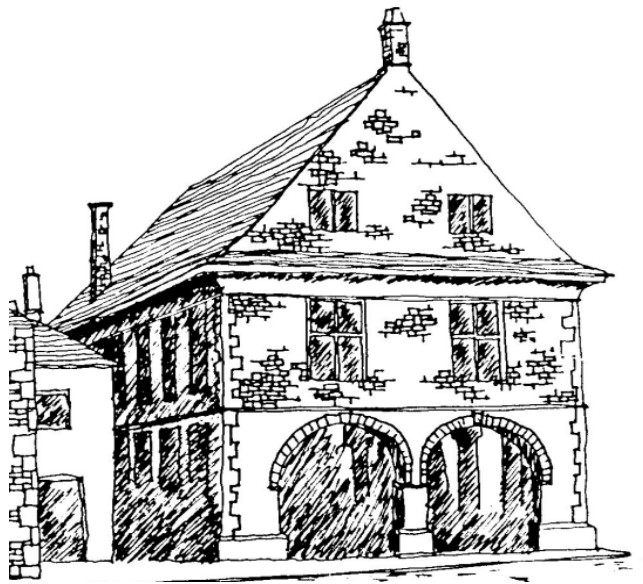


# Minchinhampton

## Life and Times

### Part 3: Landmarks



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## **Preface**

Two years ago the Local History Group published two slim volumes about the life and times of Minchinhampton, reprinted from the first fifteen years of our Annual Bulletins. The response from far and wide was tremendous! It was thought that a further volume could be based on our Millennium Exhibition, and on the brief series of articles published in “Tom Long’s Post”, the quarterly newsletter of the Parish Council. Hence Life and Times, Part 3: Landmarks.

The three most distinctive landmarks, The Common, Holy Trinity Church and the Market House are not included, as each has been well covered in previous publications, by J.V. Smith, the Parochial Church Council and the Minchinhampton Society respectively. However, the resident and visitor alike should find plenty to whet their appetite here – we hope you enjoy reading about some of our treasures.

Diana Wall, Chairman Local History Group, 2002

## **Abbreviations**

Some abbreviations used throughout the book are:

G.R.O.       Gloucestershire Record Office  
M.L.H.C.    Minchinhampton Local History Collection

## **BLUE BOYS – INN, FARM AND HOUSE**

**Mrs. Jocelyn Blanshard**

The Blue Boys Inn sign depicts two youths standing either side of a dyeing vat as its supporters, their style of dress suggesting that the sign was painted in the late C18<sup>th</sup>. But this ancient wayside inn was in existence in the early years of that century, and the oldest part of the present building dates from the C17<sup>th</sup>. The sign is now displayed in “The Museum in the Park”, having been presented by Mr. William Clutterbuck Chambers of Thrupp House, who was a former owner of Blue Boys Farm. Under the sign is the inscription “*Tho’ we stand here in Wind and Rain, True Blue will never stain*”, denoting that the quality of the dyed cloth would withstand all winds and weathers. The young men are dressed in blue clothes, but their hands and faces are not stained.



Local legend recalls that many years ago young men from Minchinhampton worked in dyehouses in the neighbouring valley mills, returning home stained from the indigo dye. In the mid C17<sup>th</sup> Wimberley Mill, Bourne, as well as St. Mary’s Mill, Chalford, are known to have been making and dyeing cloth, and both these mills were within easy walking distance from the Blue Boys site. Spring Mill, Cowcombe (later known as Randall’s Mill), is recorded in 1711 in a Minchinhampton Manor document as being “*leased with Messuage and Dyehouse for three lives to Joan Randall and her grandsons James and John Teal.*”<sup>1</sup> The Black Gutter, a feeder stream into the River Frome, powered this mill. Another accessible place of employment, but in the Nailsworth Valley, was Egypt Mill, which in 1695 was leased as a tenement, two fulling mills, a gig mill and a dyehouse by Henry Wilouby to Richard Webb. So it is very probable there is truth in the old legend, which gave rise to the unusual naming of this area as “The Blue Boys”.

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<sup>1</sup> G.R.O. D131 T/14

It is evident that the Blue Boys Inn was a widely known location, as is shown in the following announcement in the Gloucester Journal, dated 30<sup>th</sup> August 1730: “*Whereas on Tuesday Morning about 3 or 4 O’clock on 11th August was dropt a female child, on the court at the Blue Boys at Minchinhampton. Whoever will discover who left it, or the mother of it, as they may be brought to Justice, shall have five guineas Reward, paid by the Churchwardens.*” A search in the churchwarden’s accounts for the ensuing few months did not reveal any payment of the reward!

The inn was a meeting place of some importance in the early part of the C18<sup>th</sup>, being used as a coaching inn for goods and passengers en route to Cirencester and London, and was also the venue for the Fair specialising in the traffic of horses. On 28<sup>th</sup> March 1749 the following advertisement appeared in the Gloucester Journal:

“CIRENCESTER FLYING-WAGGON.

*Begins to Fly from the Blue-Boys, near Hampton, the 27<sup>th</sup> of March Infant, at Four in the afternoon, to the Ten Bells in Cirencester; and from thence proceeds directly to the Bell-Inn in Friday-Street, London, every Wednefday; and fets out from thence the fame Night for the Blue-Boys as above, where it will arrive every Saturday Night all the Summer-Season. In which all Goods and Paффengers fhall be taken great Care of, By their humble Servant, ANN MASTERS.”*

The original 1751 turnpike went from the Blue Boys along the Old Common, and then turning left it emerged onto the present road near the Hyde junction. The siting of the Blue Boys is parallel to this old turnpike, not to the present Cirencester Road. The present piece of road from Blue Boys to the Ragged Cot was built in 1783<sup>2</sup>. The sunken area by the Fox and Goose (of which more later) belonged to the Commissioner of Roads in 1830, and was perhaps used as a source of road building material. In “Notes and Recollections of Stroud” Fisher states: “*The growing prosperity of Stroud and its neighbourhood required better roads, and in the year 1751 by the Act of 25<sup>th</sup> George II powers were granted for repairing the highway from Cirencester to a house called the Blue Boys near Minchinhampton, and from thence over Hampton Common down the steep side of the hill through the village of Rodborough, and to the lower part of Stroud*”. Issac Taylor’s map of Gloucestershire, first published in 1777, shows the Blue Boys on the turnpike road from Cirencester to Stroud.

As stated earlier the area surrounding the Blue Boys Inn was the venue for the Horse Fair, attracting horse dealers from many miles around. The Charter giving the right of a market and fair was dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1269. By 1760, however, the authorities of the town of Minchinhampton had decreed (for some reason not apparent) that the Horse Fair was no longer to be held at the Blue Boys, and this notice was published:

“THIS IS TO GIVE NOTICE

*That the Horse Fair that was usually held some time past at the Blue Boys in this Town, will in the future be holden at the top of the West End of the said Town, in a certain piece of ground now in the possession of Messrs. Benjamin and Henry Sheppard, Wheelwrights.*

*SIGNED: William Clift, Town Bailiff of the Said Town.”<sup>3</sup>.*

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<sup>2</sup> Gloucester Journal 10<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1783

<sup>3</sup> Gloucester Journal 27<sup>th</sup> May 1760

The fair was discontinued in 1868.

The Vestry minutes are another source of information, where the decisions of the local townsfolk seem to have been made with some considerable opposition. The announcement had been made in Church in July 1796 that the site of the Town Pound was to be moved to a new position at the Blue Boys, and there were certain persons who were adamant that there was no advantage in changing the site<sup>4</sup>. The Pound can still be seen at Blue Boys, so it may be presumed that the Rector (Henry Jeffries), the Curate (William Cockin) and Messrs. Gardiner and Earle lost their argument. In 1975 the Pound was conveyed to the National Trust by the Commons Commissioners, and is still under their protection.

The earliest documentation of the name Blue Boys is in 1718, when the marriage Settlement of Samuel Sheppard III and Anne, daughter of Edward Darell of Rockhampton, Surrey states: *"All that Messuage, cottage, tenement, dwelling house or inn at the top of Butt Street in Minchinhampton called the Blue Boys, and stable and barn and ale outhouses thereunto belonging to same by estimation 5 acres, also one other close of pasture ground named the Butts Piece by estimation 8 acres, also three messuages, tenement, dwelling house adjoining one another and gardens, outhouses and appurtenances belonging in Butt Street, lately demised by Samuel Sheppard to Elder to Margaret Cook by indenture 13<sup>th</sup> August 1717, to hold immediately after the death of Nathaniel Cook, clothier for 99 years, if the said Margaret Cook and Grace Pitman should so long live, at an annual rent of £8.2s.0d."*<sup>5</sup>.

Nathaniel Cook continued as overseer of the estate at the top of Butt Street until his death in 1736. A document dated 1725<sup>6</sup> testifies his administration of leasing the three tenements, which entailed his appearance before the Manor Court to transfer the second tenement from Samuel Millard to Thomas Hollyday. This was in all probability the Blue Boys Inn and the five acres referred to in the 1718 Marriage Settlement. It would appear that eight years later Thomas Hollyday wished to dispose of his lease, because on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1733 the Gloucester Journal ran this advertisement:

*"TO BE SOLD                      A leasehold estate called the Blue Boys at Minchinhampton in the County of Gloucester for three lives, being a well-accustomed inn, a good brew house, with a good well in it, good cellars, a stable and barn with six acres of pasture ground adjoining to the said house bound round with a good wall, at one shilling per year chief rent. Enquire of Thomas Holyday at Hambrook in the parish of Winterbourne near Bristol, or of Mr. Price, the Bristol Carrier, in Gloucester."*

The Blue Boys smallholding and pastureland remained in the ownership of the Sheppard family until 1806. In the ninety years prior to this the leasing was granted to three families of overseers. First, as already mentioned, Nathaniel Cook and his kinsfolk. On his death (4<sup>th</sup> December 1736) his widow Margaret continued to pay rent for a dwelling, but by 1741 the management had passed to Joseph Dangerfield and his three sons in turn, Joseph, Samuel and Thomas, until 1791 when Thomas Chambers became the

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<sup>4</sup> G.R.O. P217/VE 2/1

<sup>5</sup> G.R.O. D131 T/14

<sup>6</sup> G.R.O. D1198

proprietor. The Rent Rolls of the Manor of Minchinhampton 1724 – 1779 list the following:

1725	Thomas Hollyday for ye Blew Boys	£4. 1s. 0d.
1744	Margaret Cook (rent)	6s. 3d.
1744	James Cantor for the St. Foin ground by ye Blew Boys	£4. 0s. 0d.
1745	Joseph Dangerfield for ye Blew Boys	£4. 0s. 0d.
1747	Joseph Dangerfield for ye Blew Boys	£4. 0s. 0d.
1747	Margaret Cook (rent)	6s. 3d.
1747	James Cantor for the St. Foin ground by ye Blew Boys	£4. 0s. 0d.
1749	Joseph Dangerfield for ye Blew Boys	£4. 0s. 0d.
1777	Margaret Cook (rent)	12s. 6d.
1777	Samuel Dangerfield for ye Blew Boys	£8. 0s. 0d.
1779	Samuel Dangerfield for ye Blew Boys	£8. 0s. 0d.

The precise date of the transaction when Joseph Dangerfield senior became overseer of the Blue Boys estate is provided in an Assignment of Mortgage document as 20<sup>th</sup> February 1741<sup>7</sup>. An old list of victuallers and their sureties<sup>8</sup> shows that there were twenty trading in Minchinhampton in 1755, and confirming that Joseph Dangerfield was then the innholder of the Blue Boys, and that his two Sureties, who each paid £10, were William and Robert Dowdy.

The 1777 Survey of Minchinhampton<sup>9</sup> provides more detailed information of Samuel Dangerfield's obligations as occupier and proprietor.

1.	<i>The Folly (later The Yews)</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	<i>2 roods 20 perches</i>
2.	<i>Great Cosborns</i>	<i>Arable</i>	<i>8 acres</i>
3.	<i>Little Cosborns</i>	<i>Arable</i>	<i>5 acres 1 rood</i>
4.	<i>Blue Boys Land</i>	<i>Arable</i>	<i>4 acres</i>
		<i>Pasture</i>	<i>1 acre</i>
5.	<i>Butts Piece</i>	<i>Arable</i>	<i>7 acres</i>
6.	<i>Rousetowsy Dutton's Grove</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	<i>25 acres</i>
	<i>(owner Wm. Cantor)</i>		
7.	<i>Knaves Hall, Spring</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	<i>1 acre 2 roods</i>
	<i>(owner Edward Sheppard)</i>		
8.	<i>Blue Boys Park</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	<i>4 acres</i>
	<i>(owner Edward Sheppard)</i>		
9.	<i>Doudy's Piece</i>	<i>Arable</i>	<i>2 acres 2 roods</i>
	<i>(owner Miss Doudy)</i>		
<i>TOTAL:</i>		<i>Arable land</i>	<i>26 acres 3 roods</i>
		<i>Pasture</i>	<i>32 acres 20 perches</i>

The Land Tax records for the period after 1780 are extant, and give an idea of the relative sums paid. Thomas Dangerfield took over from his brother Samuel in 1788, there being only slight variations in the tax up to 1793. For the following three years

<sup>7</sup> G.R.O. D131 T/14

<sup>8</sup> G.R.O. Q/AV2

<sup>9</sup> G.R.O. P217/3/1

Edward Sheppard's name appears as the proprietor of the Blue Boys estate with a Mr. Longfold as tenant, although a change took place in 1796 when John Vines was granted the tenancy with Thomas Chambers as overseer. In 1805 John Vines was replaced by Charles Ayliffe as victualler of the Blue Boys Inn, and trade directories show that he continued there until the mid 1820s. The Land Tax for various dates is given below:

	<i>1780</i>	<i>1793</i>	<i>1796</i>	<i>1806</i>
<i>House</i>	<i>7s. 8¾d.</i>	<i>8s. 5½d.</i>	<i>8s. 5½d.</i>	<i>3s. 4½d.</i>
<i>Land</i>	<i>9s. 9d.</i>	<i>£1. 4s. 2d.</i>	<i>£1. 4s. 2d.</i>	<i>£1. 3s. 11d.</i>
<i>Land</i>	<i>8s. 7¾d.</i>			
<i>Lagger</i>	<i>1s. 1½d.</i>	<i>1s. 2 ½d.</i>	<i>1s. 2 ½d.</i>	
<i>Stock</i>	<i>4s. 5d.</i>	<i>1s. 2 ½d.</i>	<i>1s. 2 ½d.</i>	<i>1s. 2 ½d.</i>
<i>Land (for the late Cosburn)</i>	<i>5s. 6¼d.</i>	<i>9s. 5 ½d.</i>		
<i>House (for Mrs. Hopes)</i>	<i>2s. 11d.</i>			

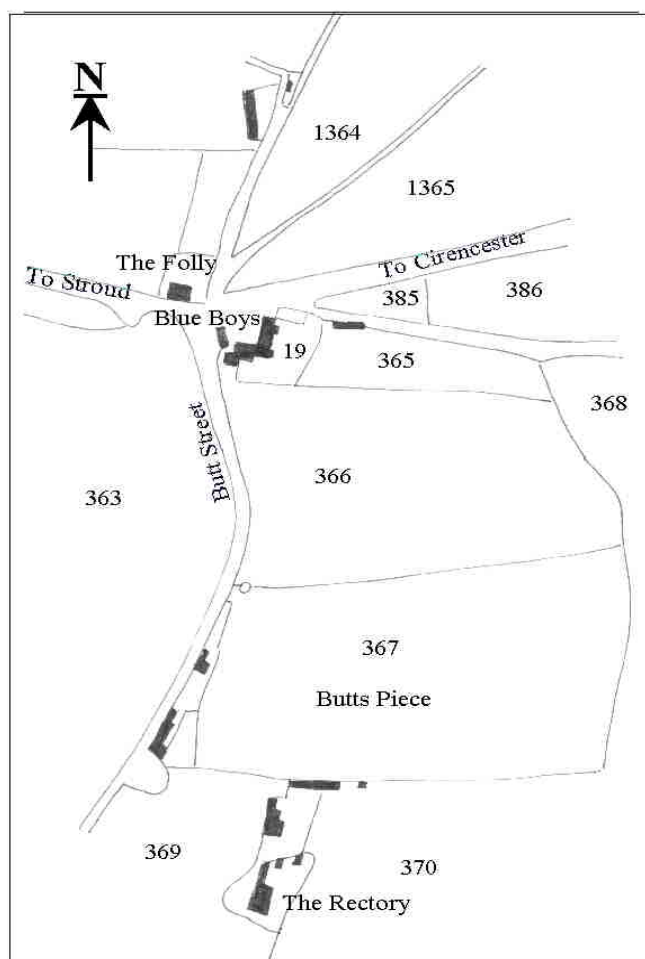
It will be seen that in the early C19<sup>th</sup> the rates were variable, and several surveys were made for the purpose of equalising the Poor Rate. The survey in 1803 shows that, as seven years previously, the proprietor was Thomas Chambers and the tenant John Vines and the ownership was still held by the Sheppard family. On 24<sup>th</sup> March 1806 the land and buildings were conveyed to Thomas Chambers of Forwood by the Sheppard family. The Chambers family, who were connected to the Clutterbuck family owned a large estate, including Forwood House<sup>10</sup>. Thomas Chambers died on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1816 and the Blue Boys passed to his son Francis, and the 1830 survey map<sup>11</sup> records that the Blue Boys Inn, outbuildings and barns had been extended and a further piece of garden ground, measuring 1 rood 32 perches, had been added. An extract from the map is given on the following page, and the relevant details of ownership are given below.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Occupier</i>	<i>A. R. P.</i>	<i>£ s. d.</i>	<i>Type of land</i>
<i>19</i>	<i>Francis Chambers</i>	<i>William Williams</i>	<i>0. 1. 32.</i>	<i>13. 2. 6.</i>	<i>Inn, garden &amp; buildings</i>
<i>24</i>	<i>Wm. Cockin</i>	<i>Wm. Cockin</i>	<i>1. 0. 9.</i>	<i>30. 0. 0.</i>	<i>House, stables, barnyard</i>
<i>363</i>	<i>David Ricardo</i>	<i>John Kibble</i>	<i>56 .2. 0.</i>	<i>91. 1. 6.</i>	<i>Pasture</i>
<i>365</i>	<i>Francis Chambers</i>	<i>William Williams</i>	<i>1. 0. 3.</i>	<i>2. 1. 6.</i>	<i>Pasture</i>
<i>366</i>	<i>Francis Chambers</i>	<i>William Williams</i>	<i>5. 1. 10</i>	<i>8. 9. 6.</i>	<i>Arable</i>
<i>367</i>	<i>Francis Chambers</i>	<i>William Williams</i>	<i>6. 3. 35</i>	<i>11. 4. 3.</i>	<i>Arable</i>
<i>368</i>	<i>Francis Chambers</i>	<i>Francis Chambers</i>	<i>8. 3. 31</i>	<i>13. 3. 4.</i>	<i>Arable</i>
<i>369</i>	<i>Wm. Cockin</i>	<i>Wm. Cockin</i>	<i>2. 1. 14</i>	<i>5. 17. 0.</i>	<i>Pasture</i>
<i>370</i>	<i>Wm. Cockin</i>	<i>Wm. Cockin</i>	<i>7. 0. 3.</i>	<i>21. 1. 3.</i>	<i>Pasture</i>
<i>385</i>	<i>Comm. of Roads</i>	<i>Richard Smith</i>	<i>1. 2.</i>	<i>5. 0</i>	
<i>386</i>	<i>Wm. Cockin</i>	<i>Richard Hitchings</i>	<i>5. 3. 7.</i>	<i>7. 13. 3.</i>	<i>Pasture</i>
<i>1365</i>	<i>Wm. Cockin</i>	<i>Richard Hitchings</i>	<i>4. 2. 13.</i>	<i>6. 6. 9.</i>	<i>Arable</i>

<sup>10</sup> M.L.H.C. 538

<sup>11</sup> G.R.O. P217a VE 1/2

# Details from the 1830 map of the Survey for Equalising the Poor Rate



By the time of the next detailed survey and map, 1839, a few changes had taken place. Francis Chambers continued to use the 5-acre field (No. 368 on the map) but the rest of the land was leased to James Davis. The name of the victualler at the Blue Boys Inn was not given; however two years later the 1841 Census lists no less than eleven persons residing at the Blue Boys on that particular date, Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June. A probable explanation for this number of occupants could have been that they were visitors to the market and fair held annually on the Eve and Feast of Holy Trinity and the three days following; the last day of the fair in 1841 also being Census Day! The extract from the 1841 Census for Minchinhampton shows at the Blue Boys Inn:

	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Born in Glo'shire?</u>
<i>John Parslow</i>	35	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Elizabeth Parslow</i>	30		<i>Yes</i>
<i>James Mabbett</i>	25	<i>Cooper</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>James Holland</i>	24	<i>Horse dealer</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>William Jenkins</i>	20	<i>Horse dealer</i>	<i>No</i>



<i>John Lackruck (?)</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Horse dealer</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Thomas Madler</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>Horse dealer</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Richard Shott</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>Farrier</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>George Pool</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>Dealer</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Edward Trinder</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>Tailor</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Charles Groves</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>Dealer</i>	<i>Yes</i>

Ten years later in the 1851 Census Returns on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March there again appeared to be an unusual number of occupants in the Blue Boys building, with no apparent reason for eight earthenware dealers to be visiting the Town, unless they were there in preparation for the weekly Tuesday market. The other occupants were:

	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>
<i>William Pearman</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>Victualler &amp; farmer of 30 ac. Employs 2 labourers.</i>	<i>Denham, Middx.</i>
<i>Emma Pearman</i>	<i>34</i>		<i>Malvern, Worcs.</i>
<i>Augustus Vernall</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Cheltenham</i>
<i>Edward Vernall</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Servant &amp; carter</i>	<i>Malvern, Worcs.</i>
<i>William Price</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>General labourer</i>	<i>Minchinhampton</i>

Slater's directory of 1858/9 lists William Pearman's name at the Blue Boys Tavern, and he remained there until he died on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1875, aged 52, although by that time it was no longer functioning as an inn. The 1861 Census shows only four persons living at the Blue Boys:

	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>
<i>William Pearman</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>Innkeeper and farmer</i>	<i>Weybridge, Surrey</i>
<i>Emma Pearman</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>Farmer's wife</i>	<i>Great Malvern</i>
<i>Job Bond</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>Servant, farm carter</i>	<i>Minchinhampton</i>
<i>James Neal</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>Retired shoemaker</i>	<i>Horsley</i>

The inconsistency of William Pearman's place of birth in the two Census Returns is curious, as Denham and Weybridge must be about 20 miles apart.

It is thought that the Blue Boys Inn ceased trading in 1866, although the Slater's Directory already referred to was the last to mention it under "Inns and Taverns". No verification has been found for 1866, although that is the mentioned in various articles from the "Stroud News" from last century<sup>12</sup>. The new Stroud/Chalford/Cowcombe turnpike opened in 1814, thus bypassing Blue Boys, and the railway came to Stroud in 1845, so these two events could have contributed to the decline of the inn. In the Cowle Museum the sign was displayed with the inscription "*The sign of the Blue Boys Inn, Minchinhampton. It shows an indigo vat and dyers. The Inn, a posting house for the coach from London, was closed in 1866. Presented by W. Clutterbuck Chambers.*"

There is a story told by a local villager that on the day the Blue Boys Inn closed a Mrs. Webb, who was a regular customer, was served the last pint. She had only a few paces to walk home, as she lived in the cottage with the sunken garden on the Cirencester road, formerly known as the Fox and Goose, which retains its stone carving to this day.

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<sup>12</sup> Stroud News June 21<sup>st</sup> 1929  
Stroud News Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> 1929  
Stroud News Apl. 6<sup>th</sup> 1934

William Pearman continued to live at the old Blue Boys, and in the 1871 Census he is listed as a farmer with 160 acres. After his death in 1875 his widow Emma remained living in Butt Street.

Mr. Pearman was, of course, a tenant of the Chambers family. Francis Chambers died on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1850, and Letters of Administration were granted to Mary, his widow. There were three sons, William Clutterbuck, Giles and Francis George, and three daughters, Emily, Esther and Mary. On their mother's death on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1878 Letters of Administration were granted to the eldest son William Clutterbuck Chambers, but a lengthy settlement followed. On 20<sup>th</sup> July 1881 it was finally agreed that William Clutterbuck Chambers should purchase the Estate from his siblings, for £22,125. Part of this was the Blue Boys, at that time comprising the farmhouse, garden yards and buildings, together with a pasture close of 6 acres, and two arable closes of 6 and 8 acres. At that time the tenants of the house were James Morgan, a gardener, and his wife Bertha. Also living there were John Midwinter, a superannuated policeman, and Mary his wife, who was a dressmaker. John lived there until his death in 1894, and shortly afterwards began the occupation by the Summers family, which lasted until 1935.

The Electoral Rolls for Minchinhampton list George Summers as occupying the house and land from 1901 to 1906. His name does not appear again until 1915 and it is probable that he spent those nine years in Canada, where he had emigrated to farm. On his return he spent a short time at Blue Boys before building and moving to what is now "The White House" in Tetbury Street, where he lived with his wife Ann from 1918 to 1923. He then farmed Tobacconist Farm and after some years he moved to Shurdington, where he spent the rest of his life.

In 1907 Arthur Summers, his wife Alice and family became occupiers of the Blue Boys house and land. Arthur Summers had married Alice Munday Dean in the early part of 1886, and they had two sons (George b.1889 and Arthur b.1891) and three daughters (Jessie b.1887, Winifred b. 1896 and Evelyn b. 1897). At the end of World War I Frank Pilsworth and his wife Marion Rosina moved into that part of the of inn nearest to the barn, and continued living there for many years as neighbours of the Summers family.

Upon the death of Mr. William Clutterbuck Chambers in 1934, at the great age of 97, his solicitors were instructed to sell his Estate by auction. Lot 1 concerned the smallholding at Blue Boys farm, which included several fields scheduled as building land under the Town Planning Scheme<sup>13</sup>. The auction did not produce a purchaser above the reserve price, and the settling of the Estate was again a lengthy process. The Pilsworths continued to live in part of the farmhouse, but Alice Summers became ill and she and her husband moved into "Uniquea", 19 Butt Street, with their son Arthur. Here Alice died in 1936, and her husband three years later.

Between these two dates, however, the Summers family made the big decision to buy Blue Boys farmhouse and some land. On 13<sup>th</sup> August 1937 Harold and Richard Chambers (sons of William Clutterbuck Chambers) sold to Arthur Summers Jnr. The farmhouse and buildings with the three pasture fields to the southeast for the sum of £1,200. Two years later the field on the corner of Butt Street and Old Common was conveyed to Evan Hopkins of Tetbury, and was later developed for bungalows and houses. The old boundary of the field was preserved in the line of the new road – Summersfield Road.

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<sup>13</sup> G.R.O. D4586/13

It was ten years later when the next document appears, the conveyance of a piece of land at the Blue Boys, together with the buildings described as the old farmhouse and skittle alley (in the occupation of Frank Pilsworth and his wife Marion), from Arthur Summers to William Critchley Wilkins, together with the right to use the lavatory! Mr. & Mrs. Pilsworth, who had been living there since 1918, were granted the right to live there as long as they wished, which in fact they did until they died. Mrs. Pilsworth was buried on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1953 and her husband a few weeks later on 30<sup>th</sup> June, aged 78 and 82 respectively.

The new owner of Blue Boys Farm, “Bill” Wilkins (as he was known to many when their dairyman) was related by marriage to the previous owner, albeit remotely. In 1953 Mr. & Mrs. Wilkins moved from “Wood Cottage” in Chapel Lane to Blue Boys. Major alterations were carried out to the house by the firm of J. Hatherall, builders of Hampton Fields. The cellar was filled in, which was a pity as it had a flagstone floor and rough plastered walls, ideal for cool storage. The two photographs below show the external changes to the house, with the changed position of the doorway and window alterations. Behind the old doorway was a spiral staircase, also removed at the time. Whilst repairs were in progress two Sun Alliance Fire Insurance plaques were removed, possibly when the walls were being repointed. Only one was replaced, and bears the number 612225, which, according to records, was issued between 1790 and 1795.



Mrs. Summers at Blue Boys



Blue Boys after the alterations (c.1968)

Formerly there was a bowling alley running alongside Butt Street, which Mr. Wilkins, and probably Mr. Summers before him, used for storing vehicles. There was also a piece of land alongside Butt Street, which formed a ditch, but the cattle got into it that formed a health hazard. The local council took over responsibility for the piece of land, and created a pavement. Mr. Wilkins took down the boiler chimney, which had stood at the rear of the property for many years, in 1961, by which time he had become firmly established as a dairyman making deliveries to all parts of Minchinhampton.



Aerial view of Blue Boys, showing the house after alterations, the barn, the pound by the Old Common and the bowling alley and pavement alongside Butt Street.

At the same time Arthur Summers sold the farmhouse, he probably disposed of his remaining two fields, south and east of Summersfield Road. These were purchased by Stroud R.D.C. and developed over a period of time into the Glebe Estate<sup>14</sup>. Mr. & Mrs. Wilkins always regretted that they had not been able to afford to buy the large stone barn adjoining, which according to experts was built in the early C19<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Eric Vosper purchased it for £500, and for many years it was used as part of a storage yard, as shown on the aerial photograph. In 1987, however, it was sold to “Mayrose Developments”, who converted it into two self-contained dwellings.

In 1966 Bill and Muriel Wilkins retired from business at the Blue Boys Dairy, and moved to a bungalow in Hampton Green. Muriel died on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1982, and Bill remained a familiar figure as he walked his faithful dog over the Common and into Minchinhampton, twice every day. He died on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1989.

The dairy business was taken over by Mr. & Mrs. Lines, who extended it with a fruit and vegetable shop, and later a frozen food centre. However, increasing numbers of people chose to shop in the supermarkets of Stroud or Cirencester, and Jim Lines retired from business in 1998, and the Blue Boys once more became a private house.

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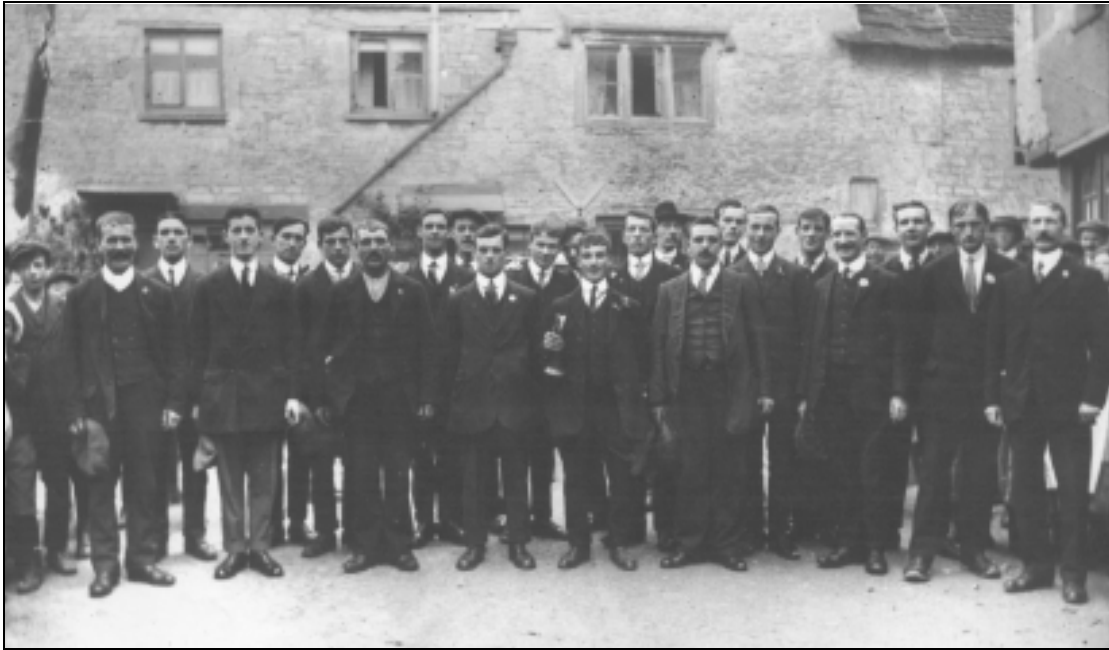
<sup>14</sup> Minchinhampton Life and Times Vol. 2

## **THE TOWN WAR MEMORIAL**

**Mrs. Diana Wall**

Standing in the centre of the Market Square is a distinctive War Memorial designed by Sidney Barnsley, the renowned “Art and Crafts” practitioner. Until 1919, there was no large open space here; it was filled with an island of buildings with narrow streets to the east and west. The Upper Island had been cleared from the lower end of Butt Street in the C19th but Lower Island remained opposite the Market House.

At the start of the Great War the recruits for Kitchener’s army assembled in front of the Crown Inn, and marched down to Stroud led by the Town Band. A local photographer was on hand to mark the occasion, as shown below:



“For King and Country” – September 1914

Sadly this “war to end all wars” was not to be over in a few months as was confidently predicted in the local press. The stalemate of the trenches in Flanders and the appalling conditions on the Turkish peninsular all took their toll, and by the time the Armistice was signed in November 1918 the parish had lost a total of fifty-one men, and many others had received wounds, gassings or shell-shock from which it would be difficult to recover.

As the war drew to a close thoughts turned to a fitting memorial to the fallen. The Parish Magazine of December 1918 states “*We shall be holding a meeting before long to discuss the subject of a War Memorial to record our thanksgiving to God for victory, and to commemorate those gallant men from this Parish who have fallen during the great war. It will be felt by many that there should be a Town Memorial, but I am sure that all Church people will agree with me that there MUST be a Memorial of some sort within the Parish Church ...*”. In the event both church and Town received impressive memorials.

The first subscription list to be set up was for the Town Memorial, and it was felt by some that the Lower Island buildings should be purchased, renovated and turned into almshouses, or a club for returning soldiers. In April 1919 Mr. T.J. Thompson, who owned the draper's shop in part of Lower Island conveyed his property to Lt. Col. H.G. Ricardo, the Lord of the Manor, who was acting as agent for the Trustees of the Minchinhampton War Memorial. (The others were the Rector and Churchwardens, the Chairman of the Parish Council and two representatives of the Baptist Chapel.) The Reading Room, which made up the remaining part of the Island, was conveyed at the same time. The buildings of the Lower Island were very dilapidated, and a decision was taken to remove them and erect a memorial cross in their place. This would have the added benefit of improving the flow of traffic, and opening up the top of the High Street. Sidney Barnsley, one of the celebrated Sapperton Group of craftsmen, was chosen to design the memorial. He is responsible for other crosses in Gloucestershire, notably Poulton, and his brother, Ernest, was the architect of "Westfield" facing the Great Park, and other local houses.



The demolition of the Lower Island

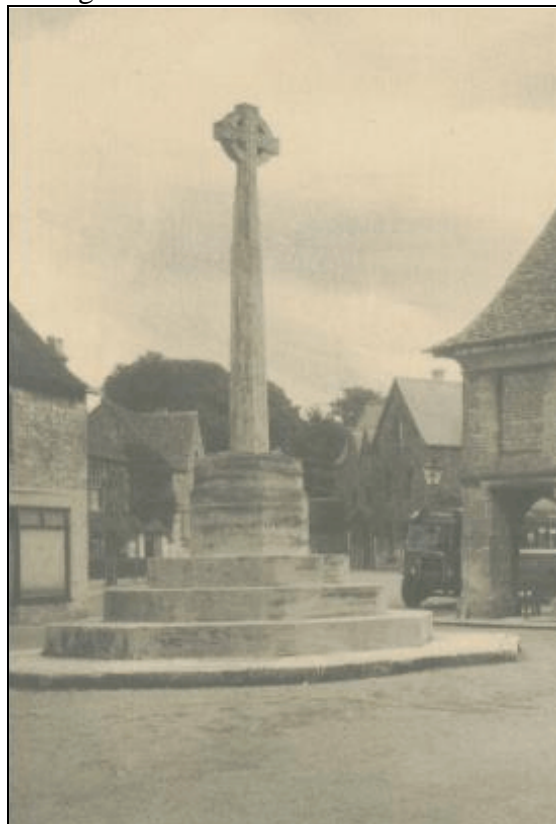
It would not be possible to include the names of the fallen on the cross itself, so these would be placed on tablets outside the Market House. To provide room for these the Minchinhampton Fire Brigade received notice to quit in 1919 – for many years their manual engine had been housed behind ornamental iron gates in the undercroft. The engine found a new home in the barn at the back of the Crown, and the work on the memorial went ahead. The cross and tablets cost £1236.13s.3d. raised entirely by public subscription, and included a contribution from the contingent of A.F.C. airmen based at Minchinhampton Aerodrome until 1919. Holy Trinity Church members contributed a further £500 for the erection of a Rood Screen as a further memorial, the Lawrence family paid for the Calvary in the churchyard and the Johnson family of Hyde paid for the restoration of the old font. Both Amberley and Brimscombe erected their own memorials to the fallen, although there is some duplication of names as the Town Memorial was the first to be consecrated, in October 1920.



The photographer, F. Reynolds, who published a series of postcards, recorded the dedication of the memorial. The one reproduced below shows the church memorial in the background, in front of the Victorian school.



Since 1921 local people have met around the Town Memorial on Remembrance Sunday for a service honouring those who have fallen in the name of freedom. World War II saw further names added to the tablets, some from the same families as the previous conflict. In 1946 the Daily Telegraph published a photograph of the service to represent how the countryside was marking the first year of peace. It is a tradition that exists to this day, with the Market Square falling silent as a tribute to the sacrifices demanded in war.



## **MOOR COURT, AMBERLEY**

**Mrs. Diana Wall**

Once the leaves fall from the trees, it is possible once again to see the main façade of Moor Court, on the northwest side of Minchinhampton Common. This landmark is hidden for most of the year by the mature oaks and beeches that remain from its once extensive gardens, with only the Victorian lodge house as a clue to what lies beyond.

The present Moor Court probably dates from 1864, although there is a reference in the Stroud Journal of 1855 to the sale of a “recently built” property. Perhaps this was just an updating of the much older house, which lay at the heart of what was then known as the Mugmore Estate. This enclosure was certainly in existence when the mediaeval custumals of the Manor of Minchinhampton were drawn up, detailing the duties of the population of this part of Gloucestershire. Some authorities believe “Mugmore” came from an Old English name — *Mucga* — but it could also be derived from *moccas* meaning a pig, and thus mean the place where there was pasture for the Manor swine. Whatever the derivation, “Muggemore” was a location recognised as distinct by A.D.1300.

Moor Court photographed in 2000



The distinctive “porte-cochere” or entrance porch is shown above

The estate of Mugmore, the largest in Amberley, continued in existence until well into the C19th, although there is no evidence of the appearance of the original house. In 1747 it formed part of the manor Estate, and was mentioned in the marriage settlements of Philip Sheppard. After his death it passed first to his widow Jane, then to their daughter Mary, who sold Mugmore in 1802. By 1839 the estate was in the hands of Joseph Hort, who then sold it on to Mary Lowsley, before her marriage to the Rev. Williams. (The Lowsley-Williams family eventually became established at Chavenage House.) It was Mary and George who had the present Moor Court built.

The architects they employed were the firm of Elmslie, Franey and Haddon who were based in Great Malvern, and designed several buildings there, although it is not clear just how they came to be used in this part of the Cotswolds. The house is in the Italianate style, with the most important feature being the porte-cochere on the entrance front, with two storeys above. The photograph shows the conical roof,



triangular pediments and decorative ironwork. In the days of horse-drawn transport, guests could arrive in their carriages and be set down without getting wet or windswept in inclement weather — an important point when the house was 250m. above sea level! On the west the owners constructed a terrace, which still exists, outside the Drawing Room to take advantage of the views across the Nailsworth Valley. On the garden façade “*the centre ..... was rather weakly emphasised by a full height canted bay window. Either side, flanking this, the elevation had a pair of Venetian windows. The attempted symmetry was somewhat corrupted by the service wing, slightly set back at the north end of the house*”<sup>1</sup> In 1869 the first of two sales of estate land was held, comprising ten lots of land and twenty dwellings, and it is tempting to speculate that this was to recoup capital expended in the building of Moor Court. At some time between 1871 and 1876 Lord Charles Pelham Clinton purchased the house and truncated estate, and lived there until his death in 1894. Shortly afterwards, in 1897, the last of the estate land was sold, leaving just the house and its immediate gardens.

Older residents will remember with affection the time that Moor Court was a hotel, catering for long-term residents, tourists and containing one of the premier function suites of the district. In a recent book<sup>2</sup> John England relates how his grandmother, Kate Webb, then running a guesthouse at Rose Cottage, purchased Moor Court for £4000 in 1938, from a building firm. During the war, not only did the hotel provide accommodation for people moving from the Home Counties, but also the grounds were used for fund-raising events for the war effort. Mr. England remembers Lady de Clifford, Norman Hartnell, Lady Baden-Powell and the novelist P.C. Wren all being associated with Moor Court Hotel. In 1944 Lady de Clifford chaired a meeting at Moor Court which resulted in the formation of the Minchinhampton branch of the G.T.C.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Webb died soon after the war, her son and daughter ran the hotel, and gradually the pattern changed from longer-term residents to summer tourists and functions such as wedding receptions, dinner dances and the like. In 1975 a world recession, coupled with new fire regulations threatened the viability of the hotel and it was sold. The main house was converted into three dwellings, and a number of large houses were built in the grounds, but Moor Court remains one of the major landmarks of the Common.

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<sup>1</sup> The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, Volume III, by Nicholas Kingsley and Michael Hill, 2001

<sup>2</sup> Village Voices, Millennium Book Group of Amberley, 2000

<sup>3</sup> Minchinhampton Life and Times, Volume 2, 2000

## **THE LAMMAS**

**Peter Grover**

William the Conqueror and his wife Matilda presented the Saxon manor of Hampton to the Convent of the Holy Trinity at Caen in Normandy, as part of the spoils of war. The nunnery in Caen was dedicated on June 18<sup>th</sup> 1066 on the eve of William's invasion of England. He was Duke of Normandy and it was regarded in a special sense as a ducal family religious house, known as L'Abbaye aux Dames. In the course of time Hampton came to be called Minchen – Hampton, *mynchen* being the Saxon word for nun.

The ancient manor house acquired by the nuns stood on the site of the present house, "The Lammas", or very near, possibly where the present tennis court stands. Contrary to popular local myth, however, the nuns never established a nunnery or cell of the abbey in Minchinhampton. They were in fact absentee landlords, deriving a considerable income from the rents and tithes, often paid in kind. There are records of cheeses and fitches of bacon being transported to Southampton to be shipped to Caen. The Minchinhampton revenues were specifically allocated to the upkeep of the Abbey kitchens and the entertainment of guests.

Successive Abbesses visited their property from time to time, usually staying at Bristol or Gloucester where there were substantial abbeys. In 1213 the Abbess purchased the right to hold a market and two annual fairs, thus making Minchinhampton a town – a distinction that it holds to the present day. The right was reaffirmed in the surviving Charter of 1269.

As Lords of the Manor, the Abbesses, through their representatives, were also empowered to hold courts and to mete out punishments to offenders. A bailiff, who was sometimes a Frenchman, administered the Abbey's affairs and frequent disputes and lawsuits broke out between tenants and landlord, making the bailiff an unpopular figure. The existence of Minchinhampton Common has been attributed to the independence of the local inhabitants, and their tenacity in upholding their rights.

The nuns built the parish church at Minchinhampton, naturally dedicating it to the Holy Trinity. The Abbey records also refer to regular payments for keeping a light burning in the chapel of St. Mary.

In approximately 1290 part of the manor was leased by the Abbey to Robert de la Mare, who died in 1308, a year after the accession of Edward II, who was brutally murdered at Berkeley Castle, and is buried in Gloucester Cathedral. Robert bequeathed the remaining lease to his son, Sir Peter de la Mare, and it was around this time that the property became known as Delamere Manor, contracted, as was the custom of the time with so many names, to "Lamers". The first day of August is also known as Lammas Day, formerly observed as a Harvest Festival, but it is difficult to see the connection in relation to the property in Minchinhampton.

Sir Peter built the magnificent South Transept of Minchinhampton Church, with its Rose Window, probably as a Lady Chapel, or the chapel of St. Mary where the light was kept burning. St. Peter and his wife are buried in canopied tombs beneath the south wall, the

arms on his shield corresponding with an heraldic tile on the west wall<sup>1</sup>. Other authorities have suggested the effigies may be of John of Ansley and his wife Lucy who held Delamere's Manor at some point in the C14th<sup>2</sup>

In 1483, at the accession of Richard III, Delamere Manor, now known as Lamberts or Lambards, was granted to George Nevile Esq. and his heirs. The house was described as "*being near the spring at Minchinhampton*". This is presumably the spring which emerges halfway down Well Hill and which formerly drove a grindstone for sharpening shears and implements connected with the wool trade that thrived in the district.<sup>3</sup> Another spring flows from the wall below "The Lammas" and feeds a fishpond for the use of the house. The outline of a second pond can be seen at the foot of the field below the house, which was also used as a vineyard, the ridges still being traceable. Each of these springs issues from the junction between the permeable Oolitic Limestone and the Fullers Earth beneath.

The Norman nuns held Minchinhampton for 333 years, being finally disposed by an Act of Parliament in 1415 when the Crown confiscated all foreign-held ecclesiastical assets. England was at war with France (it was the year of Agincourt) and the King, Henry V, was naturally resentful that the revenues of French possessions in England were going to his country's enemies. However, the newly acquired assets were not used for war-like purposes but were passed on to English religious houses, or used to found new ones. A life tenancy was granted to a friend of the king, William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, and his wife Alice, and on their deaths the manor of Minchinhampton was presented to the Bridgettine Abbey of Syon, at Isleworth in Middlesex. The nuns of Syon remained in possession until 1534, with the dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII. The nuns fled abroad and their abbey eventually became the property of the Dukes of Northumberland, who occupy it to this day as Syon House. The Order eventually returned to England, and is still established at Chudleigh in Devon.

Henry VIII retained possession of Minchinhampton for a few years, together with the Manor of Avening, but in 1543 transferred them to Andrew, First Baron Windsor, in exchange for his manor at Stanwell in Middlesex. This adjoined the royal hunting grounds at Windsor, and was coveted by the King as an addition to the royal possessions. Baron Windsor, who was no relation to the present Royal Family, who adopted the name in the C20<sup>th</sup>, was not best pleased with the arrangement, but it was clearly an offer he could not refuse. A C17<sup>th</sup> historian describes the transaction in these words: "*Henry VIII sent Lord Windsor a message that he would dine with him, and at the appointed time His Majesty arrived and was received with bountiful and loyal hospitality.*

*"On leaving Stanwell His Majesty addresses his host with words, which breathe the very spirit of Ahab. He told Lord Windsor: "that he liked so well of that place that he resolved to have it, but not without a more beneficial exchange." Lord Windsor answered that he hoped His Highness was not in earnest. He pleaded that Stanwell had been the site of his ancestors for many ages, and begged that His Majesty would not take it from him.*

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<sup>1</sup> Minchinhampton and Avening, A. T. Playne, 1915

<sup>2</sup> Buildings of Gloucestershire, David Verey & Alan Brooks, 1999

<sup>3</sup> Minchinhampton & Avening, A. T. Playne, 1915

*“The King replied that it must be so. With a stern countenance he commanded Lord Windsor, upon his allegiance, to go speedily to the Attorney General, who should more fully inform him of the Royal pleasure.*

*“Lord Windsor obeyed his imperious master and found the draught already made of a conveyance in exchange for Stanwell, of lands in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, and amongst them of the impropriate rectory of Minchinhampton and a residence adjoining the town. (The Lammas). Lord Windsor submitted to the enforced banishment, but it broke his heart.*

*“Being ordered to quit Stanwell immediately, he left there the provisions laid in for the keeping of his wonted Christmas hospitality, declaring with a spirit more prince-like than the treatment he had received, that “they should not find it Bare Stanwell”<sup>4</sup>.*

Whether he found similar provisions laid in at The Lammas is not recorded, but he did not live long to enjoy his new home and died the following March. To rub salt into the wound he was also ordered to hand over a makeweight payment of £2,297.5s.8d. to the King.

In the C18<sup>th</sup> the Gloucestershire historian Ralph Bigland wrote: *“The ancient manorial house inhabited by the Wyndesours is said to have been situate in the centre of the town and to have been very spacious and to have had hanging gardens open to the south.”<sup>5</sup>*



The blocked-off tunnel at “Lammas Park”

The hanging gardens probably consisted of the two long parallel terraces, which now form part of the gardens of “Lammas Park” and “St. Francis”, the two houses built in the grounds in the 1940s. On the lower of the terraces at the former there is the entrance to a tunnel, now blocked, which is said to have been connected to buildings on the other side of what is now New Road, and to have been used to convey grapes from the vineyard to be made into wine.

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<sup>4</sup> Baronage of England, Dugdale, 1675-6

<sup>5</sup> Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections relative to the County of Gloucester, R. Bigland, 1791

In 1790 the head lease of “The Lammas” was put up for auction at the Fleece Inn, Cirencester, but it was apparently unsold. The sale particulars describe it as: “*that beautiful and delightful spot called the Lammas, consisting of a dwelling house, garden, fish ponds, pleasure grounds etc.*”

Earlier, in 1651, the property had been acquired by the Sheppard family from the Windsor Trustees. Under the ownership of Philip Sheppard, who died in 1713, the Lammas ceased to be the manor house, the Sheppards preferring to live in the ancient house adjoining the church, which had been the headquarters of the Abbey of Caen’s bailiff or *firmarius* (from which the word farm derives). The Sheppards considerably rebuilt the old house, but Edward Sheppard, who died in 1803, did not consider it grand enough, and built Gatcombe Park, which then became the manor house of Minchinhampton. The old house was bought by William Whitehead, an eccentric character who pulled it down and laid the foundations of a very large house to be called “Minchinhampton Abbey”. He then ran out of money and the new house never rose above the foundations, which lie under the present school.

Meanwhile, the Lammas was acquired by the Pinfold family, a substantial family of clothiers and mill owners, who operated Longfords Mill, in the Avening valley, among others.

Alice, daughter of Richard Pinfold, married an unpleasant character named Jeremy Buck of Minchinhampton, a captain in the Parliamentary Army, whose men beat the Royalist rector of Minchinhampton with pole-axes in front of his wife and children.<sup>6</sup> According to a local legend a group of Royalist troops took refuge in the spacious cellars of The Lammas, but on the approach of the Parliamentarians, they fled through a tunnel to the Church, where they were butchered. If this legend has a basis in fact the Pinfolds must also have been Royalists, causing some dissent in the family.

The Pinfold crest of three doves still stands over the main entrance to The Lammas, and the proposed sale in 1790 already referred to, was “*expectant on the decease of the survivor of the Miss Pinfolds*”.<sup>7</sup> These were two elderly spinster sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, who passed on their property in an unusual and charming way. Whilst walking to church one Sunday they were jeered by some local youth. The newly appointed curate, the Rev. William Cockin, came to their rescue and escorted them to church. This kindly act so impressed them that they agreed to leave all their possessions, including The Lammas, to the clergyman. On the death of the last of the old ladies the representative of the Pinfold next-of-kin contested the will, but was defeated.

Lord Erskine, the attorney who represented Rev. Cockin at the hearing, described what happened: “*Two old maids in a country town, being quizzical in their dress and demeanour, were not infrequently the sport of the idle boys in the market place, and being so beset on their way to Church, a young curate, who had just been appointed there, reproved the urchins as he passed in his gown and cassock and, offering an arm to each of the ladies, conducted them triumphantly into their pew near the pulpit.*”

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<sup>6</sup> *Sufferings of the Clergy*, Walker, post 1685

<sup>7</sup> *Minchinhampton & Avening*, A. T. Playne, 1915

*“A great intimacy followed and dying not long afterwards they left him all they had. The will was disputed, and when I rose in my place to establish it I related the story and said: ‘Such, gentlemen of the jury, is the value of small courtesies.’”*

It would probably be unjust to suggest that the reverend gentleman may have dropped hints on his frequent visits, but he was certainly a wily character, judging by the way he progressed from being curate to rector. This he did by the simple expedient of betting the solicitor acting for the patron of the living £1000 that he would not appoint him!<sup>8</sup>

Architects date the present house at c1800, which would have been during Cockin’s curacy. The house is *“of ashlar, with cornice and blocking course. South front of two bays and seven (sic) windows, with a central semi-circular porch on Tuscan columns supporting a broad bow window above. In the hall some pretty moulded plasterwork with Cockin’s (sic) coat of arms; other rooms have good plaster cornices.”*<sup>9</sup> The Georgian front bears a striking resemblance to nearby Atcombe court at Woodchester and Barton End Hall, Horsley, and they were probably the work of the same local architect, possibly William Keck. The coat-of-arms already referred to is definitely that of the Pinfolds – was this part of an earlier dwelling, or inserted in recognition of the gift of the house?

Cockin became rector in 1806 and was well loved, though worldly, and his parishioners tolerated good-humouredly with his practice of rebuking them by name in his sermons if he considered they had misbehaved. He kept a generous table at the Lammas, which served as his rectory, and after dinner sat round a blazing log fire with his cronies, in locally made high-backed ‘beehive’ chairs, sipping port, of which he was a connoisseur. He died in 1841, aged 76, and the sale of his effects, including the contents of his cellar, lasted eight days.



An Edwardian photograph of The Lammas

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<sup>8</sup> Minchinhampton & Avening, A. T. Playne, 1915

<sup>9</sup> Buildings of Gloucestershire, David Verey & Alan Brooks, 1999



Mr. C.R. Baynes bought the Lammas from Cockin's heir in 1876, and the property remained with the Baynes family until the late 1930s. Charles Robert Baynes was a former member of the East India Company, later becoming a judge in the High Court in Madras, finally retiring in 1859 when the administration of the sub-continent was taken over by the Crown. *"Change of scene with him meant only change of work".*<sup>10</sup> He started the 'Stroud News and Gloster Advertiser' in 1867, directing it through its early days until 1873. He was active in Minchinhampton too, *"with ... Mr. Oldfield he was largely instrumental in building (Minchinhampton) schools"*<sup>11</sup> as well as being an Inspector for the Lighting District and a founder member of the Fire Brigade Committee, both of which existed in the days before the Parish Council took over local affairs. In 1896 it was reported: *"Minchinhampton Fire Brigade proceeded to the Lammas ... the men were put through several drills by Capt. Wess and an experiment with the jumping sheet was tried. Capt. Baynes, grandson of Mr. Baynes, jumped from a second storey window of the house and successfully landed in the sheet."*<sup>12</sup> A talented and polished speaker, and a staunch conservative, he was married twice, with four sons and four daughters.



Interior of the Lammas during the Baynes occupation

C.R. Baynes died in 1899, in his 90<sup>th</sup> year and was buried in Amberley churchyard alongside his second wife, Maria Dyneley, but there is a memorial window in Minchinhampton Church.<sup>13</sup> Miss Mabel Baynes was a great benefactress to the Minchinhampton Schools, and sometimes taught needlework to the girls.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Holy Trinity Parish Magazine, 1899

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> G.R.O. P217s PC1/1 & 2/2

<sup>13</sup> Minchinhampton & Avening, A. T. Playne, 1915

<sup>14</sup> Minchinhampton Life and Times, Volume 2, 2000

Subsequent owners of the Lammas included Mr. A.H. Fyffe, Mrs. Harcourt Wood, Mr. Ordway and Mr. J. Oldacre. In 1977 Mr. G. V. Sherren, then Mr. Arne Larsson in 1985, bought it and Lord & Lady Catto purchased the property in 1988.

Visitors to the Lammas often remark on the unobtrusive nature of the entrances to the house. Its parkland to the west was sold off in the 1930s, and the original gateway and drive now form the entrance to “St. Francis” and “Lammas Park”. The celebrated architect, Sir Peter Falconer, built the former in 1949, and the grounds contain an icehouse dated 1768, and a modern summerhouse, modelled on that at Longfords House. The cottage opposite the gate was built for a gardener or lodge-keeper.

Of the remaining buildings, the barn to the north of the house is said by the Ministry of the Environment in their latest register to date from the C18<sup>th</sup>, but it could be earlier. (The Lammas is Grade II\*). The inglenook fireplace is a C20th insertion, and the stables and coach house date from the early C19<sup>th</sup>.

When Holy Trinity Church was largely rebuilt in 1842 a number of incised stone slabs were found built into the nave walls. They were probably memorial slabs over graves, and had been used by the C14th builders when they rebuilt the Saxon or Norman church. A similar stone can be found in the northeast wall of the cottage attached to the main house. Three more have been recovered from the bridge over the sunken lane. The three bridges were probably made because there was an ancient right of way through the park and pedestrians could now use it without seeing the grounds of the Lammas, and being invisible themselves from the house. The lane now marks the western boundary of The Lammas grounds.



## **THE HISTORY OF HORSLEY PRISON**

### **Roy Close**

The prison at Horsley was one of four “Houses of Correction” built in Gloucestershire, after a 1883 Act of Parliament, by a commission headed by the champion of prison reform in the county, Sir George Onesiphorous Paul. All four (the others were at Littledean, Northleach and Lawford Gate) were of similar construction to the Gloucester Penitentiary, but on a smaller scale and all were to be run with the intention of fulfilling his ideas to check the early dawning of vice by some form of detention. In 1783 he declared “*Bread, water and air, as the means of healthful existence, should be denied to no prisoner, with fresh air as essential to the purposes of life as food.*” These ideas were clearly reflected in his insistence that provision of work, controlled diets and health and religious education were to be the main priorities for the prison authorities and staff.

Horsley prison was built on the site of the original priory, which in 1783 was owned by Henry Stephens, the Lord of the Manor. After an approach from Paul he agreed to give this piece of land, adjoining the churchyard, specifically for this purpose. For this very charitable act, the commission decided his generosity should be recorded in the Gloucester Journal and that a commemorative inscription be mounted in the prison. Although contracts were signed in 1786 the early work was delayed by a series of mishaps, varying from an accident to the surveyor when he lost a leg, the bankruptcy of a contractor to shortages of building materials. Eventually the work was completed in 1792, twice the estimated time and possibly twice the quoted cost.

Opened by the Horsley Justices on 20th October 1792, the prison consisted of a keeper’s house with a magistrates’ committee room, a turnkey’s lodge with baths and fumigating rooms, an infirmary, chapel, courtyards, dayrooms and cells. Flues warmed the latter, the heat being checked daily by the prison officers with a thermometer.

On admission, all prisoners were thoroughly washed, given a prison uniform in place of their verminous clothing, divided into four classes and subjected to the appropriate discipline — generally labour proportionate to their age and force, and separated where possible. Women prisoners were responsible for all the cleaning and washing in the prison.

Petty Sessions were held at the prison until 1801 when the agreement lapsed. After several years the rules were revised and specified that they were to be held at certain times to appoint auditors, overseers and the granting of public house licensing and this resulted in the Sessions returning in 1808.

Although most of the prisoners had committed the more common offences such as petty theft, larceny, or were a vagabond or rogue, some were guilty of the more unusual ones. Among those listed in the records are cases of bastardy, wool employment offences, leaving a wife and children chargeable to the Parish, and even an instance of riding on a wagon without holding the reins! Women as well as men could initiate disturbances. Clara Dunning was an agricultural labourer who had moved to Box from Minety. One day, whilst working in the fields the wedding bells were heard, and upon enquiry she was told it was for John Packer’s wedding. She immediately shouldered her rake, marched into the village and disturbed the wedding guests with shouts and splinters of glass from broken windowpanes.

Apparently she had been having an affair with John in Minety, and although she herself was now married she was still jealous! Clara was fined and spent some time in the Horsley House of Correction.

From 1840 there was a considerable increase in those sentenced for stealing-food. (This was felt by Paul to be connected with the rising price of food). An example from Box is that of Job Walkley who called for some potatoes from Joseph Evans. He asked for a quarter at 6d, wrapped them in his handkerchief and walked off without paying saying, "*you owe me seven pence and this will do*". A quarrel developed, Joseph's wife joined in and Job Walkley was sentenced to a ten-shilling fine or seven days in the Horsley Gaol. He chose the latter! Defendants involved in the more serious cases of threats to kill, rape and assault were held at Horsley pending trial at Gloucester Assizes.

Most sentences were of one or two months duration, although women found guilty of bastardy could be sentenced for up to twelve months. The largest number of inmates held at any one time was 37, whilst the approximate yearly average was nearly ten times that number. In 1792 Paul was largely responsible for the installation of a broadloom as a means of providing work, the proceeds from the sale of cloth being divided between inmates, the courts and the Governor. Prisoners also did some cloth dyeing, domestic and garden chores, whilst women with suckling children were given light duties. In the 1830s a decision to install a tread-wheel to provide power for the mill led to considerable complaint from the prisoners who had to work it, mainly because of the heavy, physical demand it required. One visiting magistrate ruled they should change places every two rounds instead of the previous four, but then allowed a second wheel to be worked by the women prisoners. However, an increase in illnesses resulting from the work eventually led to visiting surgeons refusing to allow certain prisoners to do the work. During the same period, though, one prisoner, George Cooper, was ordered on the wheel because he had put on a stone in weight, and had become too fat for his own good!

A fairly strict control was exercised over the prisoners' diets, with the main items being bread, with oatmeal for breakfast, and usually a meat dinner as the main meal, served with vegetables from the garden. Measured quantities of salt were also issued, whilst on Sundays extra meat was provided, with broth from the bones being served the following day. In cases of sickness the surgeon could order mutton broth and gruel, with occasional delicacies such as ginger and tea. Paul was sympathetic to the needs of women with suckling children, ensuring they had an adequate diet by allowing them extra bread and an additional penny a day. An indication of the high standard of their diets is illustrated by a 1822 directive which ordered a lowering, as the standards were higher than those of the long-stay prisoners in Gloucester.

A high standard of cleanliness was also expected. Paul, in 1795, blamed the new keeper for the dirty living conditions, and later refused to accept overcrowding as a cause of dirty accommodation. An immediate order was made that half the prisoners would undertake the cleaning, whilst the remainder carried on with the normal work. This brought about a considerable improvement as it was noted, "*that the walls had been newly whitewashed while all surfaces were clean.*" Still on this theme, in 1822, a visiting magistrate accused the

authorities of neglect, because some prisoners were wearing the same stockings for almost two months, and the same shirt for at least a month.

The emphasis on religion is illustrated by the action of the authorities following Paul's attendance at a Good Friday service, when he complained that some prisoners were not properly attentive or respectful. They were immediately punished by loss of privileges and special lessons were introduced to improve their behaviour and participation in services. This, and Paul's insistence that other ministers should deputise for the regular one to ensure services were not reduced, clearly brought about improvements, reflected in a request for extra Bibles and Testaments to encourage the prisoners to read them. Some were actually taught to write in large and small print from these books.

The authorities also had problems with the health and security of the prisoners in various ways. A spare room was used to bleed prisoners who were mentally disturbed, (apparently a regular practice in Victorian times) and one turnkey was removed from his post because of his mental state. Deaths also, unfortunately, occurred, with listed causes varying from "*A visitation of God*", Typhus and Dropsy, as well as the more usual ones. Surgeons attended whippings, and on several occasions in the 1840s ordered them to be stopped before the number of nominated lashes had been carried out.

Security was a continual problem throughout the life of Horsley Gaol, for as early as 1794 the turnkey was dismissed for opening the cell doors too early and allowing two prisoners to escape, while in 1821 another was dismissed for being in a drunken stupor on duty, when one prisoner escaped. The locks were regularly picked, with records indicating several instances of escapes by this means, despite the locks being changed. Escapes apparently caused concern in the village, as during this period plans were made to fit a warning bell to rouse the village when this occurred. Unfortunately, after installation it was found to be cracked and could not be heard outside the prison walls! However, despite all its problems, the prison was regarded as a well-run and ordered house, well supervised by staff, magistrates and surgeons, all of whom showed genuine concern for the care of the inmates. In 1809 Paul reported it as the most neatly kept and best managed in this, or any other county.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the use of the prison declined sharply, in 1867-76 being used only as a remand centre for those appearing at Gloucester, although still requiring a keeper. It was eventually closed, sold and partly demolished in 1878, although apparently some parts were used to form a mansion that became known as "*The Priory*". This was until recently used for administration purposes by the Highways Department of the County Council. During my childhood we were able to explore the old dungeon passages, when we could take advantage of the openings made accessible by local knowledge.

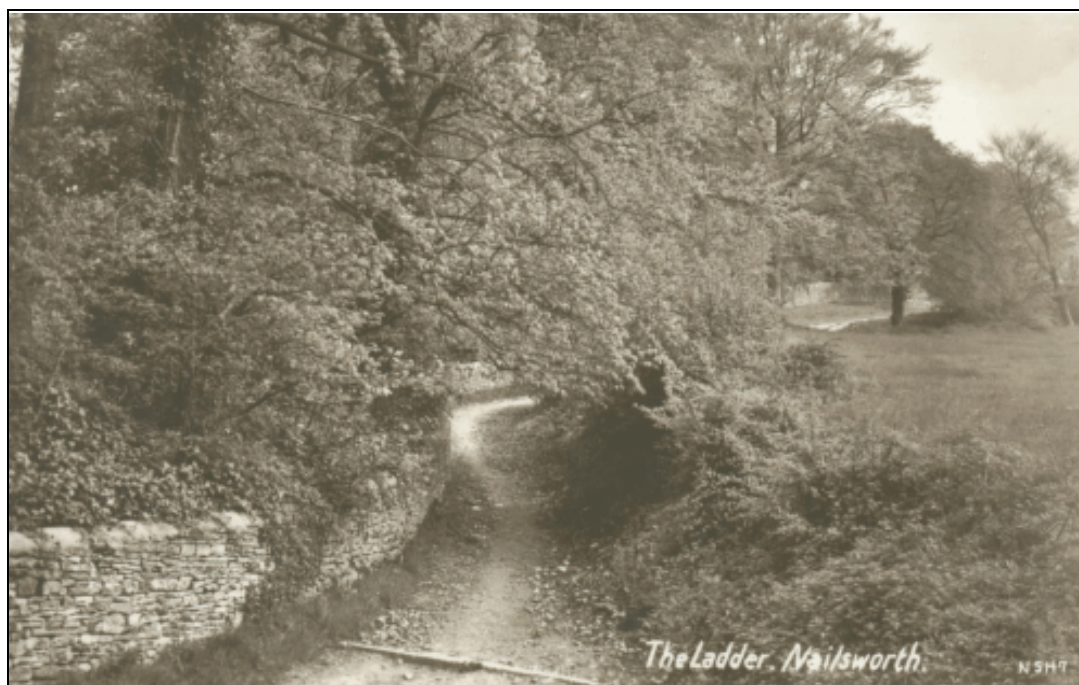
## **THE NAILSWORTH LADDER**

### **Diana Wall**

If you study an Ordnance Survey map of this area it is easy to pick out the road known as the “W”, running from Nailsworth to the Halfway Inn. Looking more carefully, you can see a track, which takes the direct route up the gradient – this is “The Nailsworth Ladder”. On the ground, its lower end at “The Hollies” is often overgrown, and easy to miss, but each February it is the scene of a motoring trial with its roots in the first years of the last century.

Before the C18<sup>th</sup> there were few roads of any permanence in this area, only tracks used by mules or horses and carts, whose route would vary according to the season. As one part became a quagmire, the carriers would move around it, or take a different track altogether. Routes came up from the valleys to the Common, and then down again on the other side, although the track from the Great Park towards Cirencester kept to the hill summit, along the line of the Old Common, later utilised for the turnpike road. The former Blue Boys Inn is aligned along this route, rather than the present-day road. The Ladder was one of the tracks up the hillside, from the scattered communities of Newmarket, Shortwood and Spring Hill. Similar routes included Ham Mill Lane, from the valley at Thrupp, Bownham Lane parallel to it, and Whips Lane at Amberley.

What was a suitable gradient for a horse or other pack animal was deemed too steep for carriages or coaches in the turnpike era. There is a maximum gradient of 1 in 2 ½ for the Ladder, with nothing on the current track less than 1 in 5.<sup>1</sup> The use of mules or donkeys on some of the steepest hills in the Stroud district is easily understood when these gradients are considered, and on Whips Lane there is a stone which local tradition suggest was the resting place for drovers and their loads.



<sup>1</sup> A History of Hampton Cars, Trevor Picken, 1997

In 1781 the Nailsworth Turnpike Trust discussed the building of what is now the 'W'. This would link the newly-constructed Gloucester to Bath Turnpike with Minchinhampton via Hampton Green. By going along the contours, albeit with the series of bends from which the road takes its name, they obtained a gradient of 1 in 9 at the bottom and 1 in 12 at the top. The stone for the surface was to come from a quarry in Hazelwood, laid 12 inches deep in the middle decreasing to 6 inches at the sides, thus creating the camber necessary for drainage. The road was completed in six months and a toll-bar was erected at the bottom of the hill. Thus the Ladder became a bypassed track.

The concept of trials, for motorcycles and cars, has its origin in the early years of motoring. Just as now, manufacturers tried to show that their machines were superior to the others around. This might take the form of a long-distance road run, a high-speed timed trial or an ascent of a steep hill. In the early years of the C20<sup>th</sup> the horse was still supreme, and many of the road surfaces were less than suitable for mechanical transport. The area around Stroud, with its many steep hills and relatively sparse population was an ideal location for the testing of machines both by manufacturers and individuals.

One of the earliest cars to climb the Ladder was a 10-horsepower Hampton, which was then built in Birmingham. This factory later moved to Dudbridge, where the Sainsbury supermarket now stands. Hampton Cars commissioned some publicity shots of an attempted climb in 1914<sup>2</sup>, a few days after a formal manufacturers trial, when a Singer, Warren-Lambert and a Morgan were also successful. In the same way that high-speed trials evolved into grand-prix and endurance races in the post World War I period, so ascents of unsurfaced hills, linked by long-distance runs, developed into what are now known as "Classic Trials". Speed was of little importance (although you would wish to finish in daylight!) but the varying terrain tested the machines reliability, as did the mileage covered. The Motor Cycling Club, celebrating its centenary in 2001, ran events to Lands End and Exeter from starts all around the U.K. before 1910, although probably the routes did not come into the Stroud area. The annual "Nailsworth Ladder August Event" was very popular in the post-war years; Mrs. Lionel Martin was the first lady to make a clean climb in her husband's Aston Martin in 1920. *"10 – 16 H.P. Hampton, Complete - £520. The FIRST and ONLY car with 2, 3, and 4 passengers to climb the NAILSWORTH LADDER – a gradient of 1 in 2 ½. Can easily do 50 miles per hour."* So ran a 1920s advertisement for Hampton Cars.<sup>3</sup>

The hey-day of trialling was probably the 1930s. *"In the years immediately before the Second World War, which is the period of motor sport dealt with in this book, club racing.... was non-existent. Racing of any sort was confined to the old Brooklands track, the narrow parkland circuit at Donington, together with occasional forays at Crystal Palace. Because of this, the major pastime of the clubmen of those days was "Trials". Major trials events used to attract entries nearly as large as are today received for race meetings at Silverstone, Goodwood or Brands. Entries usually consisted of only mildly modified (and up to 1938 "Knobbly tyre" equipped) versions of the small two-seater sports cars of the day"*<sup>4</sup>. C.A.N.

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<sup>2</sup> A History of Hampton Cars, Trevor Picken, 1997

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Wheelspin, C. A. N. May, 1945

May wrote this in the 1960s in the preface to the second edition of his book "Wheelspin" and also mentions that hills like Nailsworth Ladder and Ham Mill regularly attracted crowds of hundreds of spectators. In the early 1930s the M.G. Car Club ran "The Abingdon Trial", taking its name from the Morris Garages factory, which was both start and finish of the event. A lunch halt was made at the Bear of Rodborough. May attempted the local hills for the first time in an M.G. J2 in 1933. *"Composure was regained slightly after a successful non-stop climb of Nailsworth Ladder, because 'The Ladder' which runs up from just outside Nailsworth directly on to Rodborough (sic) Common, and is steep, with a very rough surface of rock outcrop, had quite a reputation."* Such was the publicity generated that M.G. ran a works team for many years and the area would be used many times during the season, for both motorcycles and cars. These events were (and still are) totally different from a hill climb, which took place over a tarmac surface, against the clock, at venues like Prescott (north of Cheltenham) or Shelsley Walsh (Worcestershire). The Motor Cycling Club, now catering for cars as well as bikes, had also discovered the area: *"For 1933 and 1934 the event (The Team Trial) again broke new ground, with the start in the Stroud Area - actually from the foot of the first section, Sandy Lane - and it was in this event that the names of well-known 'trials hills' began to appear: Sandy Lane itself, Bismore, Ferriscourt, Knapp, Nailsworth Ladder, and Catswood. The Ilkley and Birmingham M.C.C.s were the respective winners."*<sup>5</sup>



An M.G. J2 on the Ladder in 2001

World War II obviously intervened, but trials were the first type of motor sport to resume in this country, and on February 23rd 1946 the Bristol Motorcycle and Light Car Club ran their "Feddon Trial" which used both Nailsworth Ladder and Bownham Lane. For two years many pre-war drivers and cars competed in a full round of trials, all over the country, but the restrictions on fuel, together with the age of many of the vehicles, led to a pause until 1950. It was in that year that the Stroud and District Motor Club was formed. Three good friends, Philip Ford, Peter Hewins and Bob Parker, with others who had expressed an interest, met at the Bear Pools Cafe on 5th June to adopt a constitution. All three had been interested in pre-war car trials, and since that date the Club has maintained its focus as a trials club. In

<sup>5</sup> The Motor Cycling Club, Peter Garnier, 1989

looking for a symbol for the whole district it was decided to adopt a silhouette of Rodborough Fort as the Club Badge.



A 1949 trials car still in use in the late 1970s

Many of the early trials organised by the Club were single-venue events, but in 1955 there are records of using Nailsworth Ladder and Fort near Dursley. Of course, other clubs continued to use the local hills. Competitive sports cars, such as Dellow's would compete alongside Volvos and Singers. The premier event "The Cotswold Clouds" was first run in the early 1960s, using both pre-war hills and other venues such as Ebworth Woods. In 1962 "Avening and the Ladder were too dry to claim many victims. Cakebread's TR2 bottomed twice on the Ladder, but Dive's Roche and Hadland's Skoda made fast easy climbs. There were many spectators on the Ladder, and two old-timers were heard to say "It were rougher'n this in the old days" "Ah! And a damn sight steeper too". It is this event in early February that still attracts car competitors from all over the country, and a great number of spectators, to the top of Ham Mill, and along "the step" of the Ladder. It is the only event where cars are permitted to use these hills, although motorcycles also climb them during the "March Hare Trial".

For most of the year the Ladder is a peaceful track, offering a steep climb to those walkers who enjoy the countryside above Nailsworth. The top section is now only a footpath, but once each year it is possible to participate in a spectacle little changed in seventy years. Long may its use continue!

## **THE YEW TREE, WALLS QUARRY**

**Mrs. Diana Wall**

Should you feel energetic enough to walk up Brimscombe Hill from the main road in the valley, you would pass several of the old inns, pubs or beer houses for which the Cotswolds were renown. First on the right comes “The Ship”, still serving the area, and with a name recalling the busy Brimscombe Port during the days of the canal. Further up on the left is the former “Nelson Inn”, with its sign writing still visible on the end wall. Like so many local houses it was tied to the Stroud Brewery, formerly in Rowcroft, and beneath the creeper advertises its “Ales and Stout”. At Walls Quarry there is the “Yew Tree”, featured in this article, and then further up the hill, on the right again, “The Bell”, still retaining its name as that of a house.

The well-known Stroud photographer Edwin Peckham photographed both of these last hostelries in the first half of the last century and they were both mentioned in Charles and Mary Hadfield’s guidebook “The Cotswolds” published in 1966. Miss Grace Halford, former parish councillor, believes the photographs were taken in the late 1920s or early 1930s, when the landlord at the “Yew Tree” was a Mr. Snelling. He and his family kept chickens on the other side of Brimscombe Hill, in what was once a pigsty. Delivery of vital commodities like bread would be by horse and cart, (here belonging to the Co-op) and the lack of trees meant that the boys who used the flat stretch of road from the “Yew Tree” to the Pike as their football pitch would have an uninterrupted view up onto the Common.



Ó PECKHAMS of Stroud

Miss Halford remembers, “*The bay window was in the Ladies Room at the pub and the bar was a bit further in, but still on the right side of the front door.*” “*As a child I remember buying a packet of crisps from a little hatch on the left just inside the front door of the pub (and probably small bars of chocolate too!) Once my father bought ¼ cwt. of coal from Mr. Snelling for our neighbour Mrs. Sally Bassett ... I remember seeing it being weighed. I think Dad may have carried it down on his back*”



The earliest existing building on the site faces onto Water Lane, which in the C16th when the cottage was built was the more important road, as there were none on the valley bottom. The late A. Cyril Turk believed that this was a private alehouse, where the owner would have brewed beer to serve to the local clothiers and mill owners. The present “Yew Tree” was built in the middle of the C17th, with the stables a little later. The current owner says there are many examples of privies all over the garden area. It probably passed to the Stroud Brewery in the 1820s, but no one has any idea where the name originated. Two yew trees have now been planted.

The “Yew Tree” also had “STROUD BREWERY, CELEBRATED ALES & STOUTS, WINES & SPIRITS” stencilled on the end wall, although unlike those farther down it can no longer be seen. Small public houses like these grew out of cottages and houses, and served a very local, and loyal, clientele. “The Bell” and the “Yew Tree” served the farm workers and quarrymen, rather than the more rowdy, and transient canal and port workers catered for by “The Ship” and the “Nelson Inn”. The name “Walls Quarry” may suggest the use of the local stone, or could relate to the name of a family resident in the area; no definitive answer has been found<sup>1</sup>. The trade of publican did not always bring in enough money for a family to survive, and it is common to find other occupations being undertaken. In a trade directory of 1867 the landlord, Charles Vines, is also described as a baker.

The general shop on the corner of “The Roundabouts” may have disappeared, but the “Yew Tree” continues to serve the local and wider community. Many visitors to the area have taken advantage of the “Bed and Breakfast” business, which can be seen as a direct successor to the “Yew Tree Inn” of previous days.

## **THE STONEHOUSE AND NAILSWORTH RAILWAY**

### **Mr. Roy Close**

On the 13th July, 1863 a newly-formed, independent Company, the Stonehouse and Nailsworth Railway Company, was authorised to build a line from the Midland Railway main line (Birmingham to Bristol) at Stonehouse, to the Cotswold market town of Nailsworth, following the Frome Valley as far as Stroud.

Earlier that year a notice in the 17th January edition of the Stroud Journal had announced the formation of the Company, by raising £65,000 in 3,250 shares of £20 each, the bulk of which would be raised by a number of prominent local businessmen, with the rest to be provided from subscriptions from the general public of the district, applications for which were to be made to G.B. Smith, Solicitors, of Nailsworth.

The decision to launch the Company had been taken after negotiations with the Midland Railway had resulted in agreement to go ahead; this after the original Bill for the line

<sup>1</sup> Minchinhampton Life and Times, Vol 2, 2000

had been defeated, when a proposal to include a station at Woodchester had resulted in objections from shareholders, who thought it would encourage the use of the Catholic Convent on the edge of the village.

Although the eventual branch line was destined to become a rather sleepy railway backwater, the promoters originally had some rather grandiose ideas, mainly originating from the Midland Railway. They intended to continue the line beyond Nailsworth, crossing the Cotswolds via Tetbury and Malmesbury, and eventually terminating at Southampton, giving the Midland a route to the south coast, and the opportunity to cut across the heartland of the Great Western Railway.

Had these schemes come to fruition the railways of the area might well have been very different. Unfortunately however, the money ran out and the line never got beyond Nailsworth, where the terminus with its odd track layout remained to remind travellers of the ambitious but impossible scheme. It would have been very expensive to build, needing steep gradients and large earthworks, and the eventual size of the task was far beyond the funds and resources available at the time.

The original local committee consisted of the following prominent local citizens: William and Charles Playne, S.S. Marling, A.M. Flint, A.S. Leonard and J.E. Barnes, all in Cloth Manufacture, and Isaac Hillier, J.G. Frith and George Mills, who were in Provisions, Tea and Meal respectively. One assumes they would have held the majority of the shares.

The building of the line went ahead more or less as planned with stations at Stonehouse, Ryeford and Nailsworth, and several sidings along its route, serving cloth mills and other industries. It was eventually opened on February 1st 1867. Although no major earthworks were required, completion had been delayed through the failure of the contractors to meet deadlines and the constant slipping of bridges over canals and streams, which the track crossed and recrossed.

Although the turning of the first sod at Nailsworth by the M.P. the Hon. A Horseman in February 1864 had caused great excitement in the small town, with flags, bunting and a brass band, the opening of the line was generally low-key, apart from decorating the engine. There was some celebration in Nailsworth, with cannons being fired at High Beeches and the Subscription Rooms (later the cinema and now the Boys Club) while the band played in the streets as people celebrated.

There were three regular journeys between Nailsworth and Stonehouse at first, with a fourth added later that year, and in the early 1880\*s a fifth. The early trains ran between 8.00 a.m. and 8.30 p.m. with each journey taking approximately twenty minutes. After the opening of the Stroud branch, between the town and Dudbridge in 1886 (possibly later than was intended originally) services were increased to seven daily; the last ended at Stonehouse at around 9.00 p.m.

Despite these increases in passenger services, the line relied heavily on goods traffic, especially until the Stroud branch was opened. The large number of private wagons based at Nailsworth with at one time at least nine different firms being represented reflected this. The goods yard at Nailsworth was a busy place, containing a turntable, engine shed, goods shed, cattle dock and a large warehouse with several smaller buildings near the entrance from the town. The warehouse is still in regular use today, mainly as a timber store, and still carries the original name of C.W. Jones & Co.

The station buildings at Ryeford, Dudbridge and Nailsworth were all built to the Company's own design, with walls of Cotswold stone and a grey slate roof. That at Nailsworth rather dominated the short platform, being much larger than those normally found on a small branch-line terminus, perhaps reflecting the main line status envisaged by the founders of the original plans. The meetings of the board of the original railway were held there, in what later became the booking hall.

The original station at the Stonehouse end was probably only a small temporary affair and was replaced by one in the Midland Railway design of wood on a stone base with a stone chimney and a wide canopy. It was possibly built at the same time as the one at Stroud, when the additional branch from Dudbridge was completed in 1886. The one at Woodchester was also to Midland design but was much smaller, built rather as an afterthought and possibly influenced by letters in the press complaining of passengers having to walk to Dudbridge for trains.

These buildings underlined the backing given by the Midland Railway almost from the start and they were soon involved in supporting the line's financial affairs, as these were fully stretched by debts incurred in its building. In 1869, for instance, the Stroudwater Canal Company were awarded over £1000 damages against them for interruptions to traffic on the canals whilst the bridges were being built. They were apparently unable to meet this until 1878, when they had been invested in the Midland and they were eventually dissolved as a separate company after the completion of the branch to Stroud in 1886, when the running of the complete line became the responsibility of the Midland.

The Stroud extension probably reprieved the passenger traffic on the line and also added to the goods traffic several lucrative contracts, including the supply of coal to the Stroud Gas Works. This continued until well after World War II, and at times was over 3000 tons of coal a month. Passenger trains consisted of four and six-wheeled coaches, drawn by locomotives such as the Kirtley 0-6-0 and Johnson 0-4-4 tank engines. Amongst the services provided were a number of excursions to Gloucester, Bristol and Birmingham, while the connection to the Midland main line at Stonehouse enabled many to have a day by the sea at Weston Super Mare, especially in later years. I well remember being taken on some of these just before World War II.

However, passenger services were gradually affected by the new local bus services, and despite combining passenger and goods services, by using one coach along with several trucks, they were temporarily suspended in 1947. They never resumed and by the middle of 1949 their departure was made official, but goods traffic remained fairly constant. Eventually the arrival of Dr. Beeching in the 1960's sharpened the knife and the line finally closed in June 1966, almost, but not quite, reaching its centenary.

Today all the track has long-since disappeared, although its recent conversion to a combined walking and cycle track between the two original termini has meant that it still provides an amenity for the local people, although rather removed from the intentions of its founders nearly a century and a quarter ago. Some buildings still remain, particularly at Nailsworth, while at other places semi-derelict walls and other reminders can be seen amongst the undergrowth. Nailsworth has recently had a new fire station built almost on the entrance to the old goods yard.

The last scheduled passenger service ran on the 14th June 1947 when, although leaving Stonehouse empty, it was completely full after leaving Ryeford with passengers having to find room in the guards van and apparently some even travelled on the footplate. Amongst those embarking at Ryeford were some 60 boys from Wycliffe College and their Headmaster, Mr. Sibley.

At all the stations on both branches, and at other vantage points such as bridges and level crossings, it was cheered on by crowds of people all wishing to witness the historic journey. At Dudbridge detonators were let off, and the engine was suitably decorated with flags, bunting and greenery. At Nailsworth it was detached and backed along the rails to the water tower for replenishment before commencing its final run back to Stroud and Stonehouse.

Several excursions were run by the Gloucestershire Railway Society in the following years, culminating in a final one on the 7th July 1963 when three coaches, packed with passengers, were hauled by a 1934 L.M.S. 0-6-0 engine, specially brought down from Redditch for the occasion.

During its lifetime there were, obviously, a number of varied and unusual incidents, including a number of accidents, two of which caused fatalities. One occurred at Stroud when John Griffith, a carter of Stroud, was kicked by one of the two horses on his dray when he was driving for the L.M.S. in 1908. He was driving from the shafts (apparently not officially allowed) and the Coroner at the inquest recorded a verdict of accidental death, when he also praised the bravery of a witness, William Harrison of Brick Row, for pulling the victim clear of the shafts when the horses bolted.

Another tragic accident occurred, this time at Nailsworth, when a porter, Charles Paish, (52) of Horsley Road was engaged in shunting operations in the goods yard in November 1918. He was caught between two cattle trucks and crushed beneath the wall of the cattle pen, death being instantaneous.

In 1892 another accident had occurred in circumstances which can only be described as unusual, to put it mildly. A passenger train, which had left Stroud at 7.55 a.m. was approaching Nailsworth station before its due time, when surprised staff saw it charge through the station, with full steam on, and end its journey against the stop, some 150 yards further on, fully embedded in coal and dirt. Luckily, although one coach derailed, no one was fatally injured, but one young lady, Lottie Tarrant, broke her leg and had to be taken to Stroud Hospital for treatment. The rather surprising end to this incident came at the enquiry, when it was found that the signals that warned approaching drivers of their nearness to the station had been removed some years previously! Needless to say

the Company admitted liability and paid damages.

During the floods of 1889 a landslip occurred on the line at Rodborough, which required prompt action from officials to keep it open for traffic. A gang of men had to be engaged to clear away the fallen earth and debris in order to ensure that the traffic was not impeded. Flooding also occurred at the level crossing at Woodchester, causing passengers either having to go on to Nailsworth or walk back along the track to Workman's (now Quaker Chemicals) to make their exit, which could only then be achieved by wading through a good depth of water. The ladies were favoured when those willing to entrust themselves to the strong arms of company servants were safely delivered to terra firma. The last train from Stonehouse to Stroud could not pass Ryeford and passengers were conveyed in a hired vehicle to Dudbridge before entraining there for the short journey to Stroud.

Finally, an indication of the rather high fares charged during the latter C19<sup>th</sup> can be seen from the following examples of excursion fares. In 1868 from Nailsworth to Birmingham, First Class cost 7/6d (37½p) and Covered Carriage 3/9d (18p) whilst to Bristol fares were 5/- (25p) and 2/- (10p), respectively. In 1936, however, fares seemed more realistic as the return fares from Dudbridge to Gloucester, Bristol and Birmingham were 1/- (5p), 3/- (15p) and 7/11d (40p).

Thus the story of the “Dudbridge Donkey”\*



The “Donkey” at Nailsworth Station

## **The Baptist Church Centre (The Institute)**

In the Edwardian times there was a very forward-thinking minister in charge of the Baptist Chapel in Tetbury Street – the Rev. S. J. “Sammy” Ford. Along with many of his growing congregation, consisting largely of mill hands and agricultural labourers, he had renovated the chapel building, the Sunday school and the manse. He felt that there was a need for a meeting place for the working men of Minchinhampton, which was other than a public house, being himself a supporter of the Temperance movement. From this vision was born the Institute, and *“as in the case of the Jews, when Nehemiah undertook the building of the walls of Jerusalem, it may be said that ‘the people had a mind to work’”*<sup>1</sup>



Portrait of Rev. “Sammy” Ford, c. 1901

The site selected was next to the chapel, and necessitated the demolition of an old cottage. This task was undertaken by the minister, with a band of voluntary labour of some fifty or sixty men and boys (plus a few girls), commencing in June of 1906. The task was speedily accomplished, and the building proceeded at such a rate that the memorial stones were laid the following January. The building firm employed was that of Wall and Hook, who had a good local reputation, but again voluntary labour was used to keep costs to a minimum. The estimated cost was £1000, of which over £600 had been pledged by the stone-laying ceremony, either in money or promised labour. In the event, the final costs were met by subscriptions, all of which are recorded, along with the gifts of labour, materials and furnishings for the new building.

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<sup>1</sup> Stroud Journal, January 18<sup>th</sup> 1907

The stone-laying ceremony was marked by a great celebration. The Minchinhampton Band accompanied the singing of the hymns, and Rev. Ford outlined his vision for the use of the building. The five stones were laid, *“By Henry Clarke of Frampton Mansell to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> year’s ministry of the Rev S.J. Ford in this town”, “By Alfred Apperly Esq. of Rodborough on behalf of the Working People of Minchinhampton”, “By Alfred Archard Esq. of Bath, president of the Bristol Baptist Association” “By Ulrich Holborow Esq. of Stroud on behalf of the Temperance Society” and “By Arthur J. Clarke Esq. of London on behalf of the young men of Minchinhampton.”* *“Hymns were sung between each laying ceremony and speeches also delivered by those upon whom devolved the honourable duty, one and all complimenting those engaged on the work already accomplished and expressing a sincere hope that all their desires and hopes would be realised to the full.”*<sup>2</sup>

Inside, the building consisted of a large downstairs recreation room, for the young lads of the area, above which was a similar sized room for the men. Both were equipped with games such as bagatelle, billiards and table skittles, but smoking was only permitted upstairs. Equally important in the days before cottages were fitted with modern amenities was the bathroom and dressing room provided behind. A large gas geyser provided the hot water, which was much in demand after cricket or football matches that were played at the top of Tetbury Street. Above these rooms was a reading room where *“they hoped to make provision for daily and weekly newspapers and weekly and monthly magazines. It was their intention to make their institute non-sectarian and non-political so that it might become a neutral ground for friends of both church and chapel and of all shades of politics to meet on social terms one with another and enjoy a social evening.”*<sup>3</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> Stroud News, January 18<sup>th</sup> 1907

<sup>3</sup> Stroud News, January 18<sup>th</sup> 1907



The eastern part of the building formed the cottage for the caretaker, and was also used as a small temperance boarding house. Thomas and Kate Gardiner were the first caretakers, followed in 1935 by George and Minnie Ellins. Their daughter, Iris (now Dyer) remembers growing up in the cottage, with her parents and sister Poppy. *“The Institute was well used during those early years up to and during the war... it was open six nights a week and there was table tennis upstairs, billiards darts and draughts downstairs, and in the rear room, always known as the bathroom, there were three bath cubicles for public use at 6d for a bath with piping hot water from a huge gas geyser. One of the upstairs rooms was a kind of museum but I don’t remember it being used very much and it was always kept locked. It housed some very weird stuffed creatures – a small crocodile, a duck-billed platypus, a large round fish that looked like a balloon with spines sticking out all over it, an animal’s skull and various bits of World War I memorabilia. This room always smelt very musty.*

*“The rooms were heated by individual old-fashioned cast iron radiators heated from underneath by a gas burner which we lit manually with matches. There was one big radiator in the billiards room and smaller ones elsewhere and I can remember how the walls ran with condensation on cold wet winter nights.*

*“Billiards was the most popular game, and time limits were set by the wall clock, which rang loudly enough, to be heard in the house when the time was up. For 3d you could have half an hour. Sometimes, elderly members coming in demanded, and got, the use of the table even though younger lads were playing – such was the way of life in those days.”<sup>4</sup>*

George Ellins had fought in World War I, and had lost most of his left leg, and was supposed to only do light work, but he was not that kind of man.<sup>5</sup> During World War II there were boarders for most of the time in the house and the Institute was often commandeered for airfield construction workers, soldiers just returned from Dunkirk, evacuees, and the like. In spite of strict rationing, the family made outsiders welcome for meals, and in this way got to know a German P.O.W., a dispatch rider and his wife, as well as the army driver who had boarded with them pre-war. The public baths were used regularly by contingents stationed at Aston Down, and by the soldiers manning the searchlight battery at Hollybush Farm. Everyone wanted to “do their bit” and in 1944 Poppy prevailed on some local ladies to set up a contingent of the Girls Training Corps in Minchinhampton, with Miss Gladys Beale as the Commandant.<sup>6</sup>

With the return of peace the Institute reverted to its pre-war role, and was increasingly used by more formal groups of members – the youth club, young wives, Sunday School classes etc. and the upstairs room was used for parties and other functions – both the Ellins daughters held their wedding receptions there. From the 1960s one room in the building was used to house the County Library, open two days a week, with a regular supply of books from the headquarters in Gloucester. However, in 1977 this facility moved into a purpose-built Library in School Road, and the Institute reverted to use by church groups, a Brownie Pack and by the Avening Band for rehearsals.

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<sup>4</sup> Unpublished reminiscences

<sup>5</sup> Minchinhampton Life and Times - Part 1

<sup>6</sup> Minchinhampton Life and Times - Part 2



By the 1980s the Institute was in very poor decorative condition, but was still structurally sound. The cottage was in very poor state, and repair to both parts of the building would, it was estimated, cost in excess of £60,000. Rev. Alan Edwards had supervised the reconstruction of the church and engaged upon discussions with the authorities to see if the Institute and cottage could be converted to provide day centre facilities for the elderly. Nothing was finalised before Rev. Edwards left in 1986. Three years later the problem was discussed again, and the leadership team recommended to the members that the cottage should be sold and the proceeds used to finance the upgrading of the Institute to provide a *“multi-purpose meeting place for use by ourselves and community groups”*<sup>7</sup>

A special Church Meeting approved the concept unanimously, and plans were drawn up to restore the Institute. Downstairs a large room for meetings of up to about thirty-five would be provided, new kitchen and toilet facilities installed, with an improved entrance area. Upstairs there would be four rooms suitable for smaller group meetings. Disabled facilities would also be part of the new interior. By the time all the relevant permissions had been obtained (not only from the Baptist Union Corporation Ltd. but also Listed Building consent) the original estimate of £57,000 had been revised up to £64,000, exclusive of fittings. After the sale of the cottage, and income from grants from different sources, a shortfall of over £16,000 was raised by the members to cover the building works and the fitting out. In 1992 the former minister, Rev. Alan Edwards was invited back to Minchinhampton to perform the opening ceremony of the Baptist Church Centre, which continues to fulfil its role for the Family Church (Sunday School), various church meetings and the wider community.



The Church Centre in  
Millennium Year

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<sup>7</sup> Letter to Church members from Rev. John Smith, October 1989

## **THE GUN ON THE PARK**

**Mrs. Diana Wall**

If you walk over the Great Park, not far from the rear gate to the school, there are two seats set on a concrete plinth. This may seem unremarkable, and certainly not a landmark, although it is larger than any other plinths on the Common. However, it has a history; until about sixty years ago a large gun, the relict of some past conflict, stood there, on top of its carriage.



This photograph, looking across to the top of Butt Street, seems to suggest that the gun was in place in the early years of the C20th, and might have been captured from the Russians in the Crimean War. Certainly two cannon from the Siege of Sebastopol were erected in front of the Subscription Rooms in Stroud. Nailsworth, too, was presented with a gun but the historian, Paul Hawkins Fisher, in his “Notes and Recollections of Stroud” (1871) states they put it out of sight possibly “*to intimate the great blessing it would be to mankind if all the warlike instruments in the world lay as peaceful and quiet as theirs*”. This poses a question: at that time Nailsworth was not a parish in its own right so was this the gun that eventually ended up on the Park? Minchinhampton certainly put theirs on display, and a later photograph shows that the carriage had been replaced with a four-wheel example, and the whole surrounded by railings.

If its origins are obscure, so is its fate. It seems to have disappeared during the Second World War; was it a very obvious example of salvage? Perhaps it contributed to the “Stroud Spitfire Fund”? Certainly for a brief period of time it was a distinctive landmark on the Great Park, and one worthy of further research.



## **THE CORONATION HUT**

### **MINCHINHAMPTON SCOUT GROUP HEADQUARTERS**

**Mrs. Diana Wall**

During World War II in Minchinhampton, as elsewhere, Scouting had been in abeyance, although several local youngsters kept alive a spirit which had flourished in the town since 1909. In the 1930s the Troop met on Monday and Thursday evenings in the Gymnasium, behind what is now the Cotswold Club, but during wartime, if they could not hold outdoor meetings, they went to the belfry under the church tower. By 1950 there was sufficient interest, and the correct number of leaders, to re-form the 1<sup>st</sup> Minchinhampton Troop Boy Scouts. Sir Richard Bevan, the County Commissioner who lived in “Greylands” in the High Street, submitted the application, and on September 21<sup>st</sup> the registration was received, and Scoutmaster Trevor Kirby, took over.

The first post-war headquarters were provided by the generosity of the owners of Burleigh Court, Mr. and Mrs. G. Mackworth-Young, who kindly allowed the boys to use the stable loft. By the registration date Mr. Andrew Selway “*an old friend and experienced Scouter*”<sup>1</sup> had spent most of his holiday installing the necessary heating and lighting, and the Scout Room was also being decorated. Thanks to the owners the Scouts (but not the Senior Patrol) were allowed to use the swimming pool at the Court, a considerable attraction!

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to Sir R. Bevan

In 1953 the search was on for a suitable piece of land on which to construct a permanent headquarters. Amongst the possibilities considered were the old Simmonds' site at Burleigh, the piece of land next to Walker's Garage in Nailsworth Road and the land belonging to the P.C.C. in Friday Street (where the Youth Centre now is). Sir Richard Bevan had visited Canada earlier in the year and had obviously been talking to friends about the Troop "back home". Thinking that a site with long-term tenure had been found, he wrote in May to Mr. J. W. McConnell, who had offered to subsidise a new Scout Hut. Five days later a draft for ££600 (the full estimated cost) was being forwarded through the Boy Scouts Association of Montreal. A suggestion to name the headquarters "McConnell Hut" was turned down with a request "*to keep his donation absolutely anonymous*" and as he wrote in 1954 "*The fact that you have a complete hut in your vicinity which you did not expect to have, is abundant reward for me.*"<sup>2</sup>

The land for the headquarters came from Mr. Norman Prince of Gloucester, then owner of Park Terrace. He asked the Parish Council to relinquish a piece of land 50ft. by 100ft. from the allotments in Dr. Brown's Road, (which he presumably also owned) and this gift became a reality in September 1953.

The Scout Hut was to be professionally built by Mr. Cooper of Burleigh, but Scouts and other helpers did much of the groundwork. Work began on 3<sup>rd</sup> October with most Scouts, some only eleven or twelve, taking a stint of at least two hours at the weekend. The mild autumn weather was a bonus, and by the end of the year the concreting of the floor was complete. Only one sour note — a resident wrote in strong terms to protest at work being carried out on Sundays, which he felt was a poor example of "Duty to God" in the Scout Promise. The entrance was built with "*gateposts wide enough to admit trek carts*". Work was slow in the early months of 1954, but the Scouts were tidying the site in March, levelling the mud, which was high around the walls, making access to the site difficult.

The Group Chairman at the time was Frank L. Smith and he worked tirelessly for the completion of the headquarters, obtaining fittings, grants for equipment and organising working parties. The walls of the hut, then measuring 50ft. by 26ft., were of concrete blocks, four girders were purchased in a sale and the roof was of corrugated asbestos sheet. Site meetings had agreed that the walls should be boarded on the inside, that cold water should be piped to the kitchen sink, and that a storeroom and cycle shed should be provided. The toilet was to be a shanty outside! Lewis's of Stroud completed the electrical work and less than a year after building began the Coronation Hut was ready for its official opening.

Once open the Coronation Hut was in almost constant use. Not only did the Scouts meet on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday nights, but also at weekends. The Red Cross used it for courses, and for a time it was the home of a badminton club. As now, the Guides met in the hall. Important fittings were provided — a piano, table-tennis table, a radio receiver, boiler for the kitchen and chairs and tables. In these pre-television days it provided a useful social outlet for many boys in the area. Maintenance was a concern for the Group Committee, especially when windows were broken during indoor football matches! The storeroom was enlarged during the fifties, and a Senior Scouts room created at the back. Eventually inside toilets were provided behind the kitchen, and when the bungalows in Dr. Brown's Road were built in the sixties, a further piece of land was purchased to the south

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<sup>2</sup> Letter to Sir. R. Bevan



of the building, to allow vehicle access to the rear of the premises.

Until the late Sixties there was a fairly large paddock to the rear, which, together with the land owned by Mr. A. Holloway next door, was the site of the Scout Fete for many years, until the need for a proper store for camping equipment, canoes and office facilities led to the construction of the current large storage area. Improvements have been ongoing in this area for many years; a donation from the 1998 Country Fayre enabled a proper staircase and storage shelving to be installed, enabling better access to the camping equipment for both Guides and Scouts.



This photograph shows a group of Scouts, Cubs and supporters outside the Scout Hut in the 1950s. Sir Richard Bevan is on the right of the back row.

The headquarters made the national newspapers in the eighties when “*Princess Anne’s three-year old son started nursery school yesterday in a scout hut in the local village*”<sup>3</sup>. On the following Monday there was a scrum of photographers and reporters outside Gill Tomlinson’s school, and as this continued it became one of the few Scout huts to boast net curtains! Zara Phillips followed her brother to the school, which still uses the building five mornings a week. Other regular users are the W.I., several dance groups as well as both the Guide and Scout Movements — not a bad record for a building that reaches its golden jubilee in 2003.

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<sup>3</sup> The Sun, 24<sup>th</sup> January 1981

## **STUART HOUSE**

### **Mrs. Diana Wall**

Just to the east of Butt Street lies Stuart House, now named after the lady who lived there from 1944 until her death. Before that, the name of “The Old Rectory” gives us a clue as to its origins and history. At the end of the C16th the Rectory was much closer to the Church of Holy Trinity, either in the Market Square or at Parsons Court. *“In 1584 the rector’s glebe included 73 a. of open field land, 3 tenements and c. 18a. in closes in or near the town. His property in the town was subsequently increased in value by new building and in 1704 comprised 40 tenements most of which were sold off c. 1800 to redeem the land tax.....the rectory house comprised hall, parlour, buttery, pantry, chambers, kitchen and outbuildings.”*<sup>1</sup>

In the Hockaday Extracts, copies of which are to be found in the Gloucestershire Collection of Gloucester Library there is a report dated 14<sup>th</sup> December 1720 which speaks of that rectory house as being *“very old ruinous and decayed and situate in a Low and unhealthy place”*. This was a petition from Samuel Sheppard who desired to build a new rectory, presumably at his own expense. He was the second of that name and had been Lord of the Manor since his father’s death in 1713. In 1720 he appointed his second son to the Living of Minchinhampton, and presumably wished for a better dwelling as befitting his status. The Rev. Philip Sheppard was born in 1695, and in addition to Minchinhampton became Rector of Avening in 1728. He was then only 33 years of age. Both rectories were valuable benefices and he occupied them until his death in 1768, making a total of 49 years for Minchinhampton. He married a Miss Mary Knight of Eastington, but they had no children.

The reply from the Commissioners states *“The new one as proposed to be Built is to stand in a very dry and convenient place upon the aforementioned piece or parcell of Glebe Land called the Lyes. ‘Tis to be four square with two Fronts the extent of it is to be fifty Feet on every side or thereabouts, ‘tis to be three storeys high and there are to be four rooms in every storey and by the Assistance of the aforementioned workmen [Giles Whiting, carpenter and Jeremiah Jenkins, mason] we have Computed the Expense of Building the aforementioned new parsonage House and the Outhouses herein after mentioned and Judge it will be Four Hundred pounds.....The outhouses proposed to be built a Brewhouse about fourteen feet square and a stable three bays in Length and of a proportionable Breadth.”*

The new rectory was built about a year later, to the design stated in the extract, and those who remembered it before the remodelling in Victorian times commented upon its well-proportioned facades, and had narrow Georgian sash windows, according to Arthur Playne<sup>2</sup>. There were two entrances to the property, that from Butt Street and another to the east, from the area around Glebe Farm. All of this land to the north of Friday Street was until the C19th glebe land.

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<sup>1</sup> Victoria County History, Nicholas Herbert, 1979

<sup>2</sup> Minchinhampton and Avening, A. T. Playne, 1915

Not long before Philip Sheppard's death there is a further description of the house in a letter written on behalf of his nephew, Edward, it says "*the livings are generally esteemed to be ££700 p. ann. though 'tis well known that the present Incumbent, who is an easy gent. does not make the most of them. [Philip Sheppard] is upwards of 70 and had some time ago a Stroke of the Palsy, by which he has been lame ever since. .... He keeps three curates. .... The Parsonage House at Hampton, where the present Incumbent lives, was new built by him, and is as pleasant and convenient dwelling as most in Gloucestershire.*" At the time it would have been one of the larger dwellings in the town, comparing favourably with the Sheppard Manor House close by the church, and the Lammas to the south.

Edward Sheppard continued to appoint rectors of both Minchinhampton and Avening until his death. At least four lived in this house before 1806, but at that date William Cockin was appointed, having been curate here. . During the incumbency of William Cockin (1806 to 1841) it became the home of the curate, as Rev. Cockin had been left "The Lammas" and other parts of the Pinfold estate, and chose to live there, in a style reminiscent of a country gentleman. On his death the sale of his furniture and effects, including the contents of his cellars, lasted eight days! Rev. Charles Whately succeeded him, and presumably lived at the Rectory.

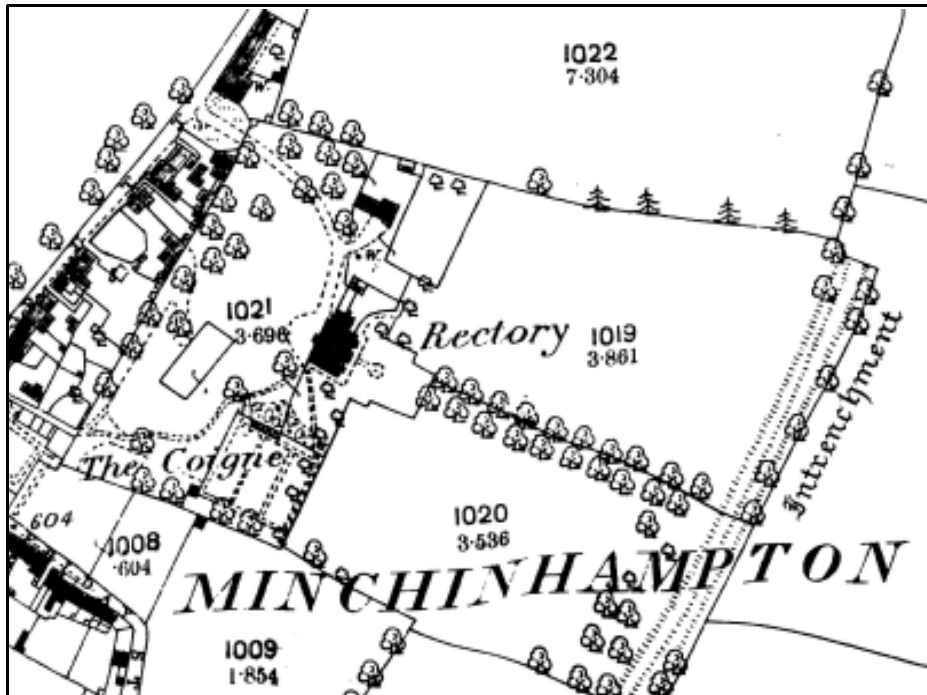


The Rev. E.C. Oldfield, who was appointed by Henry David Ricardo, in 1865, altered the rectory considerably. He was very much a family man, which possibly accounts for the remodelling of what was then a 150+ year-old house. The distinctive porch was added to the west front, the windows were replaced and dormers added to the roofline. In addition to the house he also took a hand in planting the gardens and grounds: the lime avenue, of which a few traces remain, is said to have been planted by him in A.T. Playne's "History of Minchinhampton and Avening". At this time most of the larger houses would have employed indoor servants, and this was no exception, and the 1881 Census records a gardener living in one of the neighbouring cottages. The Oldfield family enjoyed the house for twenty years. The Rev. Mather was incumbent from 1885 to 1896, followed by Rev. Bryans and the last rector to occupy the house was Rev. Bateman. However, upon his resignation "*the house was sold c. 1915 and the Coigne, a 19<sup>th</sup> century house on the corner of Butt Street and Friday Street was acquired.*"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Victoria County History, Nicholas Herbert, 1979





The map of 1881 shows the formal gardens to the south and east of the Rectory, the lime avenue and carriage entrances.

It appears that in the 1930s the house was in multiple occupation, but whether this meant it was formally divided into flats is not clear. Certainly, by 1941 when Aston Down airfield was being enlarged there were moves afoot to requisition the property for use by the R.A.F. This caused much correspondence between Miss Stuart, at that time living in southeast London, and her solicitors here, when she first thought of buying the property. She was worried that, as a disabled lady, she could find herself hostess to military officers. All these fears were groundless, and she purchased the house and surrounding land in 1944. Disabled by polio as a child, and confined to a wheelchair, she nonetheless took a great interest in Minchinhampton life, allowing her grounds to be used for fetes in the late 1950s and donating the field behind the house to the Sports Association. Upon her death, she bequeathed "The Old Rectory" to the Gloucestershire Association for the Disabled, who renamed it "Stuart House"

This last phase in the history of the house has shown much improvement and enlargement. Both the main buildings, and others in the grounds, were made fully wheelchair accessible, and the gardens to the south remodelled for disabled gardeners. Following many fund raising events, including the Country Fayre, a large assembly hall and kitchen facilities were built, enabling activities such as wheelchair dancing to be taught. For many years a fete was held in June, when the Parochial School pupils would display maypole dancing, and the new hall was a polling station for local and national elections. A funding crisis within the G.A.D. led to a reappraisal of the role of Stuart House, but it still provides services to the disabled. Sadly, the formal gardens east of the house were removed to provide parking for the physiotherapy department, but the west approach to the house remains much as it must have been at the start of the C20th. This local landmark shows signs of its evolution since completion in 1721, but remains an important feature of the built environment of the town of Minchinhampton.

## **PARK TERRACE OR “THE BUILDINGS”**

**Mrs. Diana Wall**

There is no difficulty in dating this long terrace of houses – on each end gable is a date stone reading 1833. The cottages were built for David Ricardo, of Gatcombe Park, who probably employed the architect George Basevi, who had worked on his own house. David Verey, in the “Buildings of England” series described the architecture – *“it has segmental-headed windows and rusticated pilasters, but gabled wings with Tudor windows and ball finials.”* A long-time resident described the interiors with *“kitchen, a big larder, scullery, bedrooms and a large attic”*. Of the fourteen houses the two at each end were the largest.



A rather damaged photograph of “The Buildings” which shows clearly the signpost at the junction with the lane to Burleigh (now Dr. Brown’s Road)

Many of the workers from “The Buildings” would walk to the Gatcombe Estate by way of the footpath that emerges at the junction of New Road. This passed below the level of the Lammas grounds, so that the view from that house would not be spoiled. There is a story that soon after Park Terrace was built, a member of the Ricardo family passed in a carriage and saw washing hanging in front of the cottages, as this was the only garden at that time. The sight offended their sensibilities, so rear gardens were provided for each of the tenants; these long rear plots can clearly be seen on a map.

During the C19th the large iron double gates at each end of the terrace allowed access for horses and carts, and all deliveries were made in this way. Until the coming of piped water, this vital commodity was obtained from a well 100 ft. deep outside cottage number 6. Several laundresses lived in the cottages at one time; their water was drawn from this well, as was that for the pigs raised in the rear gardens, in addition to all the domestic needs.

The Canter family lived for many years in Park Terrace, and before he died Frank Canter recorded some of his memories of life there: *“There were people of various callings living in the row ... a grocer in the end house, wood workers, engineers, carpenters and cloth workers, a plasterer, a tiler, gardeners, police and the blacksmith. He had his blacksmith’s shop there, and the horses and ploughs and all went up there for shoeing and mending. .... He used to drink very well and not wisely at times; a good tradesman but he would throw up his work in the middle of the morning and say to the tortoise (he had an enormous tortoise) “Come on down to the Trumpet”. He’d sit there drinking for hours, then go home and the tortoise followed him – I think the tortoise got there first!”*

New Road was built to replace the steep turnpike road up Well Hill, and the cottage at the junction with Windmill Road was once also an inn. The retaining wall at the front of Park Terrace has been rebuilt to allow widening of the road for modern traffic. Another concession to the motor age has been the provision of garages to the rear of the cottages, but the approach past the front doors still had the appearance of a more leisurely age. In 1983 a party was held by the residents to celebrate 150 years of Park Terrace – it is sure to be celebrating again in 2033!



The narrow junction between Windmill Road and New Road

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Avening	44	Fox & Goose	8	Nailsworth	<b>31ff</b>	Walls Quarry	30
Avening	45	Friday Street	41	Nailsworth	40	Water Lane	31
		Friday Street	44	Nelson Inn	30	Well Hill	17
Blue Boys	<b>1ff</b>	Friday Street	45	Nelson Inn	31	West End	2
Bownham	26			New Road	<b>48</b>	Windmill Rd.	<b>48</b>
Box	23	Gatcombe	19			Woodchester	20
Box	24	Gatcombe	47	Old Common	2	Woodchester	32
Brimscombe	12	Glebe	10	Old Common	8	Woodchester	35
Brimscombe	30	Glebe	44	Old Common	<b>10</b>	Yew Tree Inn	<b>30ff</b>
Bristol	2	Great Park	12				
Burleigh Ct.	41	Great Park	<b>40</b>	Park Terrace	42		
Butt Street	2			Park Terrace	<b>47ff</b>		
Butt Street	<b>6</b>	Halfway Inn	26	Parsons Court	44		
Butt Street	8	Ham Mill	26				
Butt Street	9	Ham Mill	28	Rodborough	2		
Butt Street	11	Ham Mill	29	Rodborough	28		
Butt Street	<b>40</b>	H'ton Fields	9	Rodborough	35		
Butt Street	44	H'ton Green	27	Rodborough	37		
Butt Street	45	High Street	41	Rose Cottage	15		
Butt Street	<b>46</b>	Hollies	26	Roundabouts	31		
		Hollybush	38				
Chalford	1	Horsley	20	School	21		
Chalford	7	Horsley	23ff	School Road	38		
Chapel Lane	9	Hyde	2	Scout Hut	41ff		
Church	12	Hyde	12	Ship Inn	30		
Church	<b>13</b>			Ship Inn	31		
Church	16	Institute	<b>36ff</b>	St. Francis	18		
Church	19			St. Francis	22		
Church	22	Ladder	<b>26ff</b>	Stroud	2		
Church	44	Lammas	<b>16ff</b>	Stroud	7		
Cirencester	2	Lammas Park	<b>18</b>	Stroud	31		
Coigne	45	Lammas Park	22	Stroud	33		
Coigne	<b>46</b>	Library	38	Stroud	34		
Common	2	Longfords	19	Stroud	37		
Common	14	Longfords	22	Stroud	40		
Common	15	Lower Island	11	Stuart House	<b>44ff</b>		
Common	16	Lower Island	12	Summersfield	9		
Common	40			Summersfield	1		
Cotswold Cl.	41	Manor House	19				
Cowcombe	1	Manor House	45	Tetbury St.	8		
Cowcombe	7	Market House	12	Tetbury St.	36		
Crown Inn	11	Market Sq.	<b>11</b>	Tetbury St.	37		

Numbers in **bold**  
indicate an  
illustration