

## President's Introduction



It's been a very busy time for the History Group! Talks have been arranged, displays put on, and we have the ongoing task of sorting out the group's collections. On that note, please look at page 8 where you will find some exciting news about the housing of our collections.

I thank you for all your support and being so patient while we build up the History Group.

This will be the 1<sup>st</sup> of our monthly newsletters, and all members are welcome to submit articles, letters and photos to the editor whose details can be found above. They would need to be submitted by the end of the first week of the month the newsletter is published in which for May's edition would be the 7<sup>th</sup> of May. The newsletter would then be published around the middle of the month and initially would be sent out to members only before been put on our website.

This is an important step forward in rebuilding the group to bring it back in line with how things existed before the pandemic.

Please do use our website and the Facebook pages we own. These are constantly evolving. The links are: -

[Minchinhampton Local History Group – Minchinhampton Local History Group](#)

[\(20+\) Minchinhampton Memories | Facebook](#)

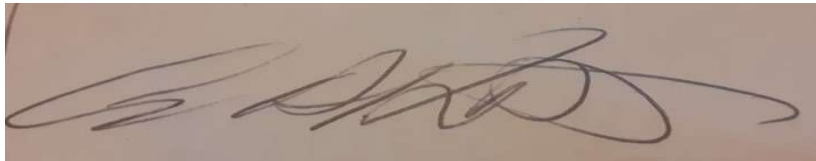
[\(20+\) Minchinhampton WW1 Great war | Facebook](#)

[\(20+\) Minchinhampton WW2 | Facebook](#)

[\(20+\) Minchinhampton area Graves | Facebook](#)

Look out for event posters which will soon appear in Minchinhampton and the surrounding areas. Members will always have priority for any tickets available.

There is an event on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. Tickets are now available for cash in the Market Stores and can be purchased online. Please just put the date of the event and your name on the reference and tickets will be reserved for you.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Gary Atkinson'.

Gary Atkinson

President – Minchinhampton Local History Group

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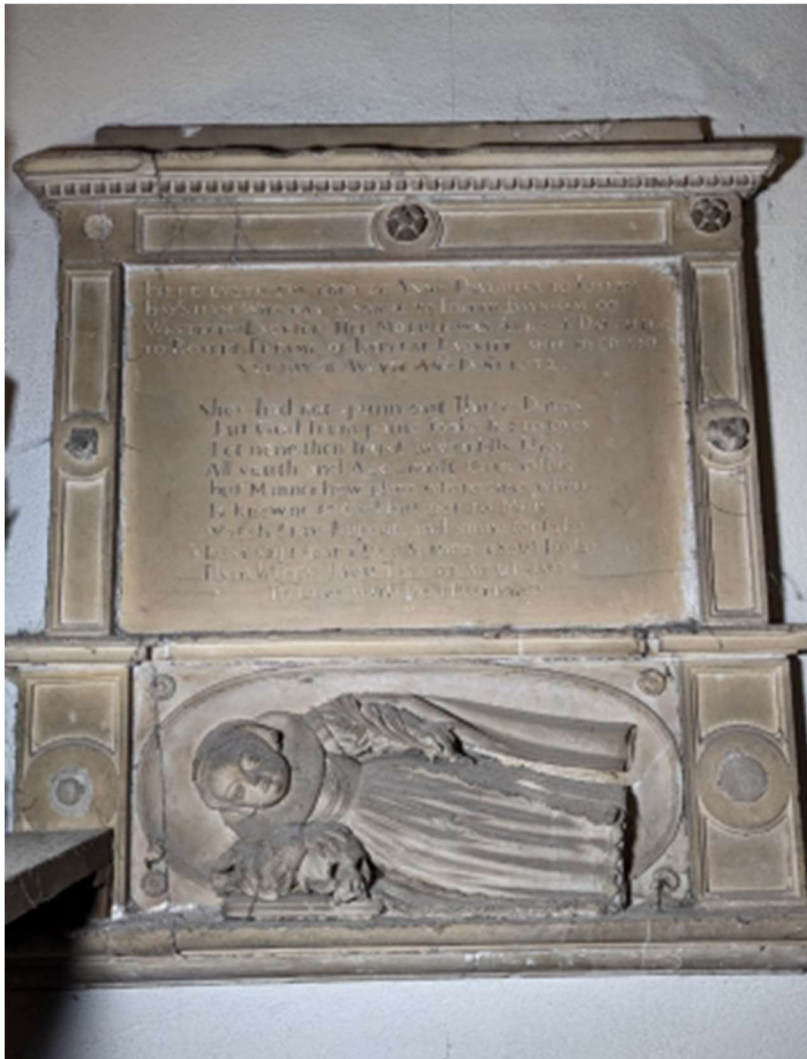
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## THE MOVE THE MEMORIAL APPEAL

By John Mounsey



Although in its new incarnation, the Minchinhampton Local History Group has only been active since the middle of last year, we are already beginning to take on a positive role in the wider community.

A good example of this is the decision by our committee to spearhead the appeal to raise money for the relocation of the Baynham Memorial.

This campaign aims to ensure that a nationally important monument is rescued from obscurity and made available for future generations to enjoy.

The story began in November last year when the organ in Holy Trinity

was dismantled prior to its restoration by specialist company Messrs Goetze and Gwynn. As the pipes were removed, a wonderful hidden treasure was revealed – an elaborate seventeenth-century memorial to a child, Anne Baynham, who died in infancy in 1632 having ‘not spunn out thirtie days’ as its inscription tells us.

Carved from local limestone – as are many other monuments in Holy Trinity – the memorial is located at a height of approximately 6 metres from the floor. A description of the interior of church by H E Relton in 1842, states that the monument was originally in the chancel and therefore must have been moved during the major rebuilding that followed.

The reason for its present location remains something of a mystery. An earlier antiquarian, Bigland, records an accompanying carved coat of arms, which is now lost.

While memorial monuments of this type can be found in many churches, it is extremely unusual – perhaps unique – to find such a memorial to a single infant. One can only surmise that poor little Anne must have held some special significance for her bereaved parents and one can imagine their pain as they ordered this elaborate monument to the memory of their dead baby.

The effigy of Anne on the memorial shows her as a small child dressed in a cap and nightgown with a ruff. She is lying down on her right side and wears a string of beads around her neck. Under her right hand is a skull resting on a cushion, a macabre image to modern eyes, but a familiar memento mori motif to the people and the artists of the time. She holds a quill pen in her left hand, the significance of which is not immediately apparent.

Overall, it is a skilful piece of work and although unsigned (as far as one can see) the sculptor was very possibly a well-known local man called Samuel Baldwin, sometimes described as being from Stroud but who actually hailed from Lypiatt. Baldwin's work would have been known to the Baynham family as he had earlier produced a monument to the pirate Henry Brydges (who died in 1615) in Avening Church and there are numerous examples of his work in Gloucester Cathedral.

An MLHG committee member was told about the discovery of the monument by John Gerard, a Holy Trinity stalwart, and suggested to the committee that preserving the monument for posterity was exactly the sort of thing that a society specifically dedicated to every aspect of local history should be involved with. His suggestion was swiftly agreed upon and the 'Move the Memorial' appeal was formally launched at a recent talk given in the Market House about the Victorian Girls' School that was once located in Hyde Court.

Minchinhampton Local History Group has now taken up the challenge of raising the necessary funds to enable the Baynham Memorial to be removed from the wall in the choir vestry and repositioned in the main body of the church where both worshippers and visitors can see it and enjoy it in perpetuity.

To do this, we need to raise around £4,000. This sum must be in the bank by September because we have been advised that alterations to the fabric of a church need diocesan Faculty Approval, a tedious bureaucratic process that can take considerable time. We must do our best to beat the deadline which will be at the end of November/early December when the organ is due to be reinstated!

We shall be organising various fund-raising events between now and then, but if you think you'd like to help financially straightaway, please contact our President, Gary Atkinson on [gamlhg@outlook.com](mailto:gamlhg@outlook.com) with a note of your name, contact details and how much you'd like to contribute (any contribution, large or small very warmly welcomed). He will send you details of the bank account into which your contribution will be paid.

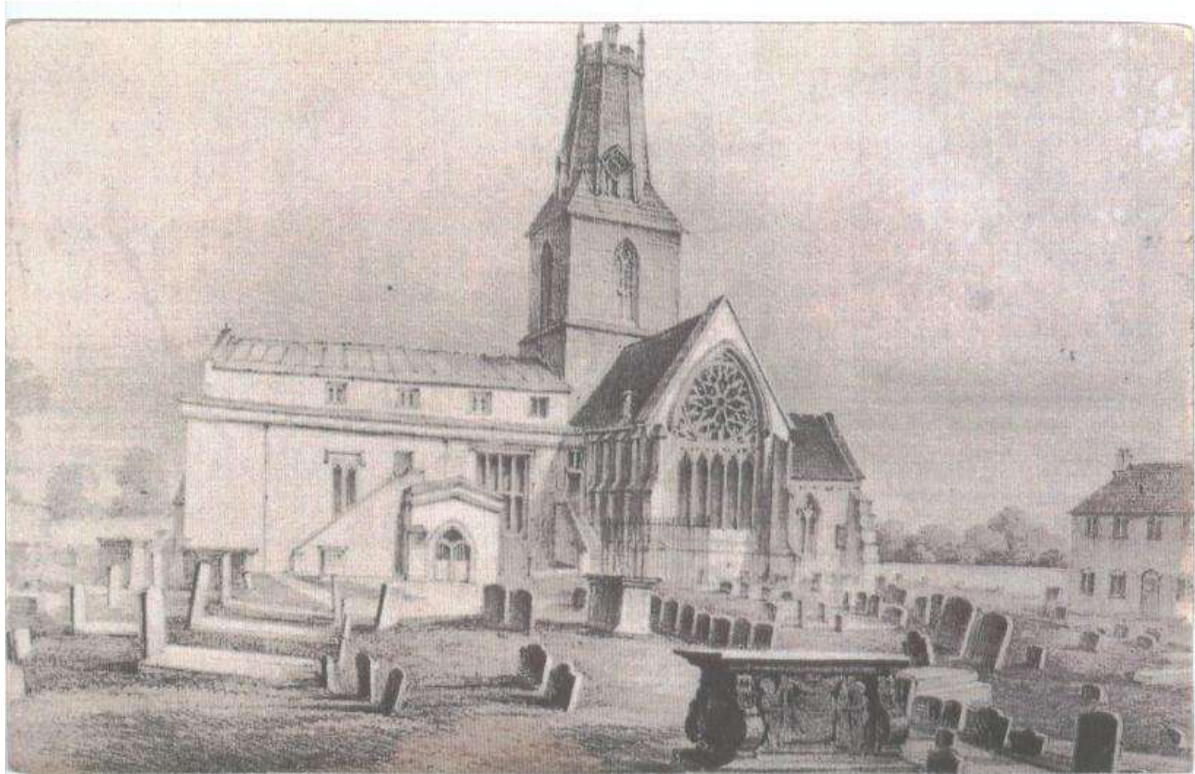
Receipts will be issued for all funds received.

Thank you, in advance, for your support!

Our next talk on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May

The Graveyard Fever Controversy 1846-7

By Brian Lett



In July 1846, a deadly fever broke out in Minchinhampton. It raged until December, and sixteen people died. Many more were infected but recovered. The fever was diagnosed as “typhus fever”, and was clearly what we would describe in modern times as typhoid fever, often contracted from foul water. The Rector, the Reverend Charles Whately, M.A., lost his wife and daughter to the fever in September.

At the end of September, a Committee for the Relief of the Sick Poor was set up, and a number of public meetings were held. The population of Minchinhampton was in a state of considerable fear. At one of the meetings, a local surgeon, Mr Daniel Smith, without any warning at all, stood up and made a prepared speech alleging that the fever was due to the rebuilding of Holy Trinity Church in 1842/3, and the disinterment of the remains of those buried there during the works on the church and graveyard. A pile of earth had been left in a nearby field, and Daniel Smith claimed that this, and other waste earth saturated with human remains, was the source of the fever. Those in charge of the works, the Patron and Lord of the Manor, David Ricardo, M.A., J.P. and the Reverend Whately, M.A., were accused of therefore being responsible for the



fever and the deaths which resulted – in the Reverend Whately's case, his own wife and child.

Mr Smith's allegations were rejected at the meeting, and he decided to report his theory to the Medical Officer of a London charity called the Health in Towns Association, a Dr Southwood Smith.

Probably for reasons of his own, Dr Smith decided to adopt and broadcast Mr Smith's allegation, and on Christmas Eve 1846, the National Press carried an article adopting Mr Daniel Smith's allegation that the fever was due to the mishandling of human remains from the graveyard, and that: "the Patron of the Living [David Ricardo], who is also the Lord of the Manor, together with the Rector, were the principal cause of the unfortunate church arrangement" and therefore the fever and deaths. Ricardo and Whately were now publicly on trial in the Press.

In January and February of 1847, the public controversy raged on. The talk will go on to detail the defence put forward on behalf of David Ricardo, the Reverend Charles Whately and others including William and Peter Playne, and "rebuttal evidence" presented by Arthur T Playne as late as 1915. There will also be "surrebuttal evidence" from a contemporary source.

At the end of the talk, it will be for the audience to decide where the truth lies.....

Sounds fascinating – buy your tickets and don't miss out!! All profits will go to the Baynham Memorial Fund – See below! [Editor]



Grave of the month

By Martyn Beaufort

A couple of weeks ago, the church carried out one of their periodic clear ups of the churchyard. In doing so, they used a jet wash, and this was used on some graves which led to sometimes long disappeared inscriptions seeing the light of day. To the South of the chancery for example this led to some words becoming discernible on a couple of ledger stones, and in the very corner a brass plate to someone who died in 1690.

As the “mapper” of the graveyard this has given me more work, but as far as I am concerned more of the same, please!

A grave at the front of the church was also jet-washed, and this led to the discovery of the below inscription. It dates to 1976, but uncovers an interesting character who lived in Minchinhampton: -



Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Hugh Loraine Bevan, C.B., M.V.O., K.B.E., D.S.O. served in the Royal Navy in both WW1 and WW2.

As a young naval officer he served on HMS Implacable, HMS Drake and HMS Aboukir. He was promoted to Sub-Lieutenant on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 1904, and completed a course at the Navy's Signal School.

He was therefore one of the first naval officers who was to deal with “wireless”, which started to be generally used in 1904 and onwards on Royal Navy ships.

Bevan was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on 31 December 1906.

He was Flag Lieutenant to Rear Admiral Wemyss of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron, conducting his wireless communications in the first months of the First World War.

He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Commander on 31 December 1914, and served in the Gallipoli campaign. He landed at Cape Helles as officer in charge of signal stations during the occupation of the peninsular. Bevan was also present at the evacuation of Suvla Bay and Anzac Cove.

From 12 August 1917, Bevan was providing wireless communication support for the Commander in Chief, Mediterranean, Vice-Admiral Gough-Calthorpe.

He was promoted to Commander on 31 December 1917. On 9 March 1918, he was moved to HMS Whitby Abbey to provide wireless services for the Otranto Barrage Force.

Captain on 31 August 1923, he commanded the light cruiser Birmingham in December 1924.

Bevan was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral on 25 August 1935 and was placed on the Retired List the following day.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War Bevan rejoined the Royal Navy in 1939. Between February 1940 and Italy's declaration of war on Britain in June of that year, he was Naval Attaché in Rome. From 1941 to 1942 he was Senior British Naval Officer, North Russia, before serving as Flag Officer-in-Charge (Belfast) until July 1945.



After retiring from the navy for a second time, Bevan served as a Deputy Lieutenant for Gloucestershire in 1946, and became a County Councillor for the county in 1949. He was made a County Alderman in 1952. The picture shows him presenting a scout award in 1948.



[Coat of Arms of Richard Bevan]

## An update on the Minchinhampton Local History Group's collections

By Brian Lett

**A HOME AT LAST:** Thanks to the generosity of the Minchinhampton Cotswold Club, we are delighted to be able to inform our members that our history collection has found a new home on the top floor of the Club in the High Street. On Sunday 7th April, we moved many of our documents, photographs, maps and pictures into rooms on the top floor of the Club. Hopefully fairly soon we will have gathered everything together there, the collection having been scattered around Minchinhampton over the past few years.

Please bear with us whilst we gather everything together and put it into good order. Our plan is that once this has been done, and we have been able to perfect the data base [which is out of date], we will be able to provide our members with far better access to the all information that we hold on a host of local subjects.

**THE 80 TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY** falls on 6th June. We were unable to book the Market House for that evening, and therefore will be holding a memorial evening on **FRIDAY 7 JUNE**. Our aim is to remember in particular the American troops who were camped in Minchinhampton Great Park in preparation for D-Day, and who then took part in the D-Day invasions. More information will be available in the next Newsletter. All our profits on 7th June will go to the Royal British Legion.