

THE
LOCAL HISTORY JOURNAL
OF
BACKWELL, NAILSEA,
TICKENHAM AND WRAXALL



Backwell West Town
Photograph from the M. J. Tower collection

Price £3.00

LOCAL HISTORY
GOSSIP - NEWS - RESEARCH



CONTENTS INCLUDE

NAILSEA FAMILIES IN AUSTRALIA: CONSERVATION & GOLDRUSH
TICKENHAM HISTORY PART 3 .
STONE CROSSES IN BACKWELL / WRAXALL ETC .
MIZZYMead FARM 1709 - LARGE PLAN AND SURVEY

Previously published by Nailsea & District Local History Society.

This ebook version, © The respective authors and Nailsea & District Local History Society, PO Box 1089, Nailsea BS48 2YP, has been made available in February 2009, so that an individual may download and read this document, for private research purposes only. It must not be reproduced or passed to a third party without written permission of the copyright holders

The Manfield Brothers and The Valley of the Shadow of Death.

By Peter Wright *from information* © Dan Webb.

James Samuel Manfield and his brother John Robert Manfield sons of George and Sarah Manfield were baptised at Holy Trinity Church Nailsea (JSM on 15 Nov 1829 & JRM on 29 Dec 1833). The family was recorded on the 1841 census as living in Nailsea Heath

George	Manfield	30
Sarah	Manfield	30
James	Manfield	11
John	Manfield	8
Mary	Manfield	5
Frederick	Manfield	2

In the 1851 census a Manfield family appears in Chelvey. James and Mary are still there as are George and Sarah but There is a James aged 21. George is 42 while Sarah is 46. Allowing for the rounding of ages in the 1841 census this is quite acceptable but as neither John nor Frederick is recorded I wonder whether this could be another family? It seems unlikely as Mary A Manfield is fourteen which fits well with the earlier census.

From Australia I have received the following among other information:-

Stories of big finds of gold in North Eastern Victoria, brought the brothers James and John Manfield to the Buckland Valley in 1854. They had been working on the Turon in New South Wales where they had become relatively experienced miners. Somerset born, the Manfield Brothers were glad to leave the heat of the inland plains for the cool valleys of the Victorian Alps. That year conditions on the Buckland were dreadful. Huge bushfires, followed by torrential rains, caused erosion and muddied the water, making it difficult to see specks of alluvial gold when panning. Disappointed the brothers climbed up Goldie's Spur to the top of Mount Buffalo. They camped at The Horn and spent some days exploring the Plateau and the Gorge. Finding no gold the Manfield boys returned to the Buckland Valley where they made enough to buy a property they called "Nailsea Farm" after their birthplace near Bristol, England.

Conditions were bad at the Buckland diggings. The water had cleared but lack of sanitation caused widespread sickness and fossickers named the area The Valley of the Shadow of Death. Disgruntled miners whispered of Ferdinand

Mueller, the botanist whose report on the Buffalo Plateau mentioned quartz veins in the granite. They speculated that this must be the source of the alluvial gold which once lay so thick on the bedrock of the Ovens River. Knowing the Manfield Brothers had once been there, a prospecting trip to the Plateau was organised." In 1856 James and John Manfield conducted a party of thirty miners to the top of Mount Buffalo and in the years that followed took many parties up this track.

This has been interpreted by some as the start of tourism on the mountain. However the gold rush was at its peak and it seems more likely that Mueller's report triggered the interest of experienced miners to discover where the alluvial gold was coming from. Mount Buffalo yielded no secrets, but the atmosphere was better than at the Buckland diggings where the growing hatred for the Chinese, who were now blamed for the outbreaks of typhoid fever and the highest death rate on the Victorian goldfields. Then word got out a rich gold strike in New Zealand, and the Manfield brothers quit Victoria for Maori Gully near Dunedin. In doing so they avoided riots which broke out on 6th July 1857 at Loudon's Flat in the Buckland Valley. Chinese escaping from the uprising are said to have sought refuge on the Buffalo Plateau where they perished from the cold. Twenty or thirty years later bones and pig tails were discovered. These gave Skeleton Gully its name.

The Manfield Brothers were homesick in New Zealand. The weather on the South Island was wintry; conditions were poor and when in 1860 the second Maori war broke out James and John hotfooted it back to Australia.

It was the year of the Kiandra gold rush near Cooma in southern NSW. Kiandra was the highest, toughest goldfield in Australia where the population peaked at ten thousand before dropping sharply with the onset of an early winter. Those who rushed there to make their fortunes were forced to leave or freeze to death.

By the time the Manfield brothers arrived Kiandra's population was down to four thousand. Among the 'stayers' was Mr and Mrs William Simpson and their daughters Jane and Margaret.

At Kiandra James Samuel Manfield bachelor and miner at the Ninety Mile Rush was swept off his feet by petite 20 year old dressmaker, Jane Robinson Simpson. Bill Simpson, Jane's father was not pleased. He considered Manfield too old for his daughter. She was a minor! He withheld his consent. The lovers

James and Jane threatened to elope until Dad approved a wedding in the District Registrars Office, Cooma on 17th November 1860. The newlyweds soon left cold Kiandra for the comparative comfort of the Buckland Valley.

While James wooed Jane his brother fell in love with her sister Margaret. Whether John returned to Buckland or whether he stayed behind to court Margaret is not clear but eighteen months later John Manfield married Margaret at the Wesleyan Parsonage, Beechworth. Also in 1862 on 22nd February at Lower Flat in the Buckland Valley, Jane Manfield gave birth to her first child Sarah Jane.

Still in the grip of gold fever the Manfield boys read of a major strike near Forbes on the Lachlan river in New South Wales "all the surplus population has left for the Lachlan or Otago" James and John Manfield had already tried their luck in New Zealand now together with Margaret Jane and her new baby they set off on the long cross country trek to the Lachlan River at the hottest time of the year. No wonder Jane fell ill.

The Lachlan diggings were neither happy nor profitable for James and John Manfield. After trouble nursing baby Sarah in the heat the child died. Heartbroken the Manfields made their way back to "Nailsea Farm" in the Buckland Valley where on 4th January 1863 Margaret Manfield gave birth to her first child Eliza. Still chasing their luck the brothers continued prospecting for gold, although in 1863 a J Manfield advertised in the Ovens and Murray Advertiser that he was making "headstones and tombstones"

Later in the year both families moved to Harrietville where they are said to have struck it rich. With money in their pockets and a confidence born of wealth the Manfield brothers applied for and got grants of Crown land in the Parish of Porepunkah. They continued to work their Harrietville goldmine until John became seriously ill. Both families came home to the Buckland Valley where on 17th August 1868 John Manfield aged 34 died of pleuro-pneumonia. His widow Margaret was left to raise three children Eliza 6, William 4 and Sarah 1. The two sisters Jane and Margaret now became very close and James appears to have lost his lust for gold turning his hand to farming and falling deeply under the spell of Mount Buffalo.

While the Manfield Brothers had been involved with searching for gold another individual from Nailsea had ventured forth in connection with the glassmaking trade and eventually arrived in Australia. The story of Thomas Brooks Junior

born in 1803 to his father Thomas Brooks senior a skilled craftsman of the Nailsea factory follows later.

Family History Part 1

Another Nailsea/Australia Connection

Mrs Joan Adams of [Redacted] Australia sent a letter to the Local Studies Librarian at Nailsea Library. Her letter eventually came from Nailsea Library to the editor.

"My grandfather **Edward BROOM**, his wife and other members of their family left Nailsea for Australia in 1856. My main interest is not so much a family tree as the story of my forebears' lives and circumstances immediately before they emigrated. The men of the family which came to Newcastle Australia were coalminers. Was there an unemployment problem at that time? Would you know if there was an organisation which arranged an "assisted immigration scheme"? Anything at all that would help me understand the conditions that would make these young people leave their homes and undertake the perilous journey to Australia would be appreciated.

Reference to the article in Pennant 20 shows that there was such a scheme at a time when Edward Broom may have left. He may even have been in the group referred to. I have written to Mrs Adams and await her reply.

Phyllis Horman has sent me the following which appeared in a family history magazine several years ago.

It was taken from "Hue and Cry" 4th July 1818 and sent to her by one of her correspondents.

WANTED

"**John Vowles**, 9th Lancers from Wraxall Somerset, Shoemaker (*no age given*) 5ft 7in, slender, small head and face, hazel eyes, light eyebrows, short nose, small mouth, short neck, brown hair, square shoulders, long arms, large legs, proportionate hands and small feet. Deserted 17th June 1818, supposed gone to Bristol wearing stable jacket, flannel waistcoat and grey over trousers"

The Brooks family - Glassmakers & Businessmen

by Mrs Faith Packard

Edited by Peter Wright

"Nailsea a small Somerset village gave its name to what have gradually gained recognition as some of the most light hearted glass creations in the British Isles. Colour was the exciting feature of the new cheap glass produced between 1795 and 1873 in the Nailsea Glasshouse started in 1788 by Robert Lucas, Bristol cider maker owning a bottle glass factory in Corn Street who wished to expand his facilities for making cheap bottles of the new cylindrical shape convenient for stacking which were then becoming popular. This Nailsea Glassware, opaque, translucent, milk white, yellow, salmon and rose pink, in greens and blues, is patterned with waves, streaks and zig zags in contrasting colours, or with stripes and threads of colour. A wide range of trinkets, such as gimmels, bellows, salt and smelling bottles, coloured balls, walking sticks, riding crops, pipes, coaching horns, cheap love tokens and fairings of many kinds produced at Nailsea from 1793 proved so popular and sought after that they were quickly copied by glassmen in Sunderland, Newcastle, Stourbridge, Warrington, Alloa and elsewhere. Products of all these factories were so much alike that it proved in practice impossible to distinguish between them; collectors refer to them all under the generic term "Nailsea".

Because of their popular origins the artistic merits of Nailsea Glass have only slowly become recognised. H.J. Powell, a great glass authority, referred to them as recently as 1926 as "entirely devoid of artistic, technical or historic merit". W.A. Thorpe of the Victoria and Albert Museum was so scornful of their artistic pretensions that he refused to include them in his classic work "The History of English and Irish Glass" published in 1929. Influenced perhaps by America, where interest in the very similar Southern New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Mid Western glass of the same period has always been high, collectors this side of the Atlantic have come to have high regard for the Nailsea style which is now recognised as an important branch of English peasant art.

The brain behind the idea of making coloured glassware out of cheap bottle glass was Edward Homer, celebrated Midlands enamel painter, whose trade was to the Continent was sadly affected by the unrest of the French Revolution. Having an expert knowledge of the behaviour under firing of the metallic oxides he saw that colourful domestic ware could be made very cheaply by decorating bottle glass, then taxed at a much lower rate than flint glass. He approached Lucas and convinced him of the soundness of the proposal. Lucas formed a

partnership with three other local men to exploit Homer's ideas and skills and they were immediately successful. ⁽¹⁾ This Nailsea glass was hollow-ware based on shapes blown in open top moulds and then manipulated by hand tools. It was designed for the popular market, to be bought by the increasing number of more affluent working class families wishing to have bright coloured table-ware and wall ornaments in their otherwise drab homes at prices they could afford.

Dublin Museum has a fine display of "Nailsea Glass" comparable with that of the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery who was the first to collect and exhibit glassware so despised by 19th century connoisseurs."

(Editor - The above information accompanied the letter of 1982 and no attempt has been made to confirm that the displays referred to can still be seen.

⁽¹⁾The comment about the commercial use of the ideas of Homer are interesting and worthy of further investigation. No evidence of production of these items has yet been found.

The notes continue:-)

There have long been exchanges of workers and products and workers between the glasshouses on either side of the Irish Sea. Many Irishmen came over to work in the Nailsea Factory and Englishmen were prominent in Irish glass manufacture. W. A. Thorpe considers Mr Hill of Stourbridge glassman who took some of his workers to Waterford in 1785 as the real founder of the Waterford factory. Benjamin Edwards the Bristol glassmaker set up the Drumrea factory in 1771, and there were others.

One of these was my forebear Thomas Brooks Junior born in 1803 to his father Thomas Brooks senior a skilled craftsman of the Nailsea factory. Robert Lucas Chance, who had learned glassmaking under his father and uncles at Nailsea, took Thomas to Birmingham when he succeeded to the famous Spon Lane Glasshouse there. Then Thomas, with his young wife and children was sent to Dublin to sell the Birmingham window glass there. His drive and business acumen soon produced a thriving concern and he then set up as a glass merchant on his own. Over the succeeding 150 years his descendants continued the business with great success. Thomas's glass merchant son Maurice Brooks, Liberal M.P. for Dublin 1874/1875 and Lord Mayor of Dublin set up branches of the family business in Walsall and London. His grandson Sir Maurice Edward Dockrell, son of Thomas's daughter Anne Morgan Brooks and her husband

Thomas Dockrell, J.P. was M.P. for the Rathmines Division 1918/1922. The firms of Brooks Thomas & Co and Thomas Dockrell Sons and Co. were carried on by descendants.

After the death of his first wife Louise Avery, Thomas left their children in Dublin and moved to America where he married again and fathered four more children to carry on the Illinois glass business he founded there. His younger son Henry (my great grandfather) moved to London and became chairman of the successful glass business founded there by Maurice Brooks, trading in London and Melbourne Australia under the name Brooks Robinson Pty.

The success story of Thomas Brooks Junior and his descendants which started in Nailsea would be unsensational nowadays but in the horse and cart and sailing ship era it was remarkable. My grandfather Harry Wilkinson Brooks in the 1880s travelled by sailing ship with his wife and young family every two years to look after his interests in Melbourne. I can remember in 1929 as a child of ten visiting the showrooms in Collins Street where the modern inverted shopfronts had been installed and were greatly admired."

At this point the following page of the story is missing. The following details have been gleaned from other documents including letters and cuttings from "Brooks Robinson Bulletin July 1954" and the privately published "Our Family History - Brooks".

Brooks Robinson Bulletin - July 1954

The picture is truly rural although it happens to be one of the busiest streets in Melbourne today - Elizabeth Street looking north from Flinders Lane. The period was 1860 when Brooks Robinson was established in premises shown on the left of the picture. In 1909 the two story building made way for the imposing structure which when this picture was taken had just received its centenary face treatment.

A small advertisement for window glass, inserted by Henry Brooks "father of the firm" and appearing daily in the "Argus" at about the time of the Eureka Stockade seems to be possibly the birth cry of one of the few century old business houses still actively serving the public in Melbourne today.

"SHOP FRONTS. Thick Sheet Window Glass of 21, 26, 32 & 42 oz. to the super foot, in sizes 60 x 32, 50 x 35, and under, of superior quality particularly

adapted for Shop Fronts as a less expensive substitute for plate glass. Henry Brooks 13 Stephen Street, between Flinders St. and Flinders Lane".

The Bulletin goes on to set the scene for the founding of the firm.

"Discovery of gold in Victoria in 1850 and 1851 led, directly and indirectly, to any sudden changes in the mode of life for the colony and prepared the way for the great progress that has since been made. The sudden departure for the diggings of most of Melbourne's tradesmen, clerks, shopkeepers, labourers and others brought business almost to a standstill. At the same time there started an unprecedented influx of people from overseas which sent population figures soaring.

Among those newcomers were some with sufficient vision to foresee that providing for the needs of this ever increasing population could be more profitable than fossicking for the yellow metal. One in this category was a young Irish commercial traveller who left his brother's Dublin establishment when the gold call came and arrived in Melbourne in 1852.

Of Henry Brooks it is not recorded that he searched for gold in the hill and gullies. Instead he chose to fill a position in a Melbourne business left vacant by a departing prospector. From this vantage point he surveyed the scene for the next two years.

In this period he saw the return to the city of many disappointed folk whom luck had not favoured and he correctly reasoned that in the years just ahead building activity would greatly increase and there would be a great demand for goods related to that industry.

Choosing to import paints, wallpapers and window glass Henry Brooks opened his business in 1854. Many businesses were founded in Melbourne in those far off golden days and it is interesting to pause for a moment to glance back at what was news in that particular year.

Here he mentions many Australian events but continues to list overseas events viz.

Overseas the Crimean War was in progress and Queen Victoria opened the Crystal Palace. Japan signed treaties with Britain and USA permitting for the first time trade with the world beyond her shores. In America the rivalries of North and South were building that led seven years later to the Civil War.

Henry Brooks first rented premises at 13 Stephen Street now long since renamed Collins Place. His shop was between Flinders Street and Flinders Lane facing what is now the Herald Office. Here for 6 years the business grew and prospered and in 1860 a move was made to a two storey building in Elizabeth Street on the site still occupied today by Brooks Robinson Ltd.

In 1863 Henry Brooks took into partnership one Edward G Robinson and thus the name of Brooks Robinson was established in Melbourne.

Mrs Packard goes on to say

"My Grandfather Harry Wilkinson Brooks was head of the firm until his death in 1944.

The firm was taken over by another firm called Email in Melbourne as both my grandfather and his partner had lost their sons in the Great War and there was no one left to carry on the business."

(Editor - The above information was sent to me by Mrs Faith Packard following a telephone call I made to her.

By a strange coincidence one of the speakers at a Local History Society meeting mentioned that when he worked for a glass firm in Bristol a letter had been received from a lady in London who was descended from a family that had set up a company in Australia. He let your editor have a copy of the information and I telephoned the number. As 16 years had passed since the letter had been written I was not too hopeful and was very pleasantly surprised to find Mrs Packard answering my call. The story which follows is based on the papers she sent me. Any errors in interpretation or misleading assembly of data are mine.)

Corrections to edition No 20 - With the editor's apologies

Readers may have noticed the newspaper extract shows 1927 as the correct year of John Thomas Attwell's death and not 1917 entered in the text near the foot of Col. 1 on p14. In connection with the same source of information I am reminded that several photographs that I attributed to Sid Rowe were in fact taken by John White's father Albert White who was then living in Brockway.

September 1866

Robbery at Nailsea

Frederick Caple was charged with stealing a gun belonging to Mr Davis of the Royal Oak, Nailsea. The prisoner had been in the service of the prosecutor but left a few days previously, when he returned to fetch his clothes. After he had left, Mr Davis missed his gun from the malt room and obtained a search warrant with which P.C. Chamberlain visited the home of the prisoner's father at Wrington, and found the gun hidden under straw in an outhouse. The prisoner who had been previously convicted, was committed for trial at the next Quarter Sessions.

Militaria

Summerell Family WW1

by Richard Cornish

I have medals for Charles James Summerell who was in the Nailsea R.E. except that he does not seem to have served with them in France. I note he was a Blacksmith and that his father was A Summerell who was the village blacksmith in Nailsea 1915/1916 and who received written appreciation from the War Dept. for the 1550 shoes he had made for mules and the hundreds he had made for horses. At that time the Landlord of the Bird in Hand was W. Summerell.

(Ed. If the many Summerells in the area care to provide more information about the family that played such a large part in the history of the village the Society will be pleased to publish it)

The Lock family WW1

information from Richard Cornish

The Bristol Times and Mirror dated 15th January 1916 includes pictures of the Backwell and Nailsea men serving in the armed forces. *(Ed. Unfortunately the quality of the photocopy precludes publishing it here.)* Among the persons shown are Charles Lock R.E. and Sappr. W. H. Locke R.E. *(Ed. The "e" is incorrect)* i.e. the William Henry Lock who was mentioned in Pennant 20.

I have also found an incomplete list of men serving in the 2nd Wessex Div. R.E. and it includes no less than 5 Locks.

Lock Sapper C H (Charles Lock from Backwell?).

Lock, Sapper W H (see above)

Lock, Sapper R S

Lock, Driver, L A

Lock, Driver, R S

Where the other three come from I do not know except that it is not Nailsea, Backwell, Portishead, or Yatton. I suspect Weston as they had Wessex R.E. based there. There is also a Sapper Ralph Lock from Nailsea who served with the S.M.R.E (South Midland Royal Engineers - a lot of that unit was based in Bristol).

Your editor recently saw a war time notice in the German Underground Hospital at Meadowbank, St Lawrence Jersey CI to the effect that:- John Lock had been arrested and imprisoned for being in possession of Radio Equipment and for spreading BBC war news!

Robert Lock was in the Bedminster Union Workhouse 1891 census:- Inmate Single aged 92 born at Nailsea. Lunatic Was he was suffering from Senile dementia?

Family History Part 2

These last few months have seen an amazing flow of information from across the world. Two families have been mentioned before viz. Manfield and Brooks and they form the background to two earlier articles in this edition. We come first to:-

Mr Grant Nurdin replied to a letter sent to him by the editor who had noticed his interest in the WEDMORE family (advertised in the Genealogical Research Directory for 1998). He says that he has in his possession the family bible of Samuel Wedmore and his wife Matilda Price. He also mentions that at one time Norman Wedmore of Sydney Australia held the family bible of Joseph Winstone Wedmore and his wife Eliza Harriett Payne.

I am still trying to help him with regard to information regarding Sarah mother of Samuel, all we know is that she was born in Portbury. In the censuses of 1871 & 1881 she was described as a seamstress or tailoress living in Samuel's cottage in Wraxall.

Mrs Mary Everett wrote about the LIGHT and HITCHMAN families and also referred to SPERRIN and WILKINS. Strangely at more or less the same time I heard from John Brain who sent me information about a James Sperrin. (see page 38)

James SPERRIN who is the subject of the presentation mentioned below died on 7th January 1891 aged 79 and he and his wife's grave is still to be seen in the old churchyard. The name SPERRIN goes back many years in Backwell (there was more than one family of the name) and our earliest gravestone commemorates a member of the family, viz:-

HERE LYETH THE BODY OF HARRIET SPERRIN, LATE WIFE OF THOMAS SPERRIN WHO DECEASED THE 7 DAY OF MAY ANNO 1628.

It is a small stone, deeply incised, near to another Sperrin box tomb, on the left hand side of the main entrance to the parish church.

John Brain was also able to supply the following information:-

1769 July 4	L Thomas Wilkins Morgan Esq of St George & Mary Thompson sp otp
1784 Apr 12	B William Pearce (Lab) and Mary Wilkins otp
1822 Dec 22	John Raines otp and Mary Wilkins otp
1671 May 10	Francis Parsons and Eleanor Hitchman
1822	William Hitchman and Harriet Vowles

"A Short History of the Village of Tickenham"

by Eleanor M James & Members of the Women's Institute and published in February 1933.

Part 1 was published in Pennant 19

Part 2 was published in Pennant 20

Part 3 concludes the extracts

The Church

Now we come to the greatest glory of the village, its Church. Little of the earlier Saxon Church remains, the present building shows work of various periods from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries. It consists of Chancel and South Chantry (Bave Chapel), Nave and two Aisles, the west end tower carrying six bells, and a South Porch.

The very graceful Tower was restored in 1878, and has figures in four niches to illustrate the story of the patron saints, S.S. Julietta and Quiricus, who were martyred at Tarsus AD 304. The four year old boy was torn from his mother's arms (Julietta), and on declaring that he too was a Christian, was dashed to death by the Roman Governor Alexander.

Two other exterior features are specially notable - a turret for the Sanctus Bell over the Chancel arch, and a "Scratch Dial" on the south east angle.

Of the interior very much might be said. To mention some of the most unusual features only, the low Norman Chancel Arch is certainly one of the oldest parts. Above this the rood loft once hung; its entrance doorway and tiny priest's hagioscope piercing the wall are quite conspicuous.

Three fine recumbent effigies, upon a long stone bench beneath the N Aisle windows, commemorating two knights in armour and a lady, apparently of the reign of Henry III. They are considered to represent Roger Fitz Nicholas (d. 1230) and his son, Nicholas (d1261). The lady may be Wentlyan, wife of the former and mother of Ralph of Tickenham.

There are some beautiful bits of old stained glass in the tracery of several windows; one is most uncommon, the subject a crucifixion; the wood of the cross is bright green in colour.

Pottery, made and presented by the famous amateur potter, Sir Edmund Elton, of Clevedon Court, is in the Sanctuary as candlesticks, cross, vases and pillars to the altar.

The east window was filled with stained glass at the worst period of that art, so is an eyesore which many would like removed.

Till 1827 there were square oak pews, and people used to bring candles to light the Church for evening service and stick them on the pews. Until the same date a gallery for musicians was across the Tower Arch. Two of the violinists are remembered. Between 1827 and 1861, when a harmonium was purchased, we presume that the singing was led by the Clerk from the three "decker."

Two years ago the organ was rebuilt and enlarged and is now a very good instrument. Unfortunately it forms a rather unpleasing block between the Chancel and the Bave Chapel. Electric light has lately been installed in a most satisfactory manner.

The six bells, some of them originally cast at Chew Stoke, are now silent, being unsafe for ringing; but it is hoped that they will peal again at Easter, after being rehung and quarter turned. (*There is a footnote here "This is now completed"*)

The Vicars of the parish can be traced back to 1311. As was usual in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, "Curates" were in charge of the parish, the last being Rev. J. B. Atkinson (1876-1887), during whose curacy £1600 was spent on the restoration of the Church.

The Rev. Joseph Byrchmore, the first resident Rector, compiled a history of the parish. The Parish Registers give us a glimpse of events such as the following:-

1802 £5 was paid towards expenses of "sleeping soldiers" called out to disperse the mob April 6th 1801.

May 1805 Parish fined over £7 for deficiency, 18 men not raised under order of Privy Council.

Entries are also made for sums expended on:-

Putting up "Whipping" posts and stocks and "Uping" stock (still existing near East gate to Churchyard, also for purchase of an "Ioren Chist".

The Pound was close to the Churchyard.

The Great War

Now a brief account of Tickenham's share in the Great War. A number of young men served in the army, the names of ten who paid the supreme sacrifice are recorded on a brass tablet in the Church and their memory is honoured each Armistice Day. One of the survivors who came back to live here is Major T.H. Roberts M.M., R.F.A., who as a Reservist was recalled from British Columbia and went to France as a gunner. He attained the rank of Major, and as O.C. brought home the remnant of his battery at the end of the War.

As in every English village, the women filled the gaps left by the men. Tending the cattle, milking and delivering fell to the lot of many wives and sisters, others worked the market gardens. Some were able to give their services to hospitals or canteens. All look back with gratitude that they could do something. Among other parochial activities, Girl Guides and Brownies are much to the fore. The W.I. celebrates its seventh birthday in February, and has taken a very active part in the life of the village; many useful reforms are due to its suggestion.

In conclusion let us have a picture of Tickenham today (*Editor NB February 1933*).

A wide, smooth, tarred road has taken the place of the narrow muddy or dusty lane that once connected the hamlets. Along it a steady procession of cars glide, with 'buses passing (in Summer) four times an hour to and from Bristol.

Attracted by the excellent social services :- Water, supplied by Clevedon Water Company; electric light available everywhere; post office and telephone in a central position, a pleasant tea garden at the West End, and a trim petrol station near the Batch - is it surprising that bungalows and houses are being built in every direction?

The population decreased from 427 in 1831 to 299 in 1891 and was then still decreasing. The census of 1921 shows 308 inhabitants; that of 1931 is not yet available, but is likely to show some increase.

Across the eastern part of the parish stride the stately pylons carrying electric power - surely a fitting type of the march of science! In November last a visitor to the Rectory arrived by autogyro, to alight in one of the wide meadows south of the road. Thus Tickenham is still "making history."

Editor - Remember this was written in 1933. Here I reproduce part of the note that appeared in Pennant 19.

No attempt has been made to amend the text because of later knowledge. The Society claims no rights over the text reproduced in Pennant from that booklet except to hope that those quoting from the text will acknowledge both sources.

Nailsea and the Archives of the Kemys Tynte family

by Julie Mansfield - North Somerset Archivist - Somerset Record Office

The survey book of the Kemys Tynte family's Somerset estates is a large, weighty, unwieldy volume (SRO ref DD/SAWH 218). Leather bound, the book shows many signs of wear and tear and would once have been an estate manager's indispensable tool. Now strengthened by conservation the volume has become a snapshot of the landscape as it was in 1709, revealing the names of tenants and the fields in which they worked within Nailsea, Wraxall, Backwell and Chelvey.

When wedding bells rang out for John Tynte of Chelvey and Jane Haswell of Goathurst in 1645 two major Somerset estates became inextricably linked. The expansion of the estate did not stop there, and when the family archives came up for sale 300 years later the estate papers related to land far and wide, from Devon to Berkshire, from Wiltshire to Rutland. As a result the collection was

carved up by many different purchasers and is now held in local record offices and private hands across the country.

The Somerset papers date from the 1360s and contain the usual deeds, correspondence and surveys relating to the land as well as various personal notes, memos and letters. As wealthy landowners, family members served on turnpike trusts, led local militia, championed regional improvements and were heavily involved in county politics. Such duties are reflected in their papers, which tell of local, national and even international issues: in the 1770s Sir Charles Tynte pondered the obstinacy of a few rebellious colonists causing trouble thousands of miles away in Boston.

But what about more local matters? What does this weighty volume tell us about Nailsea and the surrounding area? In 1709 surveyor Edward Grantham recorded the name and acreage of the family's properties, stating the tenant's name and sometimes providing an accompanying map. Within Nailsea the family's interest centred around Mizzymead Farm, then worked by John Bailey. Various plots forming the farm included Bullocks Ground, Dovers Down, Bakers Closs (Close) and Sawpit Ground, and a simply drawn map depicts the two main buildings of the homestead.

At Chelvey land worked by various tenants such as Thomas Coombes, Mr Foot, Thomas Wornall, Joseph Durband and Mary Crossman amounted to several hundred acres. A large map would have been required and was presumably drawn, but has unfortunately not survived with the book itself. A similar fate occurred to the Wraxall map, making it more difficult to locate the properties owned by John Parsons, Maurice Good and John King which included plots such as Oxhovel Tynning, Sladelands, Cowleys Grove, Nailers Closs, Orcombe Tynning and Fierney Closs. The family's land in Backwell was much smaller, amounting to only 19 acres which was rented to Thomas Parsons and Holdeth Reeds and contained various paddocks, yards, and strips scattered throughout the parish's east, west and middle fields.

The volume was certainly a working book. Alterations and notes were added for at least the next 50 years and many pages left blank, presumably for other entries to be added at a later date. Although it may have fallen out of use for many years, it has certainly retained its value in the information it holds. I am sure Mr Graham, compiling his survey in the early years of the 18th century would have been astounded to hear that his efforts were still being referred to as the 20th century comes to a close.

Survey of the Kemys Tynte family's properties in Nailsey Parish 1709

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>P</i>
William Coombes		2	A Homestead & Closs	1	3	09
		2	A piece at Sullagrove	1	3	28
		2	A Piece at Marys Grove	2	0	05
		2	A piece next to y ^c Moore	1	1	25
		2 ½	Bittle Mead	1	2	00
		½	A halfacre at Windleside	0	1	36
		1	One Acre in Newmead	0	3	05
		¼	A yard in Newmead	0	0	36
			Sum ^r :	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>24</u>
Mizey Mead farm	1	8	The Worthneys	7	2	33
John Baily	2	18	Mizey Mead	18	0	00
	3	3	Emshill	2	2	14
	4	4	Dovers Down	4	0	21
	5	5	Bakers Closs	4	3	00
	6	4	Barn Closs	4	0	08
	7	6	Long Hurn	5	1	34
	8	2	Little Hurn	2	0	30
	9	6	Sawpit Ground	5	2	32
	10	2	Homsted	1	3	00
	11	20 (	West Heath Ground	10	2	33
	12	(	East Heath Ground	8	3	15
Grounds lying disparate in y ^c Parish		3	Lower Gammons	3	0	05
		3	Jacklands	3	1	01
		2	West Church Ground	1	2	12
		5 (	East Church Ground in two parts	2	1	16
		(		1	3	03
		2 ½	A Ground at Smoky Hall	2	0	19
			A piece of Nailsey Field (
			Bryon lying on both sides (	0	2	36
		1	One Acre in middle of field Tucker east & John Taylor west	0	3	25
		0 ½	In y ^c Paddock Peter South & Golden North	0	1	30
		0 ½	A halfacre at White oaks	0	2	30
			Sum ^r :	<u>92</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>37</u>
Bullocks	1	4 (	Great Home Ground	3	1	23
	2	(	Homsted	0	1	31
	3	1	Little Home Ground	0	3	00
	4	4	Upper Gammons	3	3	05
			Sum ^r :	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>19</u>
			Sum ^r of y ^c pa	111	1	00

prepared by Edward Grantham - See also Plan "A Plotform of Mizey Mead Farm"

The headings to the table below are as follows:- 1. Main Property Name and tenant, 2. Number as appears on the map, 3. estimated acreage, 4. name of individual plots, ARP exact size in acres, rods and poles.

The Old Stone Crosses of Backwell, Nailsea, Tickenham and Wraxall

by Vince Russett, Archaeological Officer North Somerset Council

Charles Pooley, a surgeon who worked at the West of England sanatorium in the 1860s, lived at 1 Raglan Circus at the older and northern end of Weston-super-Mare. Starting in 1868 he wrote a book called *The Old Stone Crosses of Somerset* (Pooley 1877). In view its subject it is somewhat ironical that he did not know that his workplace was right over the site of the White Cross, on the boundary between Uphill and Weston parishes..

He retired to Cheltenham not long after the publication of his book, and a saddening letter now bound into the copy of his book in Nailsea library reveals that at the end of his life he was completely blind.

Pooley's declared aim was to educate and to preserve a record of the crosses, and by the standards of his time, he succeeded admirably. It is to the credit of Pooley and his colleagues that by and large, the monuments he wished might '*...thus continue to be cared for...*' are indeed being so cared for.

In following up Pooley's work I have made two complete photographic surveys of all the known surviving crosses in (pre-1974) Somerset. The first survey was in 1974-8 and the second in 1992-7. In the course of this work many more crosses, or historic records of former crosses, have come to light, some in the "*Pennant*" area (i.e. the main circulation area of this journal). Because more crosses have come to light it would be easy to draw the conclusion that the quality of Pooley's work leaves a lot to be desired, but this is too harsh a judgement.

Most of the new information about crosses has come from documents, and I would like to know more about crosses in the "*Pennant*" area. Has anyone come across references to boundary crosses, for example, in parish perambulations, or found the crosses being repaired by churchwardens?

The structures are still puzzling. Dating of the crosses is still difficult, Pooley's confident guesses are to be viewed with scepticism. All we can say is that the crosses seem to have been constructed largely between 1250 and 1550. To be more accurate will require scientific techniques such as carbon dating of original mortars, if such can be found.

The crosses come in many different shapes and sizes. Square and octagonal plans seem to be favoured, but the basic plan is of stone steps, with a socket stone supporting a tall shaft, at the top of which is placed a carved 'head' usually with a depiction of the crucifixion or other religious scene. Some crosses stand in churchyards, some in market places, some on boundaries, and a few at prominent road junctions.

The meanings and uses of the crosses for medieval villagers are even less clear. Pooley's Victorian imaginings are tinted by a very sentimental view of medieval religion, but there are clues in documents and in the structures themselves. The class of crosses on steps in churchyards are obvious centres for ritual, both formal and informal.

In modern times the formal use could be likened to the Remembrance Day Service where symbols of remembrance (the wreaths) are deposited. Were the mendicant friars (beggars) really heard to preach from the cross steps; did the children of the village gather to play on the steps, as they do now?

Their religious significance, indicated time and time again by the subject of the carvings on their heads, and occasionally on shafts and sockets, cannot be doubted, but whether this was the case with village crosses is not so clear.

Despite the description of a carved top to Shepton Mallet market cross in the eighteenth century, and the frustrating survival of part of the medieval head, at Cheddar, we have no definite surviving example of a cross-head from such a cross unless that on Crowcombe village cross is old..

What is almost certain is that all classes of cross have proved magnets as meeting places for gossip and small business ever since they were built and, to a certain extent, they still do. It is very likely, however, that the churchyard crosses represented a kind of common memorial to all those buried in the churchyard, when many had no or little other memorial.

Perhaps the crosses serve as centres to focus the social activities and other actions of the community, both living and dead.. Whether the proximity of settlements to crosses is significant is unclear: in most cases the settlements will have existed long before the cross arrived. Whether roads focused on centres of activity, later marked by crosses, or whether that activity grew up around the points where roads met is a complicated issue.

In the "*Pennant*" area, then, the following ancient crosses are at present (June 1998) known to exist, or have existed:

Backwell churchyard cross

This fine cross still stands, in good condition on the eastern side of the path to the south door of the parish church, on what is almost certainly the original site of the cross. Crosses were erected in this position, among other reasons, to be the final stopping place for Palm Sunday processions, before the walkers re-entered the church. Because of its developed architecture the cross is probably later medieval in date.

Rutter (1829) referred to the cross as '*...an ancient cross, remaining in almost its original state, mounted on four steps and a pedestal...'* and Pooley described it in more or less its modern condition, except that he described, and illustrated, a ball and sundial at the top of the shaft. This was replaced in 1962 with a new carved head in medieval style.

Lost for many years the old dial was found still lying in the churchyard in 1997. It can now be seen displayed in a niche in the re-constructed churchyard wall. This cross is one of the best preserved examples in the old county. The majority of the medieval stone work survives up to the arcaded abacus that supported the original head. It has been re-used to support the modern head. The cross is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Farleigh cross

George Master, in 1898, wrote: "*Farley ... in the yard of one of the most ancient cottages is the socket of a wayside cross .. it is probable that a village cross once stood in Farleigh ...*".

This would seem likely. Farleigh was renowned for its fair until recent times, and fairs and markets were very commonly held around crosses. The current whereabouts of the Farleigh cross are not known. Pooley does not record it.

Rose Cottage at Backwell Common, which was locally reputed to be the site of the cross was investigated by SMR workers in 1982 but no trace of it was found. The socket could still be lying somewhere in Farleigh, and discovering it would be a major find indeed.

Nailsea churchyard cross

To the left (west) of the south porch of Holy Trinity Church and about 1m from the wall of the church is the socket and shaft of a cross not recorded by Pooley.

The original site of the cross is not known but there is a round mound which might suit. This mound is to the south of the path which comes from the west side of the churchyard to the church door. This small remnant of a much larger cross, could have been moved some distance. It may have stood at a road junction nearby. It is a Grade II Listed Building, but undatable from its appearance.

Cross base at Nailsea Court

Immediately inside the entrance gate to Nailsea Court, at the end of the drive, and on the left hand side of the road, close to the barn, is the socket of a medieval cross. The mortise for the fitting of the stone shaft has been enlarged, possibly for use as a trough, and there is now a thicket of grass in it, which overhangs and hides the structure completely. There does not appear to be any record of a cross in the vicinity, and it may be that the stone was brought to Nailsea Court from elsewhere⁽¹⁾. Because Nailsea Court is a Grade I Listed Building, this cross is also protected as a Listed Structure.

Tickenham churchyard cross

Pooley drew this cross exactly as it looks today, in the position to which it had clearly been moved at some time. A drawing in the Piggott collection in the Somerset Studies Library in Taunton shows it in the same position in 1828.

It is just possible that a large rectangular stone with a pronounced drip-moulding, serving as the foot stone for the stone stile next to the gate of the churchyard, may have been one stone of the steps of Tickenham cross. It cannot be dated more accurately than 1250-1550.

Wraxall churchyard cross

Pooley pointed out that this cross is very similar to a group of others in North Somerset, such as the crosses at Dundry, Wick St Lawrence and Yatton. They all have an extra 'star' plinth inserted under the socket, and all have evidence in the form of worn holes or deliberate damage caused by the extraction of iron

pins, that they once had small statues around the base of the socket. These were probably destroyed along with the common slighting of crosses at the Reformation and again in the Civil War of the mid-17th century. It may be that all the crosses of this form are contemporary, and possibly even that they were produced in the same workshop. Like all the crosses in the "Pennant" area they are almost exclusively constructed of freestone from either Dundry or Doultong. Perhaps there was such a workshop in the medieval quarries - there are certainly cross sockets of a regular shape and size in the area around Doultong, implying perhaps that standard elements for crosses were made there.

On rather flimsy documentary evidence from Yatton, these crosses are thought to date from around 1500.

A new cross head decorated with floral ornaments has been added to the top of this cross since Pooley wrote. The new head was said to have been "...made up of old pieces...", and was restored in 1893, possibly by Sir Arthur Blomfield (Master 1900; DoE 1986). The pieces, if they really were old, may have been a gable cross or such like from the church. This cross is a Grade II* Listed Building.

Wraxall village cross

This structure (called by Pooley the Cross Tree) lost its immense and hollow elm during the Elm Disease of the 1970s - the tree was finally removed in 1977. The kerb of stones around it must have been the base of an immense structure, as each face is between 1.85 to 2.03m wide, but as the stone has no edge moulding, it may not even have been the basal step. Very little seems to be known of the history of this cross (Horman 1994), despite its central importance to the village as the site of the fair and market.

Below the kerb on the downhill side, a course of stone, re-benched with Pennant Sandstone slabs, may be the lowest step of the cross. This structure is a Grade II Listed Building.

Failand Cross, Leigh Down

A charcoal and wash drawing of 1788 by S H Grimm shows 'Failand Cross' somewhere on the Wraxall side of Leigh Down. The drawing (*in a small collection of Grimm drawings of the Failand ridge area in the Somerset Studies Library in Taunton*) shows one square step and a socket, with a stump of shaft about 30cm high in that. A couple of men have spread a picnic on its step.

The cross was probably a noted site for visits and walks, as Grimm has carefully marked in the features visible in the panorama of the Channel beyond. It should be possible to narrow down the position of this stone by using the panorama. A rather vague description of the picture is in Archer (1987), where it was described as '*..the battered remains of an ancient cross, hardly a cross at all, since only the base yet remained, desolate in an empty waste of fields..*'

Of course, the drawing illustrates the state of Leigh Down before enclosure, which explains the apparently 'desolate waste', and it seems quite likely to have been removed during the enclosure. It might be worth searching the hedges of the area. There is always the chance that the cross may simply have been left to be grown over or even dumped at the edge of a field when enclosure came.

Supposed cross at old Failand Inn, Wraxall

Another 1788 drawing by Samuel Grimm, reproduced in Archer (1987), shows the old Failand Inn which stood on the present site of Failand Lodge Cottages.

About 100m in front of the Inn standing by a wall topped with triangular slag-blocks is an object which looks very much like a cross socket and shaft. It seems to consist of a base, perhaps square, with an irregularly rectangular stone about 3m high projecting from it. The vertical scale may well be exaggerated.

However, a second drawing in the collection of S H Grimm in the British Museum (a copy of which was kindly shown me by Keith Gardner) shows this object in close-up, and reveals that it is in fact a locally famous landmark, a seat carved from the trunk of a tree, with a stone base built around it.

REFERENCES

Archer, R. 1987 Ghosts at Cock Crow: the story of Failand. Redcliffe Press, Bristol

Department of the Environment 1986 List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

Department of the Environment, London

Horman, P. 1994 The Wraxall cross tree. Pennant: the local history journal of Backwell, Nailsea, Tickenham & Wraxall 9: 1-2

Master, Rev G.S. 1898 Collections for a parochial history of Backwell. Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society (northern branch), Bristol

Master, Rev G.S. 1900 Collections for a parochial history of Wraxall. Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society (northern branch), Bristol

Pooley, C. 1877 An historical and descriptive account of the old stone crosses of Somerset. Longmans, Green and Co., London

Rutter, J. 1829a Delineations of the north western division of the county of Somerset, and of its antediluvian bone caverns, with a geological sketch of the district. Rutter, Shaftesbury

12th Century Mill at Tickenham

comment by Keith Gardner

In Pennant No 14 (page 5) reference was made to the Mill at Middleton, Tickenham, on the Land Yeo, and the possibility of its being Monastic in origin. The source seemed to be the Bristol Record Society's analysis of both the Manorial and the Obedientary Accounts of the Abbey of St Augustine in Bristol, (Sabin 1938: 1960)

Herein a mill referred to was postulated as being "on the Yeo". As it was known that Tickenham had been a holding of the Abbey it was assumed that the Middleton mill was the one referred to, and that the Land Yeo, an artificial waterway, had been cut in, perhaps, the 12th century

Work at the time on the Red Book of Berkeley by Canon David Walker (Walker 1996) however soon revealed that the entries in fact referred to a small and hitherto unknown settlement in Radford, on the border of Failand and Leigh, in the vicinity of Mulberry Farm.

References

Sabin: Bristol Record Society 1938 & 1960

Walker: Gloucestershire Record Series 1998

Subsequent work on the 600 charters and other land deeds however have now revealed that there was a mill on the Abbey's holding at Tickenham (Walker 1998). In a charter dated 1195 x 1230 Roger FitzHarding grants to the *ecclesie sanctorum Cirici et Julite de Tickenham* 'from the tithe of his mill in that vill', for the sum of 2/- for a light in the church.

The problem of dating the Land Yeo and the Middleton mill however does not go away. Why if the mill survived from c1200 until today does no mill at Tickenham appear in either the Obedientary or the Manorial accounts for 1491/2.

An alternative location actually on the Manor farm Tickenham could well be an explanation of the enigmatic rock-cut ditch to the south of the church, which, obviously manmade, did until recently carry the Middle Yeo and was possibly an earlier channel for the Land Yeo.

Editor - See also "Mills on the Land Yeo" by Martin Bodman and "Mills on the Land Yeo - Further Discoveries" by Ruth Poole & others both are publications of N&DLHS & are available from the usual outlets.

The Cockpit at Wraxall

by Peter Wright from information provided by Phyllis Horman

I was discussing with Keith Gardner the dig which took place at Birdcombe about 40 years ago on the site of the Roman villa. He mentioned a nearby circular bank which he understood was called the "Cockpit". I had never heard of it and nor had my expert on Wraxall.

Phyllis following up an enquiry proceeded to ask a number of Wraxall people she thought might have come across the name. On the never heard of it side are ranged Phyllis Horman, her brother Wilfred Rew, Mrs Stella Stone, Mrs Doris Jones and Mrs Betty Blake and two others.

Two had heard mention of the "Cockpit". Cyril Willcox and Mrs Doris Christie; she thought she had heard it mentioned by one of the Miss Horners for whom she worked at "Inches" in Nailsea. Further information would be appreciated but see also further comment on page 34.

The Cockpit at Wraxall - Further thoughts

letter from Mrs Phyllis Horman

She writes:- "If Keith Gardner saw it, say 40 years ago (when the Villa was excavated) what state was it in. Surely it would not be connected with the Villa would it? Except for two hillocks that ground could be very marshy in wet weather. Before Bristol Water started extracting water from the Land Yeo the river was much deeper and may have flooded therefore the Cockpit would have sunk into marshy ground?"

Not far from this site was Edsons Farm mentioned in the Wraxall Churchwardens Books. There was also a marriage in 1610 between Thomas Willmut and Margaret Edson. Margaret Thomas was interested in that farm (I have forgotten why) and I traced it more or less by field names. I was also told by one of our members (Evelyn Russell who died a couple of years ago) that where I presumed the farm might have been there were foundations of a building.

Could the Cockpit be anything to do with the Farm?

Editor - I have referred this suggestion to Keith Gardner and hope to have his reply in time for the next edition.

Family History 3 - Brean / Bream (an amendment)

Following on from the query raised in Pennant 20 Millie Knox wrote to Mr Brean about the entries in the local records and was able to confirm that the Backwell family was named BREAN and not Bream. She also found another BREAN in the local census for 1891. He was living at Cole House Farm Clevedon. Charles BREAN, 16, single and farm labourer born at Backwell.

Bryan Button writes to say that the discrepancy between BREAM and BREAN in the 1891 census arose because he misread the handwriting and confirms that the name should have been BREAN. For owners of his book "Backwell - The 1891 Census - Some Observations" please make a note to this effect. The actual entry for the family is as follows:-

George W	Brean	Head	M	41	Haulier	Somerset	Wrington
Eliza	Brean	Wife	M	41		Somerset	Stowey
George W	Brean	Son	S	18	Haulier	Somerset	Chew Magna
Harry	Brean	Son		13	Scholar	Somerset	Backwell
Rosina	Brean	Dau		14	Scholar	Somerset	Backwell
Owen	Brean	Son		10	Scholar	Somerset	Backwell
Edith	Brean	Dau		8	Scholar	Somerset	Backwell
Walter	Brean	Son		6	Scholar	Somerset	Backwell
Annie	Brean	Dau		4	Scholar	Somerset	Backwell
Gilbert	Brean	Son		2		Somerset	Backwell
Albert	Batten	Lodger		21	Brickmaker	Cornwall	Truro
George	Batten	Lodger		20	Brickmaker	Cornwall	Truro

Nailsea Village Gossip

extracts from the book by Phyllis Horman

This was the title of a book containing a selection of items from local newspapers of the 19th century.

The selection was put together by Phyllis Horman and published just before Christmas 1992. It was probably one of the most successful books published by the Society and sold out in less than a year. Long out of print it now seems appropriate as Pennant is available to the general public who have not had the chance to see the original to reproduce a number of extracts from "Gossip" in Pennant.

One critic in the Local History press while congratulating the Society and the author on the quality of the publication mourned the fact that we did not state which paper carried the original item. Unfortunately the person who compiled the original scrapbook did not add the source.

We will start with Phyllis Horman's original introduction:-

The word village conjures up to me a picture of a small community, thatch or slate roofed cottages, pretty gardens all clustered around or near to the church. The men leaving home about six in the morning if not before, to walk to work and put in a twelve hour day at least before returning.

The womenfolk tending to the homes, cooking, cleaning, caring for the often numerous children and probably grandfather and grandmother as well. Quite possibly taking in washing and ironing from the 'well to do' families who could afford to have the laundry sent out. In the evening maybe a five minute chat over the gate to the neighbours on either side. A quiet peaceful existence, nobody ever really quarrelling, no violence, no real crime.

My picture fades, when, on reading cuttings of old newspapers, I find that between 1840 and 1879 the same things happened then as are happening in this day and age. Robbery, murder, violence, general mayhem all around! Scandal abounds!!

These newspaper cuttings are amongst our local history collection, and make very interesting reading. I have taken a cross section of what happened, the smaller accounts I have written fully, the longer ones I have condensed.

So, let us start in 1840, what was happening in the quiet village of Nailsea?

1840

John House, farmer and butcher of Nailsea, occupier of a stall in St. James market (Bristol) was fined ten shillings and costs for having made a desperate and ferocious cut at an Inspector, with his cleaver, which the Inspector fortunately managed to ward off. House made use of the most offensive and disgusting language at the same time. The Inspector was seizing a number of false weights in the market, and House was seen to take three or four weights from his board and hide them behind in the stall. The Inspector demanded to see the hidden weights and as House refused, the Inspector forced his way over to find them and was assaulted.

A letter from Mr House complained of Mr Gingell's (the Inspector) conduct, in trying to get the weights and refusing to state his authority for doing so. The case was dismissed, Mr Gingell having to pay the costs. Mr Gingell's reply to the paragraph in the paper was that House did not ask for the Inspector's authority or it would have been shown, but Mr Gingell, not having told House that he was the Inspector, on this accidental and technical objection, the case was withdrawn without payment of any costs.

Jan 1840? Long Ashton Petty Sessions

John Gowin of Wraxall, retailer of beer, was charged with keeping his house open for the sale of beer before 12.30 pm of Sunday the 24th Jan. Fined five shillings including costs.

John Reyner of Nailsea was charged with assaulting Ann Burr ridge of Nailsea on the 26th Jan. Fined twenty shillings with costs.

Isaac White of Nailsea was summoned by John Biggin of Wraxall for refusing to pay him ten shillings and sixpence being the balance of wages due to him as a manufacturer of glass.

Eliza Wedmore of Nailsea was charged with stealing sundry articles of clothing, the property of a fellow servant, Elizabeth Bullen at Nailsea. Case dismissed.

March 1840? Long Ashton Petty Sessions

Benjamin Davis of Nailsea was charged with stealing at Nailsea a firegrate fixed in a building, the property of the Bristol and Exeter Railway Co. Committed for trial at the Taunton Assizes.

John Coles and his son Samuel, both of Nailsea charged with stealing at Nailsea, a box and some corn valued at one shilling and sixpence the property of Isaac White. Due to inconclusive evidence, they were discharged, but severely reprimanded.

Aug/Sept 1840 Long Ashton Petty Sessions

Before Messrs Mirehouse, Sharland and Burroughs, Mr Isaac White Managing Director of the Nailsea Collieries was summoned upon six information's for violating the provisions of the Coal Mines Inspection Act, for the greater protection of the lives of persons working in the mines. Mr Bruges Fry of the firm Messrs Fry and Bennett attended at the request of Sir George Grey, Secretary of State for the prosecution. Mr Abbot of the firm Abbot and Lucas, Bristol, for the defence. Mr Mackworth also attended as Government Inspector. The Justices convicted the defendant in four out of the six cases, fines twenty five pounds including costs.

Sep 1840? Long Ashton Petty Sessions

Henry Warfield of Nailsea was charged with wilfully breaking six panes of glass the property of Elizabeth Attwell. Ordered to pay four shillings and sixpence the amount of damage done. In default of payment in fourteen days, fourteen days imprisonment.

Sep 1840? Long Ashton Petty Sessions

Cornelius Shepstone of Nailsea charged with an assault on George Brown with intent to rob him. As the evidence was not satisfactory, he was then convicted of common assault and fined fifteen shillings including costs. Or in default of payment in fourteen days, one month's imprisonment.

Feb 1841 or 1842?

Mark Thompson of Nailsea, charged with stealing a lump of coal from Mr Isaac White. Ordered to be whipped.

May 1841 or 1842?

John Dean was indicted for inciting George Manfield to steal eleven ducks and four chickens, the property of Mr Wilcox, a farmer of Nailsea.

Manfield confessed to stealing the ducks and said that Dean told him where to find them on the farm, also that Dean had said if he would bring them away he would pay him for them. Mr Wilcox proved that the day previous to the robbery, Dean was at his house, had a glass of cider and admired the ducks.

For the defence, a little girl named Emma Williams said Dean bought them of Manfield for two shillings and sixpence and previous to doing so asked Manfield if they were stolen, to which he replied, "No, pon my soul, they are not." Guilty, three months hard labour for both.

Backwell 1889

Mr James SPERRIN

information provided by John Brain

List of Subscribers to Presentation by the Rector Churchwardens and Parishioners of Backwell to MR JAMES SPERRIN on his retirement from the office of Churchwarden which he has conscientiously and ably filled for 37 years.

Rev. Edward Burbidge	1- 0-0
John Turner Esq]	1- 1-0
H R T Lucas Esq]	1- 1-0
A R Robinson Esq	1- 1-0
Edgar Robinson Esq	1- 1-0
Miss Helena Robinson	1- 1-0
Miss Isabel A Robinson	1- 1-0
C T Robinson Esq	1- 1-0
F Wills Esq	1- 1-0
J W Hall Esq	1- 1-0
Mr John Congdon	10-6
Mr Albert Batt	10-6
Mr E A Holder	10-6
Mr T Baker	10-0
Miss H M Keedwell	10-0
Mrs E A Holder	10-0
Mr T A Smith	5-0
Mr T Stockly	5-0

Misses T & M Batt	5-0
Mr J Rossiter	5-0
Mr J Foord	5-0
Mr R Vowles	5-0
Mr J Griffin	5-0
Mr J Watts	5-0
Mr J Vowles	5-0
Mr S White	5-0
Mr J Parker	2-6
Mr W Cambridge	2-6
Mr W Miles	2-6
Mr C Attwell	2-6
Mr J Manning	2-6
Mr F Shelton	2-6
Miss Shelton	2-6
Mr Henry Garland	2-6
Mr W Rendall	2-6
Mr H Lott	2-0
Mr W Lott	2-0
Mr John Woodley	2-0
Mr George Rogers	1-0
Mr Richard Rogers	1-0
Mr George Missen	2-0
	£17-13-0

The presentation made on the 11th day of October 1889 consisted of a SILVER ENGRAVED TEAPOT and half a dozen SILVER (Queen's) TEASPOONS.

LOCK

(Editor's Note In a book "The Royal Air Force at War" by Martin W Bowman and published in 1997 by Patrick Stephens Ltd there is a list of the top scoring fighter pilots between July and November 1940. Plt Off E S Lock of 41 Sqn of British Nationality is top "scorer" and is credited with 22 enemy aircraft and one shared. He was wounded on 17th Nov. 1940).

The name LOCK even gets a mention in the World Cup. A member of the family won a TV competition to name the three best goals and received tickets for the final! The editor did not manage to take in details of name and address.

Sources from which "A short history of the village of Tickenham" was compiled.

1. Records of the parish found:-

- 1a History of Tickenham Rev J Byrchmore 1895
 - 1b West Country Churches W.J. Robinson 1916
 - 1c Earthworks & Camps of Somerset Ed Burrows
 - 1d Victoria County History of Somerset compiled 1926
 - 1e History of Somerset - Rutter
 - 2 Parish Registers & Maps
 - 3 Traditions and facts remembered by the older inhabitants, supplied by members of the W.I.
-

Backwell 1891

from "Backwell - The 1891 Census - Some Observations" by Bryan Button
AGE PATTERN

It is difficult to draw conclusions from the age pattern as to the likelihood of someone born in Backwell reaching a ripe old age. The amount of immigration into the village and the presumed similar pattern of emigration blurs the facts. What is certain is that not many people living in Backwell in 1891 had reached the promised three score years and ten - only 15 men and 14 women. Many of these were people who had earlier moved into the village, but most from nearby. An interesting point is that the number of men and women were similar. Presumably the hard labour undertaken by men levelled out the long-term demands on the body suffered by women who had to undergo the Victorian tribulations of childbirth. Of the 29 people mentioned, 9 were only just 70 years of age.

Maria Angus	72	Calcutta
Ann Bilbie	79	Backwell
William Caple	80	Cross
Charles Coles	80	Lympsham
Alexander Coombs	76	Nailsea
Edward Dawes	70	Bristol
Hester Fry	82	Kingswood
Mary Garland	70	Wraxall
Henry Garland	70	Backwell

Elizabeth Garland	74	Filton
Mary Green	70	Winford
Jesse Hale	70	Shipham
Charles Hicks	77	Lympsham
Hannah Hicks	73	East Brent
Sarah Huggins	84	Kingston Sey.
Mary Light	76	Butcombe
Samuel Lock	72	Backwell
Hannah Lock	75	Chew Magna
Edward Lock	79	Backwell
Joseph Lodge	70	Winford
Walter Mathews	70	Gloucester
Joseph Ogborn	70	Nempnett
Mary Parsley	70	Congresbury
Edward Rogers *	70	Lockenham
John Sams	75	Backwell
Frederick Shelton	79	Backwell
Charlotte Shelton	74	Westbury Wilts
Caroline Sellick	82	Backwell
Hester Stock	78	Backwell

Many of the people named were still working. Even Caroline Sellick, aged 82, was working as a grocer, presumably helped by her daughter-in-law. There is a distinct division in the pattern between those over and under 15, and again those over and under 50 years of age. This seems to indicate that the latter contained families which moved into the village in greater numbers than families who moved out, and that these arrivals raised families, or brought children with them, who exceeded in number their parents.

Nailsea Coalmines "Steampower"

an extract from the book by Margaret Thomas

Although horsepower had solved efficiently the problem of power for winding in the coal mines, attempts to harness wind or water power for pumping had limited application in the coal mining sphere. The introduction of the first efficient steam pumping engine by Thomas Newcomen in the early years of the eighteenth century was to transform the situation, allowing exploitation of coal measures previously inaccessible because of the build-up of water.

The earliest surviving reference to a steam engine, in a Nailsea context, was not until 1747. Steam engines were then known as "fire-engines" which succinctly describes how they functioned. At a very basic level, the principle involved the lighting of a fire (furnace) under a large metal container (boiler) full of water, which was then heated to provide steam. The earliest were haystack boilers which were round, with the furnace lit directly beneath them. Later, wagon boilers, with horizontal cylinders, more efficient in their use of coal, were introduced at Nailsea, sometimes replacing the earlier boilers but sometimes working side by side with them. Boilers in the Nailsea field were usually built outside the stone towers which housed the steam engines, hence their name, engine house.

The steam was transferred to the cylinder of the steam engine, but these were at first so badly made that they could not withstand much pressure. Therefore, steam had to be used in conjunction with atmospheric pressure to work the piston inside the cylinder, which in turn worked the counter-balanced beam, with its pump rods down the shaft. The cooling of the steam which filled the cylinder from the boiler, created a vacuum, causing the piston's downwards movement, which in turn, pulled up the pump rods, allowing water to be raised. In turn again, their weight, pulling the rods down the shaft, created the upward strike of the piston, allowing the cylinder to again fill with steam. The steam itself was cooled using a jet of water provided, by a self-acting valve. The open-topped atmospheric engine remained in use in the Nailsea field long after the work of James Watt pioneered vastly improved steam technology.

The atmospheric engine was wasteful in that it consumed vast amounts of coal, rendering it expensive and inefficient in other areas, but in Nailsea, coal was the one commodity in plentiful supply. These engines continued in use and indeed were specially manufactured for use in the Nailsea mines as late as the 1830s. In 1838, for example, Rodgers' Boilerworks in Bristol made a haystack boiler of

twelve feet diameter, as well as twelve coal hedges, for White and Co, Nailsea Coalworks. There is also some evidence to suggest use of second-hand engines from old pits.

The amount of water raised depended on the size of the cylinders, which are usually described by their diameter, and the length of the beam (the stroke). Newcomen's first engine, erected at Dudley Castle in 1712, had a cylinder of only 21 inch diameter and could raise ten gallons of water to an adit from a depth of 153 feet at each stroke of the engine.

Steam power for winding, possibly after the discovery of rotary motion by James Watt, was only very slowly introduced in the Nailsea Coalfield. The horsegins continued in use well into the nineteenth century. At Middle Engine, not built until the 1820s, two horse gins were provided, each on a separate shaft. However, by 1848, a valuation of plant in the Nailsea Colliery (referred to earlier) detailed the engines in use by White and Co, and reveals that some more efficient engines had eventually been introduced. The document provides an evocative picture of Nailsea coalmines in the middle of the nineteenth century, both in the variety of machinery needed and in the cost of such a venture as a detailed picture of Double Screen Pit (called Old Engine Pit) illustrates.