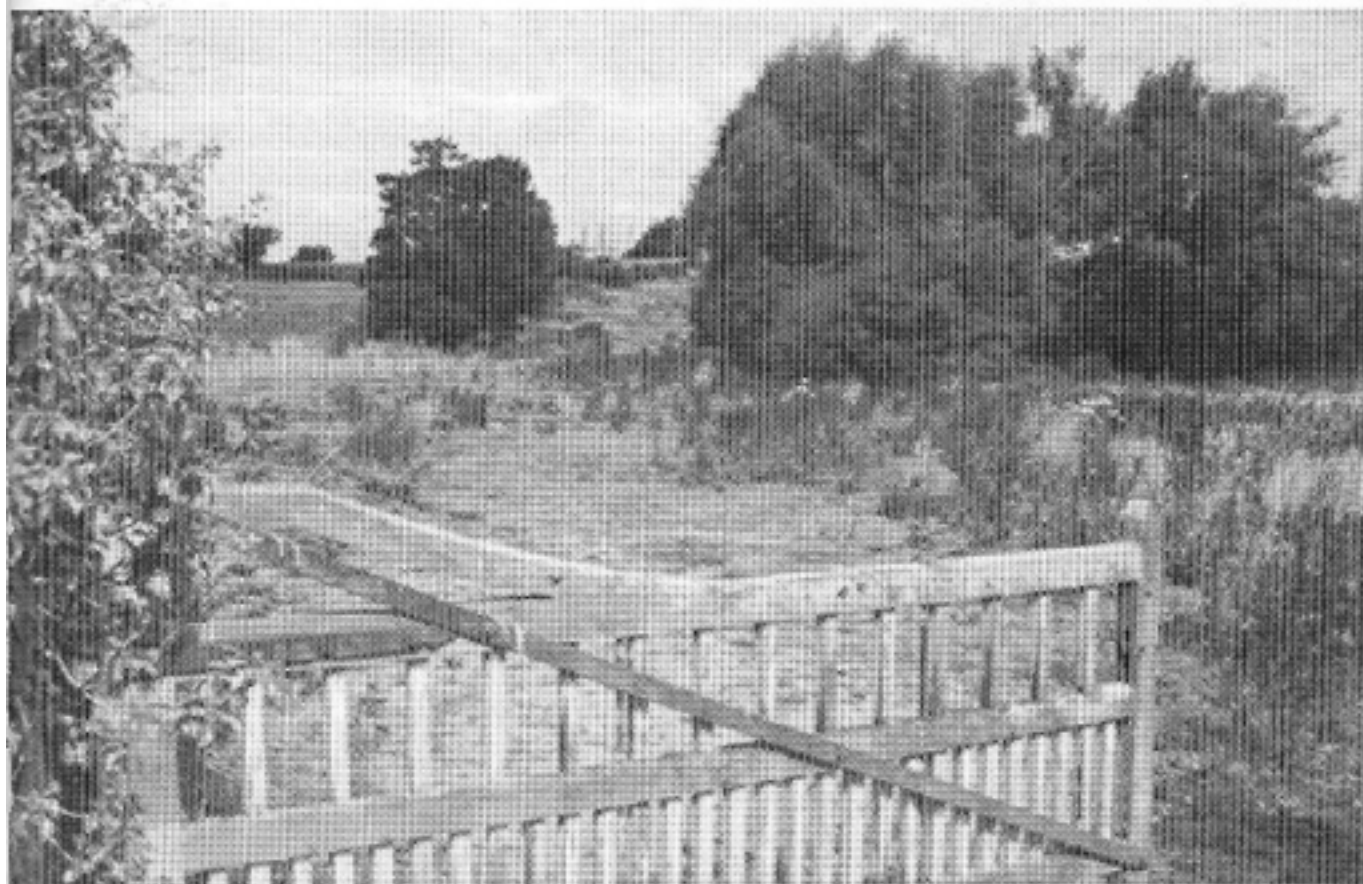


PENNANT 30

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



A Gate at Nailsea Court



LOCAL HISTORY
GOSSIP - NEWS - RESEARCH

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COOMBS, HARDWIDGE AND MASSINGHAM FAMILIES,
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10 years on growing older and older

With this edition we reach PENNANT No 30 *somewhat to the surprise of the editor who was authorised to produce the first edition in 1992.*

Regular readers will have noted that this edition is three months late but there are two valid reasons for the delay. They are the two books of Nailsea Court referred to later. They took an immense amount of your editor's time. They represent a giant step for the Society and one for which we had to seek help from the Nailsea Town Council. I cannot spend my time entirely on Pennant; I have to produce other publications which are our financial lifeblood. A loan provided by the Town Council now has to be repaid

Since Pennant's first edition we have produced editions firstly four times a year and then three times a year. However for the coming year(s) this will reduce to two times a year. Some might think that 'the end is nigh' but that will only be true if the Society members want it to be. There is little doubt that we require our members to be more active. We have a number who 'do' and some who 'don't'. The stress on those who 'do' increases as we try to spread the word about LOCAL history. More articles about families appear in the journal. Is this what you want?

This reflects the national tendency that family historians are 'doers' while many of those interested in 'local history' seem merely to seek entertainment. The problem with this is that if the 'doers' in local history are overwhelmed entertainment will cease.

Pennant will continue but for how long I cannot be certain. We have a few regular contributors without whom Pennant may have folded some time ago.

My concern is that I have found no person willing to become involved with the production of Pennant or even the articles therein. In preparing this edition so soon after "Nailsea Court – The Story Part II" went to press and in the very limited time available the inevitable happened as my computer presented me with a serious problem. As I type these words it is operating on a very restricted basis. I cannot examine the illustrations for the last section of the journal. I have no one to whom I can pass the job. Once again we will have to ask Adroit for extra help in producing the final version.

For their services to Local History your Committee has decided to award Pat and Phil Thorne and their staff at Adroit Printers the Greenhill Shield which is most well deserved in my view.

We are proud of the comments that we have received from professionals in 'local history' who seem to think that we may have got the mix of articles about right. Inevitably there has been a move towards local families as we receive enquiries from descendants overseas.

Your Society does need help and Trevor Bowen will be outlining the areas where it is needed. If you have a computer and can type you could help with the preparation of articles etc for the journal. We are already looking into the indexing of the archives and will soon seek help for this. We have an extensive photographic archive which, over the years, has been allowed to become somewhat muddled. Can you help with sorting that?

The views expressed above are my own and are not necessarily the views of other Members of the Society. I would welcome YOUR views.

I will close by asking WHAT CAN YOU DO IN 2002? Drop a line to the Society at the usual address telling us how you will help.

Peter Wright

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE LORD WRAXALL

by Phyllis Horman

When a large estate is broken up due to the death of the owner, I feel it is very sad. This seems to be what will eventually happen to Tyntesfield estate since the death of Lord Wraxall earlier this year. Already nine houses and one farmhouse are up for sale and there are many more belonging to the estate, and a large amount of land, beside? Tyntesfield House itself.

I came to know the estate quite well when I was still at school in the 1940's. One of my friends was the daughter of the head gardener, and Margaret and I spent much time in walking around, especially in the woods. These woods were on four levels as far as I remember, each with a really decent wide path on which to walk. By the side of one path was a memorial to Hannah More, and in another part of the woods was a summer house. Inside was a round table made of a section of the trunk of a very large tree, the surface of which had been at one time, highly polished. The legs of the table were made of smaller trunks of trees. I was told that in years past, when a shooting party was being held, refreshments were taken to the summer house for those in the party.

Another part of the estate which remains in my memory - and is still there - is a round thicket of rhododendrons, near the house, which is really beautiful when in full bloom. At the side of the main drive amongst the bushes were two clumps of bamboo, no doubt used for use in the gardens, my father told me he planted them when he worked on the estate as a boy, but they are no longer there. Up until the 2nd. World War, many men and boys were employed for the outdoor work, gardeners, woodmen, game keepers, all helping to keep the vast grounds in good order, all in all, a beautiful estate.

It was at the gardens where I got my first taste of peaches and nectarines. They were grown in a very ornate building known as the "orange house". Mr. Tegg (the head gardener) was very kind to me and often gave me various fruit to take home. If any of it was slightly bruised or even had a finger mark on it, it would not have gone to the House (everything had to be in perfect condition) and would only have been thrown away. Most of what I was given was perfect and not in any way damaged!

Several years ago, two or three different people told me that the family who were living in the cottage by the entrance to the Avenue (Wraxall Hill end) were preventing people from walking through saying it was their property and was private land. I decided to write to Lord Wraxall and put the case to him, knowing that the Avenue was on Tyntesfield land. I still have his letter and he stated that it was (and still is) a public footpath, and also included a photocopy of a portion of the ordnance map including the path. Apparently the occupants of the cottage kept pulling down the public footpath sign.

When I was trying to piece together information on the public houses and beer houses of Wraxall and Nailsea, I wrote asking for information on the "BattleAxes" which one of his ancestors had built. His letter in return gave me the complete history of it, and he also told me of a beer house (which he thought more likely to be a cider house) that had been in a cottage on the estate, near Belmont Hill, where the workmen could get a drink. I had never heard of that one.

My first meeting with Lord Wraxall was when he invited my brother and I to Tyntesfield House for a chat. I've forgotten what was the subject, but it was obviously historical. We were given a day and time to be there, it was a Friday at 2.00 pm. We arrived there with time to spare (couldn't be late for a first appointment!) and at precisely the correct time we approached the main door. The old butler came to us and asked us in, with apologies from His Lordship, who had been called to the office at the last moment, but he would be with us as soon as possible. We were ushered into a room and invited to sit and wait and by about 2.15 pm. Lord Wraxall arrived. We had a really pleasant and interesting talk with him, he was very knowledgeable in

many ways. We were all thoroughly enjoying ourselves and after quite a time Lord Wraxall looked at his watch and said "Good lord, its 10 to 5, I was supposed to be back at the office at 4.30, so I'm afraid I must go, but I have SO enjoyed talking with you, and I would like you to come again". We thought our talk would be for about half an hour or so and would have been happy at that, but it was a good two and a half hours. Of course we thanked him for sparing time to talk with us and that we had really enjoyed meeting him. He said again that he had enjoyed our talk and the way he spoke was entirely genuine, and it made me feel that he could have been equally as happy talking to ordinary village folk, especially about history which he seemed very interested in, than the upper class people he had to meet in his daily life.

Once a year he opened the chapel and grounds for a Rogation service and was most always present. Firstly a short service was held in the chapel, then the service continued while walking through the grounds, finally coming out near the Home farm where refreshments were provided by two or three parishioners. Lord Wraxall made a point of coming to my brother and I for a few words. The last Rogation service I attended was on his birthday (29th. May?). When the service ended, everyone was leaving the chapel to continue around the grounds, (it was a Salvation Army band providing the music) I decided to stay and wish him a happy birthday. Having one of my many moods on me (57 varieties in fact) I told him that two interesting things happened in 1928, he smiled and said "Oh, what was that?" so I replied "You and I were born in 1928". This seemed to interest him and he asked what month and day I was born, so this started a little conversation before we joined the rest of the people.

Maybe other people saw Lord Wraxall in a different light than my brother and I, I wouldn't know, but we found him a very interesting person to speak to, he helped us considerably, he had a great interest in what we were discussing, and I was very sorry to hear of his sudden death.

A real gentleman.

MASSINGHAM FAMILY

by Peter Lamb

Further To P.H. Morgan's article on Henry Collyer Massingham in the last edition of Pennant, I have been able to provide the full details of Mr. Morgan's family. I realised that I had read about Henry Collyer Massingham in the South Western Electricity Archives, which I administer with others for the South Western Electricity Historical Society.

This came about, following assistance we gave to a family member, Clifford Massingham, in compiling a complete history of the Massingham Family. Henry Collyer's eldest son, Henry George, had been very involved with electricity supply industry as I will relate and, as a thank- you, Clifford gave us a copy of the Family History he had compiled.

In 1835 when Henry Collyer Massingham was 15 he wanted to go to sea, but his father declined to provide the funds for his kit as he considered he would be in danger from the elements and surrounded by sin and depravity! So by the time he was married to Sarah Charlotte Meen in 1839, he was learning the trade of shoemaking.

His first shoe shop was at 7 Mansion House Street, opposite the London Mansion House and was stated to be one of the finest around. By 1850 they had three daughters and had moved to Guildford, where they had large premises in the High Street. Henry was employing 40 men, with five servants living in and trading as the British Shoe Company. At this time in 1851, their son Henry George was born and more on him later.

Henry's first wife died fairly young and perhaps this motivated him to sell up and move to Bristol in 1853 at the age of 39.

He acquired a large property in Old Market Street, where he established a boot manufacturing business. He then moved the factory to Fishponds in 1859. He remained there for ten years, during which time, he was very interested in the welfare of his large workforce. He started brass and fife bands for the men, buying all the instruments himself and paying the Bandmasters. Singing classes were arranged for the women and girls.

He then became financially over stretched and sold the Fishponds factory. Within a short space of time he was opening shoe shops throughout the South West, including Bristol and Bath. The shops were called Beehive Boot Stores and Henry was the first to charter a special steam train for a staff outing. Customers would find the following notice on the doors:-

"The bees have flown on the wings of steam
This day from toil they borrow
Kind friends to show that you approve
Please call again tomorrow".

Henry married his second wife, Emily Hunt, in 1871, when he was aged 51 and she was 26. At about this time, he also retired from the shoe trade. The "history" states that he sold the business ten years after moving to Bristol and also that his son, Henry George, opened shoe shops at Cheltenham and Bath at the age of 20 (i.e. 1871). It is highly probable that the son took over the business around that time. Henry Collyer seems then to have turned his attention to other businesses, presumably happy that his son is looking after the shoe trade.

He first started the "Royal Library" at 51 Royal York Crescent, Clifton with 50,000 volumes. Then he took over the Clifton Steam Laundry with premises at Southmead Road, Westbury-on-Trym. For some reason not mentioned in the "History", when he retired in about 1880, he moved to Nailsea. In the 1881 Census, Henry is aged 60 and described as "a retired librarian".

The house described as "Nailsea House" was rented from the owner of a Tannery, who presumably had supplied Henry with leather when in the shoe business. So it is not surprising that he should have started a library in Nailsea also. Henry Collyer Massingham was certainly a man with an entrepreneurial flair and a keen family man, siring four children by his first marriage, three daughters and a son, Henry George and three children by his second marriage. I will give the birth dates of these last three, since they would have still been at home upon his retirement at Nailsea – Emily 1872, William 1873 and Charles 1879 – and he would have had to support them at that time.

It would appear that he was still running the Steam Laundry in 1885 from his Nailsea retirement home in 1885, since the staff of 150 presented him with a silver cup on the occasion of his 65th birthday.

It is said that he had a second retirement moving to Ilfracombe in 1908. It must have been a short stay even though he lived to a ripe old age of 92, dying four years later in 1912 presumably having returned to Bristol and his body was interred in the family grave at Arnos Vale Cemetery.

HCM's son Henry George, born in 1851, was no lesser "live-wire", excuse the pun, but although marrying twice did not have any children. He expanded his shoe business, purchasing the Taunton shop 23 Fore Street, from his brother-in-law, Samuel Elworthy.

He had witnessed the illumination of Bristol Cathedral by the electric light in 1878 and hired the equipment taking it to Taunton for a demonstration to the Town Councillors there. With the help of the British agents, Laing, Wharton & Down, for the American company of Thomson Houston, he set up generating facilities in the workshop of his shop at 23 Fore Street and commissioned the street lighting there in 1886, the first public electricity supply in the South West.

The Taunton Electric Lighting Company's first customer was the Castle Hotel. He was considerably struck by the electricity bug and managed to persuade the Councillors at both Exeter and Bath to let him set up electricity supply companies in the two cities and establish generating stations in 1889 and 1890 respectively. He had to get the city father's agreement, since they held the rights under Electric Lighting Orders. He was unable to persuade Bristol's Electricity Committee, since they were being advised not to be too hasty by their eminent consultant, William Preece (later Sir William), Chief Electrical Engineer to the GPO.

The Massinghams were an incredible family, one could write a book about them, but then we would be digressing from Nailsea's history.

Geophysical Survey of the Site of Engine Pit

By Terence A. Smith

Stockway North Nature Reserve, behind the garden of rest in the centre of Nailsea, occupies the site of a Pennant sandstone quarry that was worked during the 19th century (note that the present Journal derives its name from this sandstone, called after the locality in Wales where this stone is also found). Between this reserve and Stockway North ring road lies an area, for many years maintained by North Somerset Council as mown grass and used as a dog exercising area by local Nailsea residents. That is – until September 1998 - when a rectangular area of turf about 4' x 5' close to the road sank about 6 inches. Further investigation revealed the remains of a shaft, which was excavated and capped by the National Coal Board

The foreman on the site claimed that the void in the shaft was about 50' deep. This apparently was the site of Engine Pit, the coalmine that was worked from 1786 until 1873, belonging initially to Isaac White. This pit mined coal principally from 'White's Top Seam' that was 3 – 4 feet of coal at a depth of up to 400 feet. In 1842 underground workers in this pit under the age of 18 numbered about 50, and with such narrowseams, working conditions must have been difficult. Although there was a ready market for

fuel at the glass works, poor quality coal, and problems with the disposal of underground water, despite a steam engine powered pump, forced the eventual closure of this pit.

In common with others who frequented that grassland, I consider myself fortunate that I had not descended to the bottom of this shaft. North Somerset Council who own the site, offered the Friends of Stockway North Nature Reserve a licence to operate that area as a temporary extension to the existing reserve, on the understanding that it might be required for the interment of cremated ashes when the existing Garden of Rest is full. However, since experience had indicated that such mineshafts were often found in pairs or even threes, the possibility remained that other shafts could be found on the site, with continuing anxiety for safety.

One technique for capping shafts in the 19th century involved the labour-saving device of pushing a tree into the hole and then piling rocks on top, in the hope that it would be a long time before the consequences of this irresponsible activity became known (Woodspring District Council, 1980). Of course, eventually the tree rotted and the cap on the shaft collapsed. Margaret Thomas in her book 'Nailsea Coal Mines' (page 19) indicates that one shaft on the site was discovered and capped when Stockway North was built in 1967. She also suggested that a total of three shafts were recorded at this pithead, one going down 20 fathoms, another 35 fathoms and the deepest at 60 to 65 fathoms (360 to 390 feet) (page 15). So two shafts had been accounted for. Was there a third shaft waiting to be found?

After the second shaft had been capped in 1998, the site was closed to the public for reasons of safety, and the grass was allowed to grow. Before signing to the licence with North Somerset Council to operate the site as an extension to the Nature Reserve, it was decided that the area should be subject to a geophysical survey to establish whether any further voids remained. With funding by Yansec (the administrators of the land fill tax in this area) and on the recommendation of North Somerset Council the 'Friends' asked the Avon Archaeological Unit to undertake this. They in turn subcontracted the work to GeoQuest who are specialists in geomagnetic survey techniques.

The principle of this survey method depends on the detection of magnetic anomalies in the rocks beneath the surface. The Geoscan FM36 fluxgate gradiometer used measures the variations in magnetic susceptibility induced by the Earth's magnetic field. The Westphalian (Upper Carboniferous) Coal Measures have a high magnetic susceptibility owing to the iron content of the shale, and are particularly amenable to this survey method. The site was cleared of steel objects on the surface (mainly old drinks cans) as far as

possible before the survey, since these interfere with the magnetic measurements.

The scan of the geomagnetic survey is shown in Fig 2, below and from this, the areas of anomalous susceptibility were marked using a computer plotting program by GeoQuest on a site plan (Fig 3). Voids would be shown as areas with negative magnetic susceptibility (A, B and C). Two areas with marked positive susceptibility may indicate the presence of underground brickwork (D and E). Strong dipolar anomalies with paired negative – positive magnetism (representing sites of bonfires, other iron-containing materials and the steel reinforcement of the known capped shaft, F, were also mapped. Smaller intense dipoles are shown as small circles in Fig 3. In their report, the Avon Archaeological Unit recommends further investigation, especially of an area in the north west of the site that has the characteristics of a second mine opening (A, Fig.3), but two other areas of concern located in the east of the site were also recorded (B and C). GeoQuest suggest that excavation of all of these anomalous areas is required to establish whether they represent the remains of shafts. Until this is done, this site remains an area of potential risk to the public. Excavation should prove to be of considerable interest to those who are fascinated by the early industrial archaeology of Nailsea.

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Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Jonathan Irvine (Avon Archaeological Unit) and Dr Mark Noel (GeoQuest Associates) for permission to reproduce illustrations from their report on the geophysical survey of the site. Funds for this survey were provided by Yansec, North Somerset Council and Nailsea Town Council.

Wraxall Boys' School Log Books

Compiled by Phyllis Horman

Re-assembling after the holiday was on **January 6th. 1879**, two days later was a very snowy day and no school, the same applied for the 9th. and 10th. On the 13th. there was a small attendance due to the weather, the snow had gone but it was very wet. Nothing of importance happened until February 26th. which was Ash Wednesday, when the children went to church in the morning with a holiday in the afternoon. The earlier part of March was taken up with the usual Diocesan and Drawing Examinations, the earlier part of April was ordinary progress until the 8th. which was the Rector's Tithe Day with the usual morning lessons until 11-30 and then the remainder of the day, holiday. Good Friday was on the 11th. with church in the morning and holiday in the afternoon, followed by Easter Monday and Tuesday, the 14th. and 15th. no school. Unusually, on Ascension Day there was no holiday, also Mrs. Ball was sent a note about her boys coming late.

The Annual Inspection was on May 27th. when there were 53 boys present, May 28th. was a holiday in the afternoon, and June 2nd. and 3rd. being Whit Monday and Tuesday, again, a holiday. On June 11th. "A fatal accident happened during the dinner hour today. Herbert Lawrence, aged 7, one of our scholars, was playing with some other little boys in the cricket field, rolling about a heavy roller, when being overpowered by its weight, he was knocked into a ditch and killed instantaneously by the pressure of the handle on his throat. No school in the afternoon on account of the excitement". June 27th. "The boys brought to school this morning a large quantity of flowers to send to the Bristol Infirmary", which I feel was a very kind gesture, and reminds me of my Sunday school days when we had, once a year, an Egg and Flower service for the same purpose, and we sang a hymn "Here Lord we offer Thee all that is fairest, flowers in their freshness from garden and field. Gifts for the stricken ones knowing Thou carest, more for the love than the wealth that they yield". Then on July 21st. there was a Fete and Gala at Nausea, when some of the boys were absent in the afternoon. I wonder where this event took place and why? After the Exams. on August 15th. the school closed for the Summer holiday.

School opened again on September 8th. some boys were absent and at the request of Rev. E.P. Vaughan the registers were to be called before prayers in the morning, all late boys names to be marked in red ink. Much to my surprise when prizes were given out on the 10th. from the Examination held in August, one of the prize takers was John flew!

By October 9th. potato picking had started, the Rector's Tithe Day was the next day, and no school. The 16th. was a holiday being Bristol Musical Festival and November 7th. yet another day off, as it was Mrs. Gibbs Clothing Club. George Walters gave up his monitorship on November 10th. to start work in Bristol, George Page was appointed in his place. There was a Library Entertainment presumably in the evening of November 27th. and another Entertainment in the evening of December 9th. On the 16th, the funeral of Miss Kington took place and the Master and a few of the older boys attended the service. It was just as well that the Christmas holiday was near, on

December 18th. "A good many little boys absent this week in consequence of the very severe weather. Scarlet Fever bad at Nausea, note to Mrs. Hicks about her children". On December 24th. the school broke up for the Christmas holiday.

1880 and the re-opening was on January 12th. and by the 14th. there was heavy snow and school was closed; the 15th. there was only a small attendance. An Entertainment in the evening of the 27th. and the next morning a children's service in church in lieu of Scriptural Instruction at school. As February 11th. was Ash Wednesday there was the usual morning service in church and no school in the afternoon, the 16th. "Very wet day, no school in consequence of the pouring rain".

The Diocesan Inspection was on March 4th. Drawing Examination on the 8th. and. oh dear, the report of the Diocesan Exam. was "unsatisfactory". After the Easter holiday and on April 9th. "Rector's Tithe Day, holiday in the afternoon. Admitted this week Percy and William Ashbery, sons of the Independent minister at Nailsea, who claims exemption from the teaching of the Church Catechism under the Conscience clause". I'm sure I can remember at school - was it at Wraxall or Nausea? - one or two Catholic children left the room during our morning prayers.

Until May 6th. (which was Ascension Day and therefore a church service) it was ordinary progress until Whit Monday the 17th. when there was only a small attendance probably because there was a Fete and Gala at Nailsea.

The Annual Examination was on May 24th. the next day a holiday, and then a sad occasion on the 26th. "Afternoon school from 1-30 to 3-30 to enable Master and some of the older boys to attend the funeral at the parish church at 4 o'clock of William Eyres, an old scholar of this school, who was drowned at W-s-M on Monday last".

The Government Report on June 26th. read "The discipline is good and the school is carefully taught, and making very fair progress. The Spelling and Grammar want attention, A better folio is desirable", followed by the Abstract of Results.

It would seem that the curate Rev. H. Vaughan was taking a very great interest in the school. He started an Examination of Standards, the first on July 14th, standards 1 to 6, for prizes offered by him, and that morning was Dictation and Arithmetic. The 15th. the subjects were Geography and Drawing, and the 16th. were History and Grammar. The following took prizes, standard 6 - George Nichols, standard 5 - Percy Ashbery, standard 4 - Joseph Battle, standard 3 -Herbert Ball, standard 2 - Fred Brown, standard 1 - Thomas Griffin. The school then closed for three weeks Summer holiday.

Re-assembling on August 4th. with the usual number present, "George Page, the monitor, did not return. Two occasional monitors will be required for the future instead of one regular monitor". So many happenings in the autumn quarter August 18th. the Flower Show at Long Ashton with some boys absent in the afternoon, August 31st. the visit of a schoolmaster from the north of England.

September 8th. Backwell Harvest Home, some boys absent, September 17th. "Some boys absent this week picking up potatoes". September 28th. Nailsea Harvest Festival, some boys absent. Holiday in the afternoon of October 8th. being the Rector's Tithe Day, also another holiday in the afternoon of October 14th. to enable the Master to go to Flax Bourton on business; he seemed to go on a regular basis.

A Ploughing Match on October 20th. so a holiday, November 5th. Mrs. Gibbs Clothing Club, yet another holiday. By November 19th. small attendance on account of measles, many boys away. This epidemic carried on until December 17th. although some were beginning to return to school again.

On December 23rd. "Miss H.E. Vaughan called to thank the children for the present given to her by subscriptions of the boys and girls, on the occasion of her approaching marriage. Examination in Arithmetic, Grammar and History for prizes offered by Rev. H. Vaughan, and the 24th. Examination continued - Dictation and Geography. Dismissed for the Christmas Vacation of two weeks".

Editor - This ends the current series of extracts from the Wraxall School records. Many thanks to Phyllis for her continued support.

"The COCK-PIT" A note to the editor from Keith Gardner

Further to the recent discussions on the Cock-pit at Birdcombe Court Farm, it was this feature that first attracted the attention of Sykes and Usher to the field in which the Roman Villa was discovered.

It was a circular bank at the top of the hill not in a position to be flooded by the river, and measured about 15-20 yards in diameter with an entrance 'gap*' in the north and south.

My diary for Oct 16* 1949 notes

"A trench was dug through about 9m of very tightly packed earth and stone down to solid rock. Near to the surface a piece of very rough Romano-British pottery was found and later a nail similar to those found in tiles on the adjacent villa"

The 1946 Aerial Photograph shows it quite clearly; it was I suspect, originally an old coal mine shaft, (obviously pre-enclosure) and part of the old Nailsea Heath, It may well have been used as a cocking pit but has been ploughed flat and there is now no trace.

The Inside and Outside story of Nailsea Court

Is now available in the Society's latest publications.

They are also available from the Society for one month after you receive this copy of Pennant at the same price post and packing free. After that the cost of postage and packing £1.50 in the UK and £3 overseas will be added but this will cover 1 or 2 copies either the same part or each part. For further copies add an extra £1 a copy.

The Coombs Family

Letters and e-mails from around the world from Douglas Coombs to Peter Wright. With assistance from Phyllis Horman

(NB the 1841 Census to which he refers was, I believe, an early copy of the text being prepared for publication by the Society. I know now that there are a number of discrepancies in it. Betty Brooks and the editor are currently involved in checking the data from that in Nailsea Library. The target for publication is March 2002.)

A genealogical friend and very distant kinsman (not on the Coombs side) has unexpectedly sent me 1841 census data for Nailsea Coombs. Naturally it has much the same names as those you sent me, but it seems to make it clear that there was not just one Charles Wedmore Coombs, my great grandfather (born 1818 and evidently not in Nailsea at the time) - there were three! We know from your computer file list for Coombs which you sent me in Nov 1999 that parish records for Holy Trinity church show that a Charles Wedmore Coombs with wife Hester had children: Mary Vowles COOMBS baptised 15 April 1839, also Ellen and Edwin COOMBS, both baptised 6 Aug, 1840. I had assumed that this was my Charles Wedmore, and that his marriage on 27.7.1844 to Mary Anne SEWARD, from whom many of us in NZ are descended, was a second marriage. When I discovered from the IGI that Charles Wedmore COOMBS married Hester VOWLES at Wraxall 12.11.1826, I speculated that this date was an error, perhaps for 1836. But it seems from the 1841 census that the following were all living at Youngwood Farm:

Charles Coombs 44 Farmer, Hester Coombs 40, Esther Coombs 14, Chas W Coombs 12, Eliza Coombs 10, Hannah W Coombs 8, John Robert Coombs 4, Mary Coombs 2, Ellen Coombs 10 months, Edwin Coombs 10 months.

This indicates the family for Charles and Hester married in 1826 including the above Mary, Ellen and Edwin, and it cannot possibly be the family of my Charles Wedmore Coombs. So we do not have to worry any more that we had not found a death of Hester which might have allowed my Charles to have a legitimate marriage to Mary Anne SEWARD in 1844! The two Charles (Wedmore) COOMBS families were surely related in some way however. Samuel Wedmore COOMBS, who also had a wife called Hester and children John and James White COOMBS, baptised 17.3.1816 and 1.3.1818 according to the Nailsea parish records was presumably also related.

Perhaps there was intermarriage between the Coombs and Wedmore families in addition to the marriage of John Coombs b 25.5.1755, d 4.5.1831 to Hannah WEDMORE died 12.1.1841 aged 84, which is recorded on the famous head stone near the porch of the old church, and from whom we believe we are descended.

Do you think that parish records from neighbouring parishes might throw light on this? Do older records exist for Holy Trinity than those you sent me from your index?

With best wishes, Douglas

Dear Peter

The handsome book has arrived; thank you. I am delighted to have this, but have decided not to order vol. 2, which is perhaps less relevant for me. Payment will soon be on its way in the form of three £5 notes. I know that that is more than the price, but in one way and another it would cost more to get a bank draft. The surplus may help to better reimburse you for the photographs you so kindly took for me a year or two ago.

Since last I wrote, I have made some progress on my Coombs ancestry, in part with the help of a distant English relative (not of Coombs descent) who became interested. It is wonderful what turns up in the various censuses - a source far from exhausted - and in wills, and in previously overlooked grave stones at the Holy Trinity Church and Tickenham.

The draft family tree I drew up a year ago had 2 sons, one daughter, and very speculatively, another son for John (1755-1831) and Hannah (c. 1756-1841), and apparently 2 marriages and resulting families for my great-grandfather, Charles Wedmore Coombs (1818-1902). We now know that John and Hannah had 5 sons and one daughter. One of the sons was a Charles Wedmore, uncle of my Charles Wedmore, and one of his sons was yet another Charles Wedmore. I had attributed CD's "first" wife to the uncle. Quite a number of other details now fit together, though we still have not cleared up the full family of my CD's siblings, children of John (1785-1869) and his wife Francis (c. 1790-1868).

I hope I am not duplicating too much work that has been/is being done by others. Of course I do not aim at a complete unravelling of all the Coombs with Nailsea origins which would be a daunting task, but hope to advance the story a bit further. I will be happy to send you a new provisional annotated tree in due course if you are interested

With best wishes
Douglas Coombs

Editor. I passed the above comments to Phyllis Horman in the hope she could help. Her reply is printed below

I have been asked by Peter if I can make any comments on the Coombs family tree. Mr. Douglas Coombs seems very confused by the fact that there were three Charles Wedmore Coombs in his family tree. He seems most interested in the one who married Hester Vowles at Wraxall church in 1826, but cannot find any reference to a birth or baptism. It is not in the Nailsea or

Wraxall registers. It states in the Wraxall marriage register that C.W.C. came from Wrington, so I wonder if he was also born there?

This family are only in the 1841 Census of Nailsea, and no other, and they are not in the Wraxall Census at any later date. Also of course, the 1841 Census only states if a person was born in the said county or not. which is not of great help to anyone. On looking through the Census returns of Nailsea from 1851 to 1881, most other Coombs mentioned were born in Nailsea, but, for instance, the 1851 states that John Coombs was born in Nailsea but his sister Letitia 11 years younger, was born in Norton Malreward. In 1861, Hester Coombs was born in St. George's, Som. but this may not have been her maiden name. A niece of Joseph Wedmore(whose Christian name I haven't got, but her surname was Coombs) was born in Kingston Seymour. As she was "Assistant" to her uncle. I presume she was not married. Then in 1871 James Coombs who was then 70 years of age, was born in Tickenham and in 1881 Sarah Coombs, 78 years of age, retired farmer, was born in Winford. It seems that, like many farming families, some of the Coombs moved around to other farms in other areas. So some children were born, say, in Nailsea, more in another village, and maybe more in yet another village. Most frustrating, as others who are into family history, know only too well. Also to remember that quite frequently, a young mother-to-be would go to her mother for the confinement, which was probably several villages away from where she lived and especially if the baby wasn't too robust, it would be baptised at the nearest church. I feel that Douglas Coombs will have a lot of frustrating digging to do before he can complete his family tree!

The Will of Hannah Coombs

B 1756 d 12 Jan 1841
from Douglas Coombs.

Editor - I received the s as this edition was to go to the printer. Unfortunately its arrival preceded by one day a crash on my computer. The original text had been copied and this version has been taken from the hard copy. It is possible that there may be some slight divergence from the original because of this. I have inserted a few paragraphs to break long columns of text and further altered the transcription of the will. Should any errors be found because of these amendments they will be corrected in Pennant 31.

I am pasting in below my transcription of Hannah Coombs' will. I found it extraordinarily difficult to read, and to help me make sense of it, I added punctuation and paragraphing which, of course, is entirely foreign to such a document. But if you would like to include some of it in your local history journal, I have no objection, and would appreciate a copy. In spite of the difficulties. I think that I have made few errors in the transcription, and have faithfully copied what is there (apart from the added punctuation), even where it does not appear to make good sense.

In contrast, the will of James Coombs, the donor of the window in the Holy Trinity Church, has been copied out by the law clerk in the most beautifully legible copperplate handwriting. James makes no mention of the window - he must have donated the money before he made his will. These two wills and various census returns have been real breakthroughs in working out some of our family relationships, and with the help of my interested English friend, I am chasing more. If you are interested, I can make you a photocopy of James' will. That of his brother Samuel Wedmore Coombs contained much less of interest, and unfortunately a will of his brother John, my direct ancestor, has not been found. Hannah's will gives the names of all her family, several of whom we did not know of before, and various nephews and nieces. One son was named Charles Wedmore Coombs, making it completely clear that he, who married Hester Vowles at Wraxall, was an uncle of my great-grandfather Charles Wedmore Coombs. No confusion remains on that.

There are some useful details in your local family history expert's comments, including the place name Norton Malreward which was not legible in my copy of the relevant census. Thank you.

I saw my friend and fellow Nailsea Coombs descendant, Doreen Tyree, at our local Genealogical Society meeting on Wednesday. We will soon be getting together to compare notes. Best wishes from Douglas Coombs.

Will of Hannah Coombs

(HANNAH COOMBS, born Hannah Wedmore, 1756?, married John Coombs (1755-1831).

Some words very difficult to read. Transcription with attempted punctuation and paragraphing by DS Coombs, October, 2001. Capital letters and strange phrases and spellings, e.g.. Coals Mines, retained, even where they do not appear to make good sense)

This is the last Will and Testament of me, Hannah Coombs, of the Parish of Nailsea in the County of Somerset, Widow.

First, I will and direct that all my just debts, funeral, and testamentary expenses shall be paid as soon after my decease as conveniently may be.

I give and bequeath the Bed and Bedding which I generally use unto my daughter, Elizabeth Doggett.

I give and bequeath unto my son, Samuel Wedmore Coombs, such one of my other Beds and Bedding as my said Son, Samuel Wedmore Coombs, may select.

And I also give and bequeath the Chest of Drawers and Dressing Table now being in my Bed Room, together with the Bed and Bedstead with the Furniture thereunto belonging, now being in my Bed Room, and six silver Tea spoons marked with the letters E.W. unto Hannah Wedmore Doggett, daughter of my said Daughter, Elizabeth Doggett.

And I also give and bequeath the Clock which stands in the Kitchen of the house wherein I now reside unto my Son, Alexander Coombs.

And I give and bequeath all other my Household Furniture, Plate, Silver, China, Glass, Wine, & other Liquors, and in general, all and every Article, matter and thing, Goods, Chattels, and effects of what nature or description so ever which may or shall be in or about the house wherein I now reside at the time of my decease, unto my Son, James Coombs.

I give, devise, and bequeath six undivided seventh parts or shares of and in All that one undivided fifth part or share of and in the Coals Mines and Minerals lying and being under certain Sands in the Parish of Nailsea in the County of Somerset, and which fifth part or share descended to me as one of the five Sisters and Co heiresses at Law of my late Brother, Thomas Wedmore, deceased, and also six undivided seventh parts or shares of or in the undivided third part or share of and in one other undivided fifth part or

share of the same Coals Mines & Minerals and which descended to me as one of the four surviving Sisters and Co heiresses of my late Sister, Ann Roberts, deceased, unto and equally between my sons

Benjamin Godwin Coombs of Nailsea, aforesaid, yeoman;

John Coombs of Compton Bishop in the said County of Somerset, Carrier¹

Samuel Wedmore Coombs of Norton Malreward in the County of Somerset, Farmer;

Charles Wedmore Coombs of Nailsea, aforesaid, Farmer;

Alexander Coombs of Nailsea, aforesaid, Farmer; and

James Coombs of Nailsea, aforesaid, Farmer,

their heirs and assigns, for ever as tenants in common and not as joint tenants.

And as to the remaining undivided seventh parts or shares of the said fifth part or share, and of the said third part or share of and in the said other fifth part or share of the said Coals Mines and Minerals, I give, devise, and bequeath the same unto and to the use of the said Samuel Wedmore Coombs and James Coombs, their heirs and assigns, upon trust, to receive the rents, issues, and annual profits thereof, and pay the same to my said daughter Elizabeth Doggett, the wife of Henry Doggett, late of the Parish of Bedminster, during her life for her separate use free from the debts or control of her present husband or any after taken husband with whom she may intermarry, and so that she shall have no power to anticipate the growing payments thereof.

And after the decease of my said daughter, upon trust for all and every or such one or more exclusively of the other or others of the Child or Children of my said daughter Elizabeth Doggett, for such Estate and Estates at such age, day, or time, ages, days, or times. And if more than one in such shares, parts, and proportions and charges, and chargeable with such Annual or other sum or sums of money for the benefit or any one or more of such child or children.

And subject to such powers, provisoes, restrictions, and limitations, and in such manner as the said Elizabeth Doggett shall by any deed or deeds, instrument, or instruments in writing to be by her, stated and delivered in the presence of and attested by two or more credible witnesses, direct, limit, or

appoint. And in default of such direction, limitation, or appointment, and so far as every or any such direction, limitation, or appointment, if incomplete, shall not extend upon trust for all and every [of] the children or Child of the said Elizabeth Doggett, to be divided between or among them, if more than one, in equal shares and proportions as tenants in common, and not as joint tenants, and of the several and respective heirs of all and every such Child and Children. And if there shall be but one such Child, To the use of such only Child and his or her heirs.

And in default of such issue, upon trust for my said Sons Benjamin Godwin Coombs, John Coombs, Samuel Wedmore Coombs, Charles Wedmore Coombs, Alexander Coombs, and James Coombs, their heirs and assigns, for ever, as tenants in common and not as joint tenants, provided also.

And I hereby declare that it shall be lawful for the said Samuel Wedmore Coombs and James Coombs or the survivor of them, his executors, or advisors during the coverture¹ of my said daughter Elizabeth Doggett and the minority or respective minorities of any other children by any Indenture or Indentures to be by them or him executed in the presence of, and attested by, one or more witness or witnesses, to limit or appoint by way of demise or lease all or any part or parts of the said hereditaments hereinbefore devised for the benefit of my said daughter and her children for any term not exceeding twenty one years, upon such terms and in such manner as to them or him shall seem meet. And also to join and concur with the person or persons for the time being entitled to the other parts or shares of the said hereditaments in making a partition or division of the entirety of the same hereditaments, or any of them, and to pay any sum or sums of money for equality of partition out of the funds, if any, which shall be vested in them or him by virtue of any of the powers hereinbefore contained, or to charge and secure the payment of such sum or sums of money, and the interest thereof, upon the allotment to be made to them, or to accept any sum or sums of money for equality of partition on any similar security, or other real security, for the payment thereof with interest; and also to sell and dispose of, and limit, appoint, and convey, all or any of the said hereditaments to any person or persons whomsoever, either together or in parcels and either by Auction or Public Sale, or by Private contract or Agreement, for such price or prices in money or other equivalent as to them, the said trustees or trustee, shall seem reasonable, with full power and authority upon payment of the money arising by or from any Sale of the said heredit[ament]s, or any part thereof, to sign and give proper receipts for the same.

And I do hereby declare that such purchase money, or money received for equality of partition, when received, shall be invested on such security as to any said trustee or trustees shall seem meet, and be held upon trusts similar

to those herein before declared with respect to the shares from which the same shall have arisen.

Provided also, and I hereby declare, that in case, the said Samuel Wedmore Coombs or James Coombs, or either of them, shall die in my lifetime or shall renounce the execution of the trusts hereby created, or in case the said Samuel Wedmore Coombs or James Coombs, or any trustee or trustees to be appointed under this present provision, shall die, or shall be absent from the United Kingdom for the space of six Calendar months at one time, or shall otherwise become unwilling or unable to act in the aforesaid trusts, then, and so often as the same shall happen, it shall be lawful for the person or persons for the time being beneficially interested in such share or shares respectively, or the major part of them, or in case they shall be under Age, or otherwise incapable of executing this present power, then for the surviving or continuing trustee, or if there be no such trustee, then, for the retiring or renouncing trustee for the time being, or if there is no such last mentioned trustee, then for the executors or advisors of the last deceased trustee, to nominate any fit person or persons to supply the place or places of the trustee or trustees respectively, so dying, residing abroad, or becoming unwilling or unable to act as aforesaid, and that immediately after every such appointment the said trust Estates shall be conveyed or transferred in such manner that the same may vest in such new trustee or trustees jointly with the surviving or continuing trustee or trustees, or in such new trustee or trustees solely, as the case may require, and such new trustee or trustees shall have, and be capable of exercising, all the powers and authorities whatsoever hereinbefore contained, in the same manner to all intents and purposes as if he or they had been appointed a trustee or trustees by this, my will; Provided also, that the trustees for the time being of this, my Will, shall be charged and chargeable with such sums only as they shall respectively actively receive by virtue of the trusts hereby reposed in them notwithstanding their joining in any receipt or receipts, or doing any other Act for the sake of conformity; and that they or any of them shall not be answerable or accountable for involuntary misfortune, loss, or damage which may happen in the execution of the aforesaid trusts, or in relation thereto.

Provided also, and I hereby lastly declare that it shall be lawful for the said trustees or trustee for the time being, by and out of the money which shall come to their or his hands by virtue of the trusts aforesaid, to deduct, retain, and reimburse for themselves respectively, or himself, and also to allow each other all costs, charges, damages, and expenses and fees, to Counsel for advice which they, or any of them may sustain, disburse, or incur in or about the execution of the aforesaid trusts, or in relation thereto.

And as to all the rest, residue, and remainder of any Estates and Effects whatsoever, whether real or Personal, not hereinbefore specifically bequeathed or disposed of, subject to and after payment of all my just debts and funeral expenses, and the charges of proving this, my Will, I hereby devise, bequeath, and dispose of the same, and every part thereof, to my said Sons James Coombs and Samuel Wedmore Coombs, their heirs, executors, advisors, and assigns, equally to be divided between them as tenants in common and not as joint Tenants.

And lastly I hereby constitute and appoint my said Sons James Coombs and Samuel Wedmore Coombs Executors of this, my last Will and Testament.

In Witness thereof, I have to this, my last Will and Testament, set my hand this twenty third day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred, and thirty eight

Signed Hannah Coombs.

and declared by the above named Hannah Coombs, as and for her last Will and testament, in the presence of us present at the same time, who, in her presence and in the presence of each other, have hereunto set our names as witnesses, the name "Samuel" having been substituted for the name "Charles" in the thirty third line of the first page³, in the eight³ thirty third³ and thirty fourth³ line on the second page, and in the twentieth³ line of the last page, and in the twenty third³ line of the same page previously to the execution thereof by the said Hannah Coombs.

Francis R. Ward, Sole., Bristol John Gaiger of Nailsea, Schoolmaster.

Proved at London the 30th April 1841(?) before the Judge, by the oaths of James Coombs and Samuel Wedmore Coombs, the Sons, the Executors to whom Administration (?) was granted, having been first sworn by Commission only to administer.

NOTES

¹ DSG - the will says carrier, not currier - error by lawyer's clerk or change of occupation?

² "Coverture"

Shorter OED "Covert"

Said of a married woman "Under the cover, authority, or protection of her husband"

³ Because of the transcription the lines referred to no longer apply

George Hardwidge

Editor - I have been fortunate in receiving from Winnie Carter in USA some information about her grandfather.

From Rev H Bolitho United Methodist Minister 26 Frayne Road Bristol Dec 5 1924

Dear Bro

Hereunder is written the entry to be placed in the Church minute book about Bro Hardwidge

As to Sunday I hope you will have a good morning congregation. Pass the word around that Mrs B is coming. Did you stick up a notice?

I trust the true spirit is being cultivated by all. Now is the opportunity to show whether Nailsea Chapel contains those who not only profess the Christian spirit but possess it. There must be in a small a real striving after affectionate unity. And it remarkable if one will leave now that will grow

I am sending class tickets herewith. Please fill in member's names and see they are distributed this quarter. Let me know the total number

Kind regards

Yours Ffthly H Bolitho

We hereby place on record our sincere appreciation & affectionate remembrance of the Christian character and devoted service of Bro George Hardwidge. For ? years Bro Hardwidge loyally and consistently served and loved His Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ in connexion with this cause. His interest in the preaching of the Gospel in the salvation of his fellow men, in the maintenance of Divine worship was always keen and never abated.

He gave himself not only to the Church but also loved to work and teach in the Sunday School, always carrying the best interests of the children upon his mind and heart.

The Temperance Movement had his ardent support and cooperation. His radiant and happy presence won the esteem & love of all. He has passed after much suffering uncomplainingly borne into the Divine Presence leaving

behind a gracious memory and an inspiring example. We record our sincere sympathy with his bereaved widow and sorrowing family & pray our loving Lord

to console them with His heavenly comfort strengthen us to take up the work our Brother has laid down & raise up others to labour with us worthily in the Gospel..

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more & more unto the perfect day"

(Prov 4/18)

Ebenezer Chapel Outing

From: "J.T. & W.M. Carter" <jtcarter@crosslink.net>

To: "Peter Wright" <peter.c.wright@btinternet.com>

Subject: Re. Recent e.mail Date: 14 November 2001 00:13

Dear Mr. Wright,

Glad to hear your computer problems have been fixed. Computers can be very good when working but a pain in the neck when they break down. Sorry you lost all your work.

The picture I sent was of an outing from Ebenezer Chapel to Heavens Gate Wilts. I think it may have been taken about 1926 or 1927. I am judging this by my age on the photo. I think I look about 7 or 8 years old. I am in the front row,(centre)kneeling down, my hat is over my eyes . Back then we went on outings in a charabanc, no coaches in those days. When the weather was good they put the top down

Here is a list of names I can remember. From left to right.

Mr. Hayes, Mrs George Hardwidge Jr., Mrs Percy Hardwidge(Edith), Mrs.Willmott's sister, Mr. Mrs. Willmott, Mrs. Davies, Mr. Frank Webber, Mrs.Horman with Harold and Ivy, Millie Stone, Mr. Mrs. Stone, Mrs. James Shortman, (mother) Mr. Matthews, Mr. Mrs Martin and George, Sammy James. Mrs. Frank Webber and Bert, Hettie Brimble, Marjorie, Reg and Alf Hardwidge, Miss Effie Davies, Ivy Hobbs, Winnie Shortman, Olive Matthews, Miss Waite, Ivy Hobbs, Charlie Brimble.

Hope you get all your work caught up in time for printing,

Sincerely Winifred.

Nailsea Glassmakers – Where Did They Go?

Brian J M Hardyman

Brian was well known as being an authority on glassmakers when he lived in this area and I was pleased to be able to contact him again. He offered me an article about Nailsea Glassworkers and where they went following the closure of Nailsea Glassworks. I was pleased to accept. You will probably have seen his previous article in Pennant 29. In May he wrote:-

Dear Peter,

Thank you for sending me the latest issue of Pennant. I found all the articles of interest. It was kind of you to send me a copy which I feel is a very good idea as I can then answer any enquirers with any queries on my piece. In the past I have written to family history societies and not having seen the text in their journals been unable to give a good answer to correspondents. The text submitted does not always read as you drafted as the editor changes the wording unknown to you. I always keep a copy of my own wording in case the original is lost in transit. (Ed. See Footnote)

I was especially interested in the list of Settlements and Bastardy Orders. It is many years since I looked at the Settlements in Nailsea Library and the list seems to be a lot bigger than I thought. It is possible I only looked at a portion of them as I cannot remember any Bastardy Orders. When I was researching Nailsea glassmakers it was in the early part of my venture and I now realise mistakes were made due to lack of experience.

I have enclosed a further article for consideration for publication. If you have any queries please do let me know.

If you have any readers contacting you regarding glassmakers of Nailsea please feel free to let them have my name and address.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course and thank you for your kindness.

Yours sincerely,
Brian J M Hardyman

Where Did They Go?

The closure of Nailsea Glassworks in 1873 was a major blow to many of the families in the village, including the glassmakers. Over the years glassmaking families had settled in Nailsea, coming from many parts of the United Kingdom where glass was blown. Many were now forced to move away from the Somerset area, finding employment elsewhere. Bristol glassmaking was reduced to just one glasshouse so there was little hope of a short move to Bristol. So where did they go?

By 1873 the number of British glass manufactories had diminished due to various reasons. The industry was no longer labour intensive as glass was in the main no longer hand blown, mechanisation was now the way and this caused glass masters to shorten their workforces. Opportunities of employment were therefore limited.

There were several main areas where glass was being produced on a large scale, namely Durham and Lancashire. The 1881 Census gives a good indication of where Nailsea families now plied their trades.

Around fourteen Nailsea families were living in the Durham areas :-Edwin Leonard, Edward S. HODGES, James and Charles NOBLE, John MALCOLM, Frederick BENNETT, John Z. and Joseph PHILLIPS, John PYE, Charles J. PEARCE, John HURST, James QUICK, George BURRIDGE and William ROBINSON. The Lancashire glass manufactories was also able to accept some of the skilled Nailsea glassmakers including John BATTEN, William BRIMBLE, Robert FAIRLESS, Peter DODDS, Frederick, James, Thomas, George and Richard KNIGHT, Joseph and Henry PHILLIPS, Henry GRAY, Alexander SHIELDS, Richard, John and James SIMS, George TAYLOR, Thomas TUCKER, John TULIP, George, Samuel and John H. WHITE and William LEONARD.

Other families went to other glassmaking areas.

These included 17 to Staffordshire, 2 to Yorkshire, 7 to Warwickshire, 5 to London, 3 to Surrey and 2 to Devonshire.

John Brooks and George Noble were the families who moved to Devonshire, which was not a glassmaking area. John Brooks family is shown on the 1881 Census as a retired glassmaker, aged 79 years, married to Emma. The Brooks name had long standing connections with Nailsea glassmaking as a Brooks from the village had left Nailsea some years prior to 1881, becoming Mayor of Dublin, Ireland.

The Nobles had strong links with both Bristol and Nailsea glass manufactories. It seems that George Noble moved on his own to Devonshire as he is shown living in St Thomas the Apostle, Exeter, Devonshire as a glasscutter. His wife Emma and his 4 children were all shown as being born in Exeter. Some families stayed in Nailsea, changing their occupation. Two of them being Mark Noble and Thomas Smailman (*Ed. Smallman?*), both former glassmakers.

Mark and Anna Noble were both born in Nailsea. Mark became a general labourer, but on the evidence of the 1881 Census it shows the family had spent some time in West Bromwich, Staffordshire. Like many glassmakers he had moved back to Nailsea, which with hindsight was possibly not a good move.

Thomas Smailman and wife Hannah became Nailsea shopkeepers and newsagents in Silver Street. This family had also moved away in the past, living for a short while in Smethwick, Staffordshire. Some of the workforce were of retiring age, such as Richard Knight, who has no occupation on the 1881 Census, living with his wife Mary aged 68 years. The Census shows they had a grandson living with them who had been born in Sunderland, Durham. Richard and Mary had lived in Smethwick in the 1840s.

With the closure of the glassworks a Distress Fund was set up so that the blow could be softened. At the closure there were upward of 200 men and boys employed in the glassworks and local pit. The pit had also closed as the coal was no longer required by the glasshouse. Notices in the press hoped that some of the workforce would find employment locally, but stated it would be hard as wages would be lower. Glassmakers were always well paid, being in the upper region of the wages structure, hence the majority of families moved around the British isles to ply their trade. The period around 1873 in Nailsea and surrounding areas must have been worrying times. We are seeing manufacturing closures even in the 21st Century but we have systems which give some relief to hard hit families, in the 19th Century there no such buffer and people had to rely on charity or Disaster Funds such as the one in Nailsea when its main industries went for ever.

(Editor – When this was prepared by me time was of the essence and decisions had to be made as to paragraphing and the text I had already prepared in rough form prior to a computer crash. If by chance I have made errors in preparing this my apologies go to the author and the reader. Any necessary corrections will be in Pennant 31)

Cyril Wilcox of Wraxall

An appreciation by Phyllis Horman

Many years ago, when our Local History Society met at the Library in the children's room, downstairs, we had a speaker from Wraxall, who gave a talk and I think, slides or pictures, on a walk around the fields of Wraxall, this was Cyril Willcox.

He was a brother of my friend Betty (we've been friends since childhood) so I've known him for many, many years. A very interesting person to have a chat with, because he had so many interests. One day he and I were talking about family history and I ended up with getting him information on both sides of his family.

It seemed that his Willcox's, although at one time some were in Nailsea, his came from an area in Bristol, so I could not go back very far, but the Windsor's (early spelling Winsor) were an old Nailsea family going back to a marriage at Holy Trinity on Easter Day 1698.

We were most excited about that and his personal tree was very direct to make.

Unfortunately Cyril's health became very poor and he passed away on October 13th. He will be sadly missed by many people as he had so many friends.