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PENNANT



Wraxall Cross Tree
From the M. J. Tozer collection

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

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The Wraxall Cross Tree

by Phyllis Horman and Wilfred Rew

It would seem that the area around the Cross Tree at Wraxall was the most important focal point of the village for hundreds of years, excluding the church of course. It was the site of the weekly market and annual fair, nearby the stocks and whipping post, the smithy and the village pound.

A charter was granted to Elena de Gorges in 1290 for a weekly market on Thursdays and a yearly fair lasting 8 days. This was revised in 1362 for Theobald Gorges and although we have found no written evidence of the weekly market, it is stated in a Dictionary for the County of Somerset 1840 "A fair is held here at Allhallows-tide which lasts 6 days".

Legend tells us that during Cromwell's time, the villagers dismantled the market cross and hid it in the river. It was never replaced and an elm tree was planted in the base where the cross had stood. There have been three successive elms here over hundreds of years and it was only when Dutch Elm disease was in this area some years ago that the last tree died. The present sapling is an oak and seems to be flourishing, it is the third to have replaced the last elm, one was a weeping willow, the other a chestnut, but neither survived.

Repairs to the stocks and whipping post are mentioned in the Churchwarden's Accounts. It would be interesting to know if they were frequently used and for what reasons.

The area immediately around the Cross Tree doesn't seem large enough to have held a fair much less an 8 day market, but it is to be remembered that until 1894 the piece of Churchyard from the east end of the church to the lych gate was open ground, part being an old orchard. The bottom of Wraxall Hill was made

into a road in 1820/1 so that would have been more open land and it would seem that when the main road (now B3130) was first laid, alterations were made in the field opposite the Cross Tree, so this would have been more spare land.

It is not known if the site of the forge is the original. The cottage to the left of the Cross Tree has been the home of the village blacksmith for a very long time, the forge is on the roadside next to the front garden. The blacksmith was a very important member of the community not only for shoeing horses but for making and repairing any ironwork especially farm tools. From the Churchwarden's Accounts of 1732/3 "Paid Sarah Morgan for mending ye twists and nailes for ye pound 4d" also "Paid her for stapels for ye leping stook and speaks nailes 5d". Does this mean she was, or helped, a blacksmith?

The village pound was said to be more or less where the school now stands and when it was built the pound was moved to behind the forge. Eventually it was used by the blacksmith as an extra yard.

It may only be coincidence but when Wraxall had a Post Office, early closing days were Thursdays, is this anything to do with the old weekly market?

To almost the present day the Cross Tree was a meeting place and on rare occasions when one went on an outing such as a Sunday School treat the pick up point was the Cross Tree.

The last blacksmiths of Wraxall were Mr Warry and a son. As a child it was fascinating to stand outside the forge door and watch the horses being shod; such a hot, bright fire, the puffing of bellows, the tinkling of hammers on iron and the smell met you many yards down the road!

One Hundred Years of Bristol's Weather

is the title of a book being prepared by Barry Horton but he tells us that he will be covering all of Avon.

He is asking for help by way of illustrations and maybe suggestions.

To give some idea of what he is after he mentions some of the weather events he is including in the book:-

Gales January 1990
Hot August 1990
Snow and cold January 1982
Hot and Dry summer 1976
Storm and Floods July 1968
Gales November 1963
Severe Winter 1962/3
Gales 1962
Severe Winter 1947
Thunderstorm and Flood July 1937
Thunderstorm and Flood 1936
Gales November 1928
Hot July 1923
Wet month / Flood September 1918
Storm and Flood August 1897
Cold Winter 1895

If you can help him please contact him at 4 Hill Street, Totterdown, Bristol, BS3 4TP.

Being a Londoner I did not experience the weather here prior to 1976 but I do know that Jim Pullan took some slides in the long hot summer of that year showing the path of the old tramway running across the fields from the junction of St Marys Grove and Engine Lane towards Bizley Farm. The dry weather

had affected the crop on the line of the track differently to that adjacent to it. This was obviously due to the disturbance of the ground probably 70+ years before.

What memories do you have and even more important do you have any photos? Did the bad weather that devastated the east coast of England and Holland early in 1953 have much effect in this part of the country?

I notice that we ran an article in Pennant No 4 (on the back page) referring to a report in the Bristol Observer 17th December 1894 about heavy rainfall and consequent flooding near Flax Bourton. I wonder if this was a bad year or just a heavy downpour.

I have sent Mr Horton a copy of that edition and this article. As editor of PENNANT I would also be interested in local events such as he is seeking.

A Small Testimonial to Bro. W. C. Lippiatt

From The Nailsea and District Local History Society Archive

The Testimonial Card was given to the Society by Louis Lippiatt son of W. C. Lippiatt and is reproduced with permission of the Lippiatt family.

It is of particular interest in that Louis has added details of the benefits and most of those who participated in the testimonial. *The notes give a picture of Nailsea people around the turn of the century but were written on January 9th 1975.*

Ancient Order of Foresters Benefit of 10/- per week for 13 weeks reducing to 5/- for further 14 weeks reducing then to 2/6d. Subscription 2/6d per year

Edwin Day

Butcher; killed pigs for cottagers.

A. Lippiatt

Carpenter; brother to W.C. Lippiatt. Went with him to Bath and West Show to construct stands.

William Elverd

Carpenter at Tyntesfield.

William Willcox

Farmer; Rock Farm; Sold milk around village from a pail.

Oliver Kitchen

Postman; Tickenham - Jacklands - Middletown.

G. Silverthorne

Fishman; Fish was transported from Bristol Market by train. Wife was called Hannah.

E. Lilley

Tyntesfield.

Joseph Pippett

Quarry master for Long Ashton Estates. Quarry behind Mr Lippiatt's home.

Edwin Lippiatt

Carpenter; Eldest son of W. C. Lippiatt.

Frank Rawlings

Coachman; for Dr White, Reggie White's uncle.

George Cutler

Postman.

Harry Patch

Maltster at E Thatcher & Co Heath Brewery.

Denis Sparks

Coachman; at Moorfields, Silver Street for Baston Family.

George Redgers

Labourer; Kings Hill area.

Jo Watkins

Mason.

W. Baker

(Bill or Gentleman Baker) Labourer / Gardener.

F. Nipper

Labourer.

Walter Bishop

Butcher. High Street.(Opposite Co-op, next door to present cycle shop)

J. Bellringer

Labourer; Sexton at Christ Church.

George Brown

George Crane

Labourer; Tickenham.

Harry Fisher

Engine Driver - Foden Engine Tyntesfield.(Father of Cliff Fisher)

E. Bye

Farmworker; Tickenham.

R. Bye

Farmworker; Tickenham.

Fred Burge

Labourer.

J. Winsor

Estate Decorator, Tyntesfield; Treasurer of AOF.

William Hobb

Labourer.

J. Brimble

F. Hobbs

W. James

Farm Worker; West End.

Charlie Baker

Labourer. (Son of William).

W. Rogers

Farm Worker; West End. Wife kept sweet and general shop near New Inn.

Tom Baker

Rose Farm at West End.

Albert Hobbs

same family (sic)

Charlie Taylor

Road Man; Old Church.

J. Redgers**T. Shaddick**

Labourer; Kings Hill.

Sydney Baker

Road man; Foreman; responsible for stone stacks.

Gilbert Pippett

Worked in Quarry. Son of Joseph Pippett.

George Packer

Lived next door to Co-op. Monkey Puzzle tree in garden.

Ernest Caple

Labourer. Lived in High Street (Pettefords Cottage).

C. Bowsher

New Comer

William Richards

Lived at Youngwood Farm.

William Baker

Haulage.

Charlie Weeks**George Ball**

Labourer.

Jim Vowles

Foreman at Brewery.

Charlie Bye

Tickenham.

H Fisher**James Young**

Farm Worker. Lived in Cottage next to Chapel in Tickenham.

W. Baker**Jim Vowles**

Postman. Son of Foreman at Brewery.

Oliver Jarrett

Painter and Decorater. Lived next to J Caple in cottages now called Little Egypt.

Jim Caple

Sold coal for Albert Wogan of Nailsea Coal Wharf. Lived in Little Egypt, father of Mabel Baker nee Caple Noahs Ark.

Harry Webb

Labourer. Lived behind Royal Oak.

G. Lock

Kings Hill.

W. G. Wetherall

Schoolmaster at Old Church & organiser (sic).

Willie Aish

Farmworker; Worker on Bath and West. Father of Fred Aish. Son of James Aish who lived at Maytree Cottage behind High St.

W. Yeates

Farm Worker; Kings Hill.

Hartley Webber

Local Carrier between Nailsea and Bristol. Depot at Old Fox, Redcliffe Street.

Extracts from the papers supplied by Martin Bodman

(Ed. Martin has supplied many references that he came across while carrying out research. He was only able to prepare an outline of what he came across and there is an opportunity for one or more of our members to take the opportunity to visit the reference library in Bristol to copy out the entries in full. Anyone who is interested should contact Norma Knight our Research Secretary on 01275 463955)

Felix Farley's Bristol Journal 22 January 1785

To be sold, in fee, Either ENTIRE or in Parcels, The Hundred of Portbury County of Somerset .. with the Manors of Portbury and Portishead and the fisheries ... 1500 acres .. of very good land .. Marshes, Downs, and other waste lands .. near 1500 acres more .. woodland called Limebridge, in the Parish of TICKENHAM, containing 77 acres

Felix Farley's Bristol Journal 18th September 1784

Freehold Estates for Sale .. Two very desirable compact Freehold Farms, situate in the parish of TICKENHAM, in the county of Somerset, about eight miles from the City of Bristol, now and for several years in the possession of John Hardwick and Henry Edgill as tenants at will...

Directories of Nailsea

Information taken from typed copies in the N&DLHS archives and from information supplied by Mike Tozer.

The first of a series:-

Post Office Directory 1861

Nailsea is a large parish and village, on the Bristol and Exeter railway, 9 miles south-west of Bristol, in the Bedminster union, eastern division of the county, Portbury hundred, Chew Magna deanery, Bath archdeaconry, and diocese of Bath and Wells. The church of the Holy Trinity is an ancient stone building in the Perpendicular style and was thoroughly repaired in 1861; it has a nave, aisle, chancel, tower with 6 bells, old register chest and singular stone pulpit. The living is a rectory, value $\text{œ}300$ yearly with residence. The Rev. Frederick Brown, M.A., is patron and rector and the Rev George Elton is curate. Christ church, erected in 1844, is a neat stone building in the Early English style; it has a nave and chancel and will seat 400 persons, all open. The living is a district parish and perpetual curacy, value £120 yearly, with residence, in the gift of the rector. The Rev William Henry Ricketts Bayley, M.A., is the incumbent. Here are also chapels for Wesleyans, Independents, and the United Methodist free Church and two National Schools. The population in 1851 was 2,567 and in 1861 2,337, and contains 2,688 acres of land. Sir J.M. Greville Smyth, Bart (lord of the manor), John Rodbard, Henry L. Bean and Thomas Gee, Esqrs, are the chief landowners. There are several coal-pits in this parish also extensive glassworks and stone quarries, corn and saw mills, a tannery and a small brewery. The soil is loamy. There is a large tract of moorland, which was enclosed under an Act of Parl., in the year 1813.

At the Post Office was Timothy Parker; letters arrive at 7-20am and are dispatched at 7-45pm. Money Orders are granted and paid at this office.

Insurance Agents Mutual Life John D Weymouth; Atlas T W Farler Stamp distributor Timothy Park.

Carriers

Richard Bolwell	from Angel Redcliffe St	Mon,	Tue,	Thur,	Fri,
William Durbin	" " "	"	"	"	"
John Shepstone	" " "	Wed,	Thur,		
Richard Elverd	from Red Lion Yard	Mon,	Tue,	Wed,	Thur, Sat.

Backwell's War Memorial

by John Brain

The decision to erect Backwell's War Memorial was taken at a Parish Meeting on May 8th 1919. There was a division of opinion on its siting, some favouring the Cross Roads but its position just opposite the parish church won the day, and how right that the names of those who gave their lives in war are remembered so close to the churchyard where so many other parishioners because of their sacrifice, died in peace.

A fine grey granite Cross incorporating a sword point downwards, was erected on three stone steps, set generously in land on the edge of Court farm, and the Dedication Service attended by the then Patron of the Living, the Marques of Bath, was held on Sunday October 10th 1920. A large congregation included the Rector, Revd. E.S.S. Caudwell, the Archdeacon of Bath, William Lott, Chairman of the Parish Council, and the schoolmaster, Mr John Webb, only recently returned after losing a leg in the War. The tablets on the Memorial were the work of Mr G.O. Dennis of Nailsea.

The annual ceremony of remembrance is always a moving ceremony, and seldom does the weather for some reason ever deny us the privilege of being present as the wreaths are laid.

The Royal British Legion's representatives over the years come to mind: Len Morgan, Jack Sams, and now Mrs Pat Dunn as Standard Bearers; the late Esmond Robinson, their President for a number of years, who read the Names of the Fallen with such dignity, and Mr A. J. Martin, manager of the Agricultural Co-op (now Signet Signs) who for many years played the Last post at the Service.

The Legion continues to tend the Memorial with loving care, and have won the North Mendip Cup for their efforts on numerous occasions. Their efforts of course serve to underline Binyon's lines that "at the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them".

This is the first article in a series covering War Memorials in Backwell, Nailsea, Tickenham and Wraxall. The Editor would welcome information and early photographs of these.