

A View of Lydiard Millicent

The following history of Lydiard Millicent was compiled by Douglas Payne. He was for a time Headmaster of Lydiard Millicent School. He was also the driving force and Project Manager when the roof of All Saints Church was removed and repaired. He was an artist and very interested in the history of the village and the Church.

I don't know how long it took to put this information together and get it printed but it would not have been so easy as it is today with the internet, emails and computers. I intend to dedicate around four pages of the magazine each month to reproduce the history of Lydiard Millicent as compiled by Douglas Payne.

Lydiard Millicent

The KING holds Lydiar. Godric held it in the time of King Edward.

It paid tax for ten hides. There is land for 8 ploughs.

In Lordship there are 6 hides less one virgate. 4 ploughs; 9 slaves Ten villagers and 6 smallholders have 6 ploughs.

There is a mill of 32d : a meadow of 20 acres.

The woodland is one league long and one-half league wide.

The value was £10, now £12

These two villages were of the Earl William. (Domesday 1085)

Subject Headings of the Book

The following is a list of the subjects covered by Douglas Payne and I will follow the structure, as he set it out in monthly instalments.

- An appraisal of the 19th c
- Clerical consciences and social reform
- Origin of Lydiard Millicent
- The feudal Lords
- The Turgis and Baskett tenure
- William Webbe, the recusant
- Sir John Askew's Grand Plan
- The Kibblewhite affair
- The latter days
- Church and Chapel
- Educations
- A village schoolmistress
- Communications
- Facts and figures
- Catastrophe
- Rank, fame and fortune

Introduction from D Payne

"History involves the study of primary sources, and reliable secondary sources if

they are available, but they are rarely complete. Anyone studying the history of a village is bound to consult the accumulated records of the Manor, or any other proprietary interest in the area, including the Church and its unit of local government called the Vestry, which preceded the formulation of civil parishes at the end of the 19th century.

Unfortunately, the bulk of the Manorial records of this parish have been lost and it is likely that they were consumed in the Great Fire which destroyed the Manor House in 1880. However, some were available to the Rev. William Henry McKnight MA, when he occupied the Manor House for 20 years as a tenant, and, therefore, he is an important secondary source to be consulted. He wrote "Lydiard Manor : its history", which was published by Mitchell and Hughes in 1892. A copy is available in the Swindon Reference library.

McKnight was not the Rector of this parish or Lord of the Manor, but his interest and concern for the community had a profound effect upon it, and I have chosen to begin this series of essays with an appreciation of this gentleman, and the times in which he was so influential, for there is little doubt that his arrival and subsequent residence in this parish was providential. His social conscience and practical assistance proved to be instrumental in the survival of the village community.

I have lived and worked in this parish for 35 years and I hope that these essays will be of some interest to residents, both old and new, until such time as a more expert appraisal becomes available when the Victoria County History series is completed in the not too distant future."

DOUGLAS PAYNE BA
FEBRUARY 1999

An Appraisal of the 19th Century

The Rev., William Henry McKnight M.A. came to Lydiard Millicent in 1851 to establish a School for the sons of Gentlemen in the Manor House which he had leased from Mrs. Streeten, widow of the Rev., Henry Streeten, previously Lord of the Manor and Vicar of Rodbourne Cheney. Before his arrival McKnight had been priest-in-charge of Westport church in the parish of Malmesbury and tutor to the sons of the Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire, at Charlton Park. Although he was a gentleman cleric of noble ancestry he was a Liberal Broadchurchman, seriously concerned with the social problems of his day, and a Radical who came to be known, often derisively, as the "Political Parson",

Shortly after his arrival in the district, the Bishop of Gloucester asked him to take informal charge of the parish of All Saints, Lydiard Millicent, which had been deprived of a resident priest-in-charge for 129 years as the result of a deplorable Church of England practice known as "holding livings in plurality", whereby a cleric could purchase the advowsons of several livings, and draw their income in tithes without ever serving the livings personally. Such parishes were often sorely neglected.

The Rector of this parish in 1851 was the Rev, Dr, Warneford of Sevenhampton

near Highworth, who was a well known benefactor, scholar and philanthropist, but shortly after he acquired the living in 1809, he was embroiled in a dispute over tithes in which it appeared that the vendor's agent had been not entirely straightforward with him. He left the parish in high dudgeon, declaring that never again would he set foot in the parish, and he kept his word. He paid the Rev., Hugh Allan, an elderly curate from Cricklade, to ride over periodically and take the essential services for a stipend of £100 per year. No doubt, Allan did his best, but in these circumstances the spiritual welfare of the parishioners was sadly neglected, and the notorious "hungry forties" had eroded their physical welfare. Hunger, inadequate housing, disease and irregular employment were common place.

Conditions in manufacturing areas were notoriously bad at this time, but they could be equally hazardous in rural areas, particularly in southern England, albeit for different reasons. William Cobbett, the reformer, in his popular account of 1830, "Rural Rides", stated of the locality, "I rode through that villainous hole, Cricklade, but an hour ago, and a more rascally looking place I ne'er set eyes on. Dwellings like pigbeds, and the food of the labourer hardly equal to that of the pig. Truly this Wiltshire is a horrible county."

The Napoleonic wars had affected the rural economy. Imported wheat had been priced at 43s. per quarter in 1792; by 1812 it had risen to 126s. per quarter. The producers had prospered in the interim period when imports were restrained but the consumers suffered through inflated prices of bread. After the war, when foreign trade improved, the prices fell and many farmers faced ruin, so the Corn Laws were enacted; wheat could not be imported until the price of corn had risen to 80s. per quarter. Bread prices remained high and continued to do so until the Corn Laws were repealed in 1846. Potatoes were a staple food and the effects of the potato famine in Ireland in 1845 are well known, but "phytophthora infestans" was no respecter of boundaries and the blight was prevalent in some parts of this country.

The Chartists were active in the 40's and ricks were burned locally. There was tenuous job security among agricultural labourers. For many the work was seasonal, particularly during haymaking and harvest, and workers were laid off at short notice, often through the vagaries of the weather. Those who fell upon hard times were eligible for Poor Law relief, usually "outdoor relief" according to a scale which had been drawn up by the magistrates of Speenhamland, Berks., in 1795. Unfortunately, the laudable intention of linking wages to the price of bread was reduced to a sliding scale of subsidy out of parish rates. It was, typically, the price of 3 gallon loaves of bread for a man, one and a half for his wife and a similar amount for every child, when the price of a gallon loaf, (8 & one-half lbs,) was one shilling. Thus a married couple with two children would receive 6s 6d. per week for all purposes at a time when the typical Wiltshire weekly wage was 8s Od.

In the year ending March 1825, when the parish population was approximately 400, Brian Bewley, Overseer of the Poor, collected £447 12s 2d in rates and disbursed for the maintenance of the poor, the sum of £335 13s 10d. In 1827, the Parish Overseer's Relief Criterion was, "When the gallon loaf is at 1s 4d., a man with

a wife and 4 children receives 6 gallon loaves costing 8s 0d., and in money, 2s 0d., making 10s 0d. per week when the average wage for a labourer is 12s 0d., per week." The office of Overseer was not popularly sought. In 1841, Mr. Herring, the Overseer refused to act so William Large, his assistant was called upon to do so, urgently. If both men had refused the Churchwardens were empowered to summon them before Magistrates to show cause for their refusal. Men of character occasionally refused if they thought that the scale of implementation was too punitive.

Even if the scale was subsistence only, it was preferable to the rigours of the Workhouse. The Parish Workhouse was in Stone Lane, on the site occupied later by the Isolation Hospital, which is now a private dwelling, number 37 Stone Lane, but it was superseded in 1837 by the Poor law Union Workhouse at Purton, centralisation being a cheaper alternative. In many cases the Parish house had been a temporary refuge administered sympathetically. In the PLU's there was a "means test" on admission and the terms of residence were less agreeable than any which prevailed outside.

The Vestry which appointed the Overseers was a powerful body elected under the auspices of the Church of England as its unit of local administration. In rural areas its members were usually farmers, and farmers paid the bulk of the parochial rates where agriculture was the dominant industry, so much depended upon the Christian consciences of the officers.

Population mobility was severely restricted. An individual could not sojourn for long in a parish if he or she was in danger of becoming chargeable to the ratepayers of that parish. In such cases offenders were summoned to appear before a magistrate, evidence taken and enquiries made, and if the magistrate determined, the transgressor was conveyed back to the parish of origin by birth. These Settlement examinations provide valuable social commentary.

One such Inquiry states "Examination of John Cowley of Wroughton and Sarah Cowley, now inhabiting the Workhouse at Highworth.....taken on oath before us, two of Her Majesty's J. P.'s on the 14th of December 1843 touching the place of the last legal settlement of the said Sarah Cowley and her bastard child, now about 8 months....John Cowley on his oath saith as follows. "I am a labourer residing at Highworth in this county. The place of my legal settlement is in the parish of Lydiard Millicent. I was removed there under an order of removal about 26 years ago from the parish of Lydiard Tregoz and there was no appeal against the same. Mr. Thomas Neale, Overseer of Lydiard Tregoz, took me to Mr. Millington, Overseer of Lydiard Millicent, and he found me work as long as I wanted. I was not married at that time. In the month of April 1822, I was married at Wroughton to Elizabeth Walter, my present wife. Since my marriage I have received relief from Lydiard Millicent for several years but I have not received any for the 10 to 11 years. I have done no act to gain a settlement elsewhere". Sarah Cowley said on her oath, "I am the daughter of John Cowley of Wroughton. Two years ago last Michaelmas, I went to live with Mr. George Edwards of Lushill Farm in the parish of Castle Eaton. Last April I left

Mr. Edwards in the family way, and went home to my fathers at Wroughton where I was delivered of a female bastard child on 15th of July last. About 3 weeks ago, in consequence of my father being unable to support me, I became chargeable to the parish of Wroughton, and the relieving officer of Highworth and Swindon PLU gave an order (permit) to go into the workhouse where I am now living with my bastard child. I have done no act to gain a settlement in my own right". Two officials gave corroborative evidence.

The Inquiry found that both John and Sarah Cowley were chargeable to Lydiard Millicent and thus the charitable action of the late Overseer, Millington, had unforeseen consequences.

To be continued

A View of Lydiard Millicent – Part 2

There are other examples of Settlement Inquiries relating to this parish.

John Lambert had been apprenticed by the Broad Hinton overseer to a Trowbridge Entrepreneur as a showman. After 3 years he ran away to join His Majesty's service by Sea, where he served for 7 years. As a sailor with an honourable discharge, he had settled in this parish with Mary, his wife. Nevertheless, he was returned to Broad Hinton in 1807.

John Giles was a sewing soldier in the Wilts., Regiment of Militia in 1807. He had been in the employment of a farmer at Lydiard Tregoz but he left this employment voluntarily and bound himself to another farmer in Oxfordshire for 1 year. He ran away from the service after 10 days but was apprehended 10 days later by warrant and returned to his employer who abated him a guinea out of his wages. After expiry of service he was now unemployed. His wife and son lived with him in Lydiard Millicent; he was permitted to remain.

These Settlement examinations often detail harrowing stories and the most striking feature of them is the restriction of liberty brought about by accident of birth. Many labourers drifted to the manufacturing areas seeking employment, while others chose to emigrate. In 1848, eight young men between 18 and 27 applied to the PLU for assisted passages to America. Richard Parsons and his family applied in 1849, setting an example for others to follow. Young paupers were apprenticed by the Board of Guardians to suitable trades. In 1831, Charles Jordan, 16, son of Elizabeth Jordan, deceased, was indentured to a cordwainer at Avebury in the sum of £5.

However, until the advent of the railways the bulk of the labouring poor stayed put, competing for employment in a society which was growing in numbers due to improvements in medical science, Census returns for Lydiard Millicent in the 19th century indicate the number of residents as follows:-

1801.....300	1811.....340	1821.....390	1831.....410	1841.....580
1851.....490	1861.....590	1871.....770	1881.....890	1891.....920

The slight increase recorded in 1841 was due to the number of "navvies" resident temporarily in the district constructing the Great Western Railway.

There is some slender evidence of population trends in earlier centuries in Lydiard Millicent to be derived from an analysis of patronymics occurring in Church Registers, although they are only as accurate as the clerics who recorded them. Thus,-

In 1550 to 1600,....68 patronymics, 1600 to 1650....155,
in 1650 to 1700.....93 ditto, 1700 to 1750....156,
in 1750 to 1800.....138 patronymics.

The figures suggest a marked reduction in the second half of the 17th century which was confirmed in its day by a Census of Wilts, in 1676, by Henry Compton, Bishop of London, who was requesting a return of Conformists, Papists and Non-Conformists in "Decanatus Cricklade, Lyddiard Melesent Conformists 132, Papists 2, Non-Conformists 0." To these figures may be added 40% to allow for children under 16. The Great Plague of 1665 et seq., may have accounted for a marked reduction in 1650 to 1700.

When the 19th century census returns for local parishes are compared, they reveal that Lydiard Millicent increased by 270% during the century

Purton increased by 172%,
Brinkworth increased by 120%,
Liddington increased by 20%, and
Lydiard Tregoz increased by 8%, whereas
Ashton Keynes remained relatively stable,
Ogbourne decreased by 4% and
Broad Hinton decreased by 58%.

All of the increases occurred in parishes within the Vale of the White Horse, each within walking distance of Swindon, and heavily dependent upon an agricultural economy utilising intensive labour such as dairying and, latterly, market gardening, whereas the remainder are downland habitations relying on sheep farming and arable cultivations.

An occupational analysis of Lydiard residents in 1851 reveals that 102 persons were labourers and 92 of them were employed on local farms. Eighteen persons were farmers, 18 were servants, 12 were paupers and 46 were tradesmen or members of professions. There were 92 scholars, most of whom attended the village school, founded in 1840. Although only 2 men are specifically identified as Railway employees, there are 205 people over the age of 12 years, who had occupations great and small but not directly associated with agriculture.

When analysed by age,

67 were infants less than 5 years of age,
70 were children between 6 and 10 years of age,
99 were youth, aged 11 to 20,
129 were aged between 20 and 40,
62 were between 40 and 60 and

38 were over 60 years of age, leaving 35 older persons of indeterminate age or unlisted, which means that they were probably "in the 'house", commonly known as

"the spike" Occupations included shoemaker, cordwainer, dressmaker, smockmaker, shepherd, blacksmith, woodman, grocer, publican, and wheelwright, all of which were typical of a self supporting community, but the hierarchy among farm labourers, which traditionally assumed carters and thatchers to be of the highest rank, and cowmen and pigmen to be of the lowest, had not been adopted in this census.

Surnames still represented today include:-

Clark, Greenwood, Tuck, Wicks, Ricketts, Beasant, Morse, Selby, Fisher, Glead, Howard, Edmonds, Norris and Newth.

In the late 19th century, the parish was 7 miles long and 1 mile wide at its widest point. Broadly speaking, it was a linear development with outlying farms. Approximately, 119 people lived at Shaw, 17 at Washpool, 33 at Nine Elms and 4 at Roughmoor, totalling 173. Greater Shaw was distinct from the other districts, being more dependent upon expanding Swindon and its people were less introverted. Holborn, Brookside, and Parkside were farming settlements with 14 residents. The Street, including Butts lane, had 135 residents and was the residual element of the Manor Estate. Lydiard Green had a distinctive atmosphere and appears to have been a settlement on manorial waste which grew up following some latter day, agreed enclosures. Tradesmen, yeomen and rural craftsmen lived

there who were determined survivors, sturdy independent folk who became fervent foundation members of parochial Methodism. Neighbouring Greatfield was of similar origin. It adapted itself to market gardening in later years but there was a depressed settlement of labourers' hovels at Cob Gutter. Between them they accounted for 68 residents. Greenhill began when "assarts" were created following the disafforestation of the Royal Forest of Bradon in the 17th century. A small brickmaking industry was established there at the time, and it continued to support some workers until recent times but the majority of the 60 residents were plot holders or labourers, and apart from the farmsteads, their cottages, often erected within a very limited timescale, were primitive. In the 19th century it had the reputation of being insular. In the circumstances, the Anglican parish church was a unifying influence but the Non-Conformists were more active proselytisers. The Methodists in particular found favour among the working classes

There were local hiring fairs for labourers but there is little evidence of parochial transfer during the pre-railway era, except through marriage.

Life was hazardly for the young and elderly before public health legislation was enacted and cheap imported food became available. It was a problem which was to greatly concern McKnight.

There was a marked rise in Infant mortality in the decade 1843-1852, when 25 children under 5 years of age died, compared with 8 in the previous decade. Between 1813 and 1837, twelve children of school age died, but between 1837 and 1857, the number increased to 24. Some authorities blamed the cramped unhygienic conditions of newly opened schools at a time when many infectious or contagious diseases of childhood were potentially lethal. Smallpox was prevalent from 1828 to

1832 which almost doubled the overall death rate. Bad harvests and inclement weather, particularly the vicious winters of 1881 and 1882 were to take their toll in later years.

Farmers were the major employers.

John and Sarah Cole kept Rowmore or Roughmoor farm at Shaw which measured 230 acres and they employed 11 men, 6 women and 3 boys.

Thomas Butt Sadler had 30 acres at Shaw and employed 3 men; his neighbour, James Ricks, had 60 acres and employed 7 men. Another yeoman, Stephen Reynolds, farmed 10 acres without help.

Mary Tuckey and her son, Richard, owned 173 acres at Peatmoor and employed 3 men. Both Roughmoor and Peatmoor were latter day enclosures, formerly known as "the Lorde's marshe" in mediaeval times, which became viable following improved drainage and agricultural procedure as a result of the Agrarian Revolution.

Further west, John and Mary Bewley farmed Parkside farm of 356 acres with 11 men, 6 women and 3 boys as labourers. The property was part of the Bolingbroke estate and had been acquired by the St. John family in the 16th century.

Thomas and Joan Plummer farmed Brook House farm of 230 acres and employed 10 men, 6 women and 1 boy. The date of enclosure is not known but much drainage must have been necessary to make it viable.

After the death of Lady Blunt, Bewley acted as agent for the estate's executors for many years and collected the rent and church rates. It had been neglected for more than a decade. John Hinder kept Parsonage farm which was 75 acres of Glebe land, but the farmhouse, formerly the Priest's dwelling, which stood on the site of the present school playing field, was ruinous, and Hinder dwelt elsewhere. He employed 8 men. The cowshed, totally unimproved, was demolished only 10 years ago.

William Large had the Grove of 24 acres which he had recently emparked and planted with walnut trees. Like Parsonage, it had formerly been manorial open fields and traces of the exceptionally wide lands created by ploughing with oxen can still be seen.

Jacob Morse, at the Green, was a descendant of a spirited family who remained undaunted after enclosures and he owned 6 acres which he cultivated with the help of 1 man, creating the first known market gardening enterprise which later was to be an important element in the village economy.

Godwins was a magnificent farmstead, the centre of a once prosperous farm which had belonged in pre- Reformation days to Stanley Abbey, but it dwindled to 57 acres, farmed by Cornelious Kibblewhite who employed 8 men and 4 boys.

There were 3 farms at Greenhill but all within the parish of St. Mary's, Purton.

William Hedges was a carter who conveyed goods to and from Wootton Bassett and from door to door. He offered a slow form of transport to elderly or infirm travellers or those too burdened to walk. Rosanna Franklin was described as a "landed proprietor" and lived in the house presently known as "The Paddocks". Peter Morse

was a thatcher and seldom unemployed at a time when roofs were thatched. The village blacksmith was Thomas Howard whose forge was situated in the Street on that land now designated as "Forge Fields". Two of his 4 sons assisted and their business included an adjacent wheelwright's shop. He employed 1 man.

Mary Ann Kibblewhite, of independent means, lived at "The Close", now demolished

The "Sun Inn" was kept by Sarah Kerby and supplied by the brewers Reed bros., of Marlborough. Charles Ricks, of number 3 or 4, the Street, was a shoemaker and an independent spirit who acted as the village spokesman. A neighbour, Richard Wicks, was one of several carpenters

Maria Ody and her neighbour, Mary Ann Wicks, were dressmakers, but Mrs. Ody was alarmed because one of her traditional sources of income, smock-making for labourers, was becoming less popular due to the introduction of broadcloth. William Wheeler, who lived in Butts Lane, was a carpenter- journeyman, who also owned an adjacent sawyers' pit. Job Morse dealt in cattle. The village school was just 10 years old and comprised a single schoolroom and dwelling. John Hawkins was the headmaster and his sister was an assistant teacher. John Canning was a retired farmer from Ogbourne and lived at "Lydiard House", a farm house in this parish, with his family.

A View of Lydiard Millicent – Part 3

An Appraisal of the 19th Century

Martha Parsons of the Green was a tragic figure but not atypical of the age. Widowed at the age of 30, she lived with her mother, a pauper, and 5 children, all dependent on parish relief. The wife of William Preddy, a near neighbour, had died in childbirth leaving him with 2 children to support, but he was a gardener and his mother-in-law, a pauper, lived with them to care for the family. In this closely knit community they shared a common responsibility. Their neighbour, John Shildon, was another strong individual who was still active at the age of 70 as a Master-Carpenter; his nephew lived with him as a journeyman.

Thomas Barnes was a shoemaker and his neighbours, Ann and Sarah Sly, had established a grocer's shop. Matthew and Maria Beasant also lived at the Green with their 6 children and he was a basket maker. William Berriman was an engine cleaner. Ben Wilkins, aged 80, was a pauper after a lifetime of labouring. Charles Beasant and the family of Hannah Morse were agricultural labourers.

Breaches Barn, now a bungalow, was one of the oldest buildings in the village before it was demolished. Ox-stalls from the 14th century were found in the foundations. Nearby is the Great Field, later known as "Pick Peas", which gave its name to the hamlet of Greatfield. Once it was part of Godwins, property of the Abbey of Stanley before the Reformation. James Edmonds lived nearby as a shepherd, the last of a long line of shepherds, when sheep farming contributed substantially to local wealth.

William Morse, Thomas Townsend, Rupert Simpkins, John Young, and John Simpkins were labourers living at Cob Gutter and local memory recalls dwellings so primitive as to be typical of those erected within 24 hours on waste land.

The farmers and brickmakers lived within the parish of St, Mary's, Purton at Lower Greenhill and 2 woodmen lived in Wood lane.

Washpool was also traditionally associated with sheep farming, but the labourers of that area were all employed on the large farms created when the "Lorde's Marshe at Shawe" was enclosed and improved at the time of the Agrarian Revolution, and subsequently devoted to cattle and dairying. John Newth, a grocer, lived there and kept a shop at the Nine Elms. His nephew was the local hawker.

There were 26 labouring households at Shaw with 108 dependents of whom, 34 were agricultural labourers. One-third of the households had a member, usually an aged relative, in receipt of Poor Relief, One-third of the unmarried women were "in service"; the number of servants absent elsewhere is not recorded. Since the local farms could not employ the rest, it must be assumed that they went elsewhere for work, possibly utilising the web of footpaths which led to Swindon. Of the 134 enumerated at Shaw, 52 originated from parishes other than the Lydiards, which is a higher mobility factor than that prevailing elsewhere in the parish.

Statistics alone do not adequately describe a community for they fail to take account of human emotions, aspirations and attitudes. Some personal testimony from elderly gentlemen survives to shed light on those critical times.

Mr. Henry Fisher was born in 1832. Some 90 years later he gave some account of his childhood to the "Evening Advertiser", in which he recalled that in his boyhood, he would walk from Lydiard to Spittleborough farm, by field path, every morning before breakfast, to milk, by hand, nine cows, for which he earned 6d per day. When he was newly married he earned 8s 0d per week, and barley bread was the staple food. It was coarser than wheaten bread which, if made from homegrown corn, was often sour, due to fungal contamination. "I well remember", he said, " the dish called Barley danners which was a mixture of barley and skimmed milk".

Mr. Henry Wicks began his working life in 1861 as a ploughboy earning 3d per day- As an adult, he earned not more than 12s 0d per week as a ploughman, but he left to enter McKnight's more lucrative employment as a coachman. When McKnight left, he began life as an employee of the G.W.R., walking to and from Swindon every working day for 37 years.

A contemporary, Mr. Charles Carter, began a working life on the farm but left to find greater security as a roadman. Mr. John Parsons was born in 1848, but succeeded in establishing his own business as a market gardener, which was "along with Primitive Methodism, the salvation of our times".

There was no easy solution to the problems which beset the parish in the middle of the 19th century but certain improvements were obvious if they could be effected. First and foremost was the problem of widespread hunger and the ills that arose from it. Henry Fisher had a clear memory of "barley danners" in his youth, but he was not in a position to assess their nutritional content. Boys such as him were occasionally

rewarded at the farm table out of compassion. In the north of England, labourers often 'lived in', and they were the healthier for it. Next to hunger and its consequences, there was the question of personal dignity. The greatest fear that any labourer had was the prospect of ending his days in the Workhouse, which often involved the segregation of the sexes, even to the point of parting man and wife, and conditions within the 'house were deliberately intended to be worse than any which prevailed outside of it. Further this was not a problem of old age; it could happen at any time if there was unemployment or ill-health.

The great age of Victorian social reform through legislation had yet to be developed. Any amelioration of the labourers' plight was in the hands of persons of stature, position, influence, conscience and goodwill.

It was providential, perhaps, that two people who had the qualifications to fulfil this role, came to reside in the village. Between them, they awakened the conscience of the church and initiated a new age.

Clerical Consciences, and Social Reform

The Rev., Henry Streeten, in his brief tenure as Lord of the Manor before his untimely death, perceived what needed to be done and a possible solution to it. It was proposed and discussed in Vestry at his instigation in the early '40's, that sufficient land should be set aside for labourers to cultivate in their spare time or when unemployed, to supplement their diets. A family of 5 could live on a ton of potatoes and very little else if needs be, but that would require 20 lug of land, far more than was generally available to a family. There was land available but very little remained as waste or common; it was mostly in private ownership. Nevertheless, in theory, a Vestry, which in any case was mostly made up of farmers, could agree to persuade landowners to set aside land, for a consideration if needs be, and award it, for a peppercorn rent if needs be, to the deserving poor. In practice it was not so easily accomplished because of entrenched attitudes in society. A few influential persons lacked compassion. Others thought that servile, hungry labourers ensured loyalty; some were fearful of revolutionary tendencies. A few considered that a person's station in life was divinely ordained and it was not right to interfere. Mercifully, others were compassionate and some were prepared to co-operate if it meant a reduction in the rates spent on outdoor relief. Some merely had to be persuaded, for farmers were traditionally conservative by nature.

Two other local factors may have contributed to the initial delay, namely, a distrust of the squirearchy and the clergy by the labouring poor on the one hand, and a contempt for both of them by the farmers. The poor of this village had not known a benevolent squirearchy since Lady Mary Blunt's father, Ferdinando Askew, had died in 1783, and their experience of pastoral care by the clergy was limited to the ministry of an itinerant priest. In general, farmers regarded the squirearchy as an imposition and resented the payment of the tithes to church and parson.

How much persuasion Streeten had to exercise can only be surmised for although he was Lord of the Manor, he had no clerical jurisdiction in the village. However, he made some progress. At a meeting of All Saints' Church Vestry held

on September 18th, 1843, the following members, all of whom except one being farmers, passed the following motion:

It is desirable that the poor inhabitants of this Parish should each occupy, (under proper regulations), allotments of land in no case exceeding one-half acre, and unless there be proportionate family, not exceeding one-quarter acre."

The Vestry of October 17th 1844 amended the above proposal to read "labouring poor and dwelling in," to be substituted for "poor inhabitants of," and added that since no suitable fields were obtainable en bloc, "each occupier of land in the parish be asked to cede land in proportion to that person's holding," and went on to list the owners.

Amazingly, they all agreed, persuaded it appears by the eloquence of a few compassionate persons, and a subsequent Vestry listed the lands ceded and their owners.

In the agreement of 1844,

John Bewley ceded 3 acres, a field on the 'right hand' side of Greenhill lane.

Stephen Cole ceded 1 acre, "out of Stone field"

Thomas Plummer gave "Little Shilvings't at Shaw.

William Plummer ceded 3 acres, his "Upper Stone field".

Miss Mary Tuckey ceded 1 and a half acres, "West Streetings", at the Grove.

William Sadler gave 1 acre out of Hawkins Cose

Thomas B. Sadler ceded 1 and a quarter acres, his field at Shaw.

John Hinder ceded 1 acre from Great Stone

Rev., Henry Streeten gave one half acre from the Grove.

William Large gave one half acre, his ploughed field

Samuel Large gave one half acre, his ploughed field, and

William Franklin ceded one quarter acre, being his land at Stone.

Conditions required that no person holding one of these allotments was to hold any other land and the rent was fixed at £2 per acre per annum. A committee of 5 persons administered the scheme. Persons who trespassed or were dishonest were subject to deprivation without benefit of growing crops. However, there was a 10s.0d prize for the best kept allotment and 5s.0d for the second best.

The tenantry were appointed as follows ,

In receipt of one quarter acre:-

Wm. Pike, Betty Sturmeay, Thos, Blackhall, Mrs Childen, Peter Morse Jn. Emmett, Wm, Simpkins, Ed, Smith, W. Hinders, Wm, Hedges, Rd, Greenwood, Aaron Morse, Chas, Beasant, Joseph Ricketts, Wm, Morse

and in receipt of one half acre:-

Chas, Sturmeay Jn, Collier Thos, Howard Martha Carter, Jacob Morse, Mrs, Wilkins William Greenwood, Wm, Preddy, Martha Parsons Geo, Young Ben, Wilkins, Mrs, Chivers, J. Bond, H. Selby, Richard Parsons, Jos, Wheeler, Jacob Young, W. Bartlett, Robt, Simpkins and William Greenwood.

Henry Streeten died in the winter of 1849 with much to his credit, notably some much needed restoration of the church and promotion of the foundation of the first

village school under the auspices of the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, but he did not live to see the fruits of his social reform.

The Rev, William Henry McKnight saw much to concern him when he arrived in the parish but his Radical and Liberal views approved of this self help scheme. However, as time went by, it was seen to be inadequate to meet the needs of a growing community, where the population increased by 20% in 10 years. He resolved to procure a quarter acre allotment for every labouring householder in Lydiard Millicent. In 1863 he found that 'as soon as October was over, the summer hands were dismissed and had to find what casual work they could throughout the winter. He found work for those who were destitute in grubbing out tree stumps for little better than starvation wages, which may account for the notable lack of trees in fields south of the Street. He managed to negotiate and secure the Kibblewhite holdings in the Street, where "The Close" estate is now, and he obtained 16 acres of glebe land, south of the current cemetery. He also sought the aid of Lord Shaftesbury who held lands both in this parish and in Purton. His Lordship made a small field available, and together, the lands were sufficient to meet McKnight's objective.

When asked, Richard Parsons, a village elder and spokesman, summed up the allotment scheme in a quaint but sincere statement, "I puts down all I gets out of the land as equals to my year's bread".

It is reasonable to speculate on what prompted these innovations. Was it altruism, or was it the growing fear of revolutionary tendencies among the labouring poor? This district had not been spared Chartist agitation, rick burnings, and a pressing need for agrarian reform. People of goodwill had been horrified by the devastating effects of the Irish Potato Famine in 1845. The blight on potatoes was prevalent in southern and western England, but not to the same extent. Persuaded by Malthusian Economic doctrines, the government of the day was reluctant to intervene until it was obliged to repeal the Corn Laws; the only practical relief offered in this area was to advise the PLU's to purchase Carolina rice as a substitute for corn.

As a leader writer for the "Evening Advertiser", and consultant within the Mechanics' Institute, McKnight advised the new, young, but informed, railway artisans against republican, revolutionary doctrines. Fortunately, they found in the Great Western Railway Company a more benevolent employer than their contemporaries found in other industrial enterprises,

Many of the allotments survived up until the 1930's and were often called "potato grounds", being nothing more than strips in a field given over to potatoes. Spratt's field, in east Greenhill, adjacent to "Picked Peas", near Breaches Barn, was called the Greenwood allotments, where an irregular quadrilateral was divided into 16 adjacent strips, each 80 links or 53 feet wide, and with a maximum length of 1 and a half chains, or 33 yards.

Folk memory states that McKnight was responsible for promoting Market Gardening as a source of income to revitalize the village. No written evidence has

been found to corroborate this statement. However in his writings for the "Evening Advertiser", McKnight displayed some appreciation of the economic needs of expanding Swindon, and he might well have encouraged local people to fulfil that need. What is certain is that much of the land originally set aside for allotments or potato grounds eventually became market gardens, particularly in Stone Lane and at Greenhill. The statistics are that in 1848, no persons were described as market gardeners, but in 1855, there was one. In 1873, 1880, and 1885, there were two families.

In 1895, this became 4, in 1899 it became 5, in 1903 and 1907 it was 7, in 1924 it was 11, in 1927 it was 10 and in 1937 it was 7.

The late Mr. Charles Woolford stated that in his young days, before and after WW1, over 100 wagons, carts and drays travelled into Swindon daily, many of them along Stone Lane. Youths used to jump up behind; unfeeling spectators used to yell "Whip behind, mister!" to the carters, thereby ensuring a painful stripe for those not agile enough to avoid it! Industrial expansion and the G. W. R. was the ultimate saviour of the community.

A View of Lydiard Millicent – Part 4

The Origin of Lydiard Millicent

Prior to the Roman conquest the earliest local established settlements were the Iron Age occupation of Ringsbury camp and its environs, and the Iron Age settlements upon the Marlborough downs. During the Roman occupation, there was a Romano-British Settlement at Pavenhill, Purton, and excavations preceding the Western Expansion of Swindon have revealed Iron Age and Romano-British kilns near Shaw, along the line where limestone brash overlays clay.

At the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasions, the whole of the site of Lydiard Millicent lay within the boundaries of Bradon forest. An authority has described the perambulation of Bradon, thus;..

"The boundary from Hailstone (Cricklade) to Water Eaton: up the river Ray to Speresholt (latterly Sparcell's farm), then up the tributary brook to the "Lydiart" of Robert de Stafford, by Lydiard Tregoz pond: then possibly by way of Lydiard Tregoz to Midgehall, to the source of the Garesbourne or Woodbridge Brook at a point 9 miles north of Midgehall copse"

Another authority, Grundy, calculates the area of the Domesday woodland of Bradon forest to be more than 10,000 acres.

However the forest was not a dense, impenetrable thicket but an association of open spaces, groves and marshy areas where the local ecology depended upon the nature of the soil and drainage. From Saxon days it was managed as a Royal Forest for the preservation of deer for hunting and as a source of timber. There was an hierarchy of officials and verderers' courts for the purpose. The Anglo-Saxon invaders settled ultimately as agriculturalists by clearing assarts within the forest to create arable and pasture land. Many factors determined the site of a settlement. They included the suitability of the soil for primitive cultivation, access to reliable

sources of water, defensive possibilities, and, in some cases, strategic importance. A "tun," or fortified site, was established on the site now occupied by the village church, but on first examination, it does not fulfil any of the criteria mentioned, except one. It is situated on a ridge of Corallian limestone which offers few defensive possibilities and the brash soil is not easy to cultivate. Fresh water springs are adjacent, but they are not reliable. One other factor remains.

Thompson, in W.A.M.LXIII, defines the Whiteway, an important pre-Roman trade route, which is clearly established at Cirencester, and is known to have crossed the Thames floodplain at Hailstone, near Cricklade, as far as Ringsbury, in Purton. Ultimately, it would have served the settlements upon the downs. Travelling conditions were very important. He postulates that the route continued southwards through the site of Wootton Bassett and thence via the sites of Broad Town and Broad Hinton, to the Ridgeway. However, when this hypothesis was formulated, archaeologists were unaware of the Iron Age populations and industries in the valley, and their trading potential. There is a possibility that a route originated at Pavenhill, proceeded in a south-south-easterly direction, keeping to higher ground, via the site of Lydiard Millicent church, and thence in a south-easterly direction, crossing a water course near the site of Parkside Farmhouse, and thence by Hay Lane to the downs. Such a route would have avoided the extensive marsh plain near the site of Marsh farm to the west and a similar area near the mediaeval "Lordes' marshe" of Roughmoor and Peatmoor. Perhaps it is coincidental that much of the route is defined by modern footpaths, (Purton 93 & 57, Lydiard 70). At one point in Purton parish adjacent to the boundary of field no. 922, (SU 093865), there is a cart track, bordered by hedges, serving no useful purpose whatsoever, unless it is the remnant of a highway, of ancient useage. The direct road between Purton and Lydiard was known as "Peddlars' Way"; its junction with the old road through the "tun", prior to the creation of "Church Place", was "the drawbridge".

Such a route, if it existed, would have crossed, or breached, the boundary between two important Iron Age tribes, the Dobuni to the north and the Atrebates to the south. Did they have frontier guards in those days?

The following variants of the name "Lydiard" are known:-

Lidgeard, Lidgerd, Lidegaeard, Lidiarde, & Lydyerd which are said to be British, meaning "a hill".

Johnston offers Lidgaeard as "Lida's gaeard", meaning Lida's enclosure.

"Notes on Wiltshire place names" states that Lidgaeard may be derived from the Anglo-Saxon "Lyt," or little, and "gaeard" from A./S. "gird" which is a "rod" or garden; hence- "a little place enclosed by stakes". So it may be, but in late Saxon times it was not a little place! Whereas Purton was worth £10 T.R.E. (in the time of King Edward), Lydiard was worth £12.

Another explanation is that the name is derived from the Welsh "Llidiard," or "hurdle opening"; the Celtic word "Llydiar" means a breach or opening. Such an hypothesis could be justified if Lydiard had been a strategic boundary crossing. Celtic words often survived in subsequent cultures if there was no equivalent in the new

order.

There are sundry names in the district which are Saxon in origin, such as "Sceagga" which is "Shaw," meaning a wood or coppice, which was "Shaghe" in a Lay Subsidy roll of 1312, and "Wyk," or a dairy farm. Sparcells is derived from "Speresholt," an ash wood from which spears shafts are made and Toothill was "Tutthill", a meeting place of significance, probably between Saxon hundreds.

A "tun" was usually defined by a ditch, bank and palisade. If circumstances permitted, the ditch might be a moat. The Lydiard "tun" was clearly defined by a ditch on the north side until recently. In 1983, the main village street between the church and the Beeches was widened and in the course of excavation, the mechanical digger exposed a profile of a ditch which was about 10 feet wide at the top. The Anglo -Saxon "herepath," now known as Stone lane, entered the "tun" at the "drawbridge" and continued on the west side of the pond. It was closed and diverted along the newly constructed road, Church Place, in 1891. The existing pond in the south-west corner extended further as mediaeval fishponds on the south side of the street. They were evident until recently when they were filled in as an alleged health hazard. It is likely therefore, that the moat or ditch was water filled on the east and south sides but dry on the others. Within that "tun", the first demesne lords built a church, but few traces of the earliest building remain.

A mediaeval settlement may have existed southwest of the "tun" at the end of an ancient access, the Butts. There is disturbed ground here which may have been "platforms," on which mediaeval houses were erected. It is an archaeologists' opinion; proof by excavation is required. Such a site would have been convenient for the "open fields," areas defined only by boundary markers which, if cultivated, were divided into strips and allocated yearly to tenants.

In 905 A.D. Aethelwold put to military execution all Brithendune, which is Bradon, as far as Bradenstoke. This carnage took place between Edward the Elder, son of Alfred the Great, and Aethelwold, son of Ethelred the 1st, who had allied himself with the Danes. In folklore, the road at Restrop, Purton, known to some as Red Street, is the scene of an ancient bloodletting.

The Codex Wintoniensis contains a document which records how Denewulf, Bishop of Winchester, granted to Ealdorman Ordlaf, ten hides at Lydiard in exchange for 10 hides at Fonthill. A hide is an imprecise measure of land, being defined as the amount of land which one team of oxen could plough in one year. It could vary, therefore, between 100 and 180 acres, depending on the nature of the soil to be ploughed. In this area, largely a medium loam, it is assumed to be about 120 acres.

The Domesday survey of 1085/86 reads ;-

The king holds Lydiard. Godric held it in the time of King Edward. It paid tax for 10 hides. There is land for 8 ploughs. In Lordship there are 6 hides less 1 virgate (a quarter). (There are) 4 ploughs, 9 slaves; 10 villagers and 6 smallholders, (who have) 6 ploughs. Also there is a mill of 32d; meadow of 20 acres. The woodland is 1 league long and one- half league wide. The value was £10, now £12. These two villages were of the Earl William."

An effort has been made to establish tentatively, by field work and the few primary records which exist, the boundaries and distribution of cultivated soil and pasture in mediaeval times. Soil can be analysed by sedimentation, and cultivated soils may show a higher proportion of clay to sand including up to 5% colloidal clay, a higher humous content, and different natural vegetation. Ancient hedges are often very wide, often mounded, and containing many species of shrubs. There are other factors which, in certain circumstances, may be taken into consideration, such as winding roads and sharp bends, created by teams of oxen at plough, requiring wide angles of turn on the headlands.

Using these criteria, the Lord's cultivated demesne is assumed to be all that land extending eastwards from the "tun," bounded on the north side by Stone lane, on the south side by the village street as far as the brook at Holbom, or Hollow Bourne, and on the east side by an irregular border extending northwards from Holborn to Stone lane, encompassing about 650 acres. The name "Buryfield" is a corruption of "burgh field" or "burh field," meaning lands within the lord's town. It is likely that it was divided into two open fields, North Buryfield and South Buryfield, because there is a reference in manorial court records to a tenant who was occupying part of North Buryfield illegally.

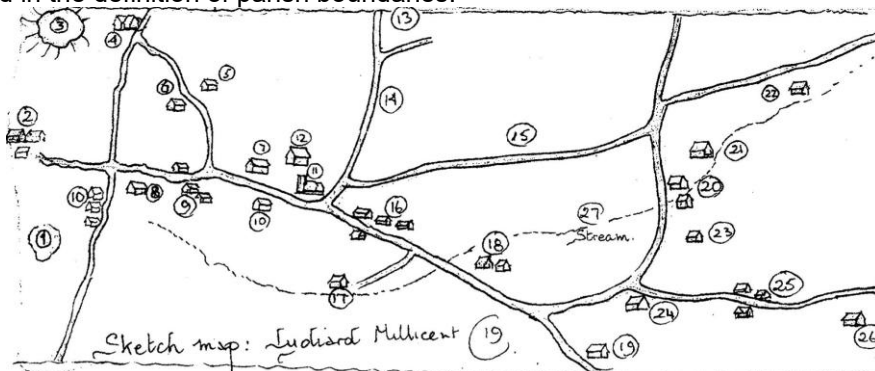
Keycroft is a pasture which lies to the north of Stone lane bordering the boundary brook; it is shallow soil on a northern slope more suitable for grazing animals. West of the "tun," and south-west of the Butts, there are fields still known as the "Hydes" which are among the best in the area for cultivation. Field work suggests that these were part of an open field system. Their current boundaries are 18th century enclosure hedges but the hedge which separates them from Godwin's acreage is much older. Some land south of the street also shows signs of ancient cultivation but the boundaries are ill defined; they may have been grubbed out in the 19th century. One ancient boundary continues south from the cemetery path and defines one boundary of "glebe" land, which is so built up in comparison with the surrounds that it has clearly been cultivated for centuries. Land to the north of the street, in the "Beeches" area does not show signs of ancient cultivation and it is "brashy", but it is well watered and therefore, suitable for grazing. Lydiard green was once manorial waste and was not settled until post enclosure days. Bagbury lane is an ancient boundary and within living memory it was a "Green lane," possibly a peripheral forest boundary before disafforestation. The mill defined in Domesday was at the eastern end of the manor near the brook at Washpool. This area was not drained until the 18th century and was rightly described as the "Lodes marshe".

The finest agricultural land in the parish is at Greenhill but it was still afforested in Saxon times. Frith copse, at Greatfield, is an unreclaimed part of that forest. Part of the manorial forest, later known as Clinton's wood was within Bradon and the people would have had certain rights there such as grazing lands, or "launds," pannage and firebote, housebote and cartbote, the right to take specified amounts of firewood.

Godwin's farm was outside of the boundaries of the mediaeval demesne, being

the property of a monastic foundation, probably Stanley abbey. Nearby Breach Barn had 14th century ox stalls within its foundations. No property has been assigned so far to an Inquisitionem post mortem of 1301 which states "Robertus le Brut et Alicae pro priore de Bradenstoke held in Lydyard Milecent, 1 messuage et 6 bovae terrae."

Few traces remain of the Saxon era. There is a freestanding ballester mullion artefact and a carved stone within the church and the haft of the churchyard cross is thought to be Saxon. Stone lane is a military road, or "herepath," constructed in the time of Alfred the Great to facilitate the rapid lateral transfer of the "fyrd," or militia, between his fortified boroughs of Malmebury, Cricklade, and Highworth, Greenhill lane is a continuation of that route. Some relics of Saxon regional government remain in names, such as Common Platt and "Tuthill" where moots may have convened, and in the definition of parish boundaries.



- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Frith copse | 2. Greenhill | 3. Ringsbury camp | 4. Restrop Ho |
| 5. Bagbury lane fm. | 6. Bagbury fin. | 7. Lydiard Ho. | 8. Godwins fm. |
| 9. Lydiard Green | 10. The Grove | 11. The Church | 12. The Manor |
| 13. Purton | 14. Peddlar's way | 15. Stone | 16. The Street |
| 17. Parkside fm. | 18. Holborn | 19. Brook Ho fin. | 20. Washpool |
| 21. Roughmoor fin. | 22. Sparcells fin. | 23. Peatmoor fin. | 24. Nine Elms |
| 25. Shaw | 26. Shaw fin. | | |

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as compiled by D Payne) – Part 5

The Feudal Lords

Godric held the manor, from Alured, at the time of the Domesday Inquisition. By 1100 A.D it was occupied by a Norman lord, Geoffry de Clinton, Chamberlain, or Master of the Royal Household to King Henry 1st. The family continued to occupy the manor until 1429, although they may not have been in residence because John de Clinton married into the family of the first dukes of Newcastle and moved to Maxstoke castle,

where one William de Clinton built a new dwelling.

The master of the royal household was an important officer and he would merit a substantial dwelling. It is likely that his manor house was built on or near the site of the dwelling now known as Church Farmhouse and surrounded by a water filled moat with a drawbridge, for they were necessary in the anarchy which followed in the reign of Stephen, and the names and sites survive. W.N.Q. vol, 8, states that "the site of the de Clinton mansion still survives in what is, to this day, called "The Moats". This is part of a wide ditch, now much silted up, which ran around and enclosed what is now the garden and farmhouse of Lord Shaftesbury, in the fields adjoining which, traces of a moat are still visible".

Bradon was a royal forest by 1135, but during the de Clinton administration, some of it was enclosed. The bounds are set out in the Close Rolls of 1228 but they were bitterly contested in the 13th century when the Abbot of Stanley claimed "la Frith" a copse which still exists. Manor officers were required to attend Forest eyres and at one of them it was noted that John de Clinton's wood and Robert Russell's wood, at Speresholt, had been disafforested. Assarts at Greenhill, were cleared for farming.

There was a church within the "tun" during Norman times but it was substantially rebuilt after the de Clinton family had relinquished the manor. No funerary monuments or recumbent effgies of this noble family remain except, perhaps, a row of six sculpted heads beneath the eaves of the south aisle, or Lady chapel, on the south side of the church. Each one is an integral part of the stone to which it is attached and they are sufficiently distinctive to be representational. In style, they ante-date the other architectural features and must have been transferred to their present position from elsewhere. Two of them, being part of one stone, are boys, possibly twins, and may be associated with a deed, 'de jure King John', in which Hugh, son of William, sells his vill to his brother Richard, after the death of their mother, the Lady Milsent. It is presumed that it is from this lady that the village gets its distinctive name, which appeared in 1411 as North Lydyard Milcent, or North Lidyard.

Hutchings in W.A.M. vol. 2, states that in 1347 the manor was held by Ralph Bassett, of Drayton, Co, Staffs, presumably as a tenant of the de Clintons because, in 1421, it was held in trust for William Lord Clinton, a minor, by Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and others, for the purpose of a sale. Other feudal tenants of the demesne lord include:-

Godfry de Aspail who gave land to the Priory of Bradenstoke in 1247. There is an Inquisitionem post mortem in respect of him in 1281.

Thomas de la Grave who held land in 1281 and

Robert le Archer in 1280.

An I.P.M. of 1301 states that "Robertus le Brut et Alicje hold land comprising 1 messuage et 6 bovat terrae pro priore ole Bradenstoke."

An I.P.M. of 1306 states that "Robertus Russell, filius Robertus Russell, holds 1 messuage and 1 carucate pro priore de Bradenstoke."

Other tenants include Guy de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and his wife Alice in

1345 and John atte Church in 1327. Alianora, wife of John Northwode, held parkwood grazing for cattle in Bradon in 1348, and in 1349, Roger Normaund was confirmed to have demised to Walter Wormbrigge 1 messuage and 60 acres of land in North Lydyerd to hold "by service of one rose yearly".

Of these feudal tenants the Russell family, and by association, the Collingbournes, another local family, appear to have had some influence upon the manor, and to have conferred an important architectural legacy. As a result of a major restoration of the roof of the south aisle of All Saints' Church in 1993, a dendrochronological survey of the roof timbers indicated, with some accuracy, that the timbers were felled in the spring of 1341 and hewn from an oak tree which was 137 years old and a poor specimen of its kind. They had been used by 1346, just 2 years prior to the 'Black Death'. In his "Wiltshire Antiquities," John Aubrey (1626-97), noted that "in the church in the south aisle is an anciente large seate, now belonging to Antony Lord Ashley, Chancellor of the 'Chequer: on the seate thus -

"I.H.C. MARIA D.E.R. ROBERTUS RUSSELL ME FESTE." Although abbreviated, it means apparently, "In the name of Christ and of the B.V.M, Robert Russell is my strength". The main body of the church was not built, or rebuilt, until a century later and the inscription implies that Russells had some claim to it.

The Russells appear to have been related to the de Clintons for Aubrey states that in the hall windows of Bradfield House, near Chippenham, "there used to be a window containing two escutcheons, one of de Clinton and one of Russell". The descent, and local influence of the Russells, while the manor was still within the jurisdiction of the de Clintons, may be described as follows;

Ralph Russell was Sheriff of Wilts., from 1261 to 1263.

William Russell was M.P. for Great Bedwyn from 1294 to 1295.

In 1241, a Robertus Russell was "Abbes de Stanlega in Wiltisire," according to W.A.M.31.

In 1329, Geoffrey Goudhyne leased all his lands in Quidhampton, in the parish of Elindun, (Wroughton), to Robertus Russell, the younger, of North Lydyerd, for life, at £10 per annum, according to W.A.M. 18.

In 1324, Quidhampton was described as a manor and thereafter, the deeds describe it as passing through the families of Russell, Collingboume, Spenser and Benet until 1658. (W.A.M. 54)

Aubrey asserts that Russells held property in Bradenstoke, Quidhampton near Clyffe Pypard, which are all in the Castle Combe barony, and at Lydiard.

Robert Russell the third was alive in 1341 and he was Constable of Marlborough until 1347, and Sheriff of Wiltshire from 1348 to 1350. He was an Escheator of Wilts., in 1348, and Warden of Bradon forest, from where the dated timbers most likely came.

It would be natural, therefore, for such a powerful influential landowner to build a church after demolishing an older one on the site, and to honour his relation and superior by incorporating their effgies in the fabric. Oliver Russell, almost certainly then son and heir of Robert Russell the third, was patron of All Saints' church in

1362. He was also Constable of Marlborough and succeeded his father as County Sheriff in 1347. Close Rolls 53 & 104 indicate that he inherited the manor at Quidhampton and lands in North Lydiard. He was responsible, with others, for collecting tenths and fifteenths in Co., Wilts., in 1358.

Even after the de Clintons had relinquished all interest in the manor the family continued to be influential. By 1473, the late John Russell, (per I.P.M.), was possessed of "quinque messuages et divers terrae", and there is a Manorial Court Record of 1453, in which it is written:-

(From the)-"court of Robert, Lord Moleynes and other Feoffees held in the 31st year of King Henry VI, John Russell, Abbot of Stanley, holds freely of the lord, certain lands called:-

The Hydes, Westronzyngys, Orchards, Elyness, Wildscrofts, near Breche, Woodwardwes and Fryth, containing 15 acres, and Mundayland". These lands are all in the vicinity of the farm presently called Godwins; Wildcrofts is cleared but uncultivated land called "waste", but put to use, and Woodwardes was disafforested Bradon in what is now, Greenhill. Mundayland was land whereon the manorial tenants would be expected to labour on one day of the week for their masters.

Robert Russell the 4th, son of John, possessed "Trescent acris pasturi et centum acris bosci pertinencis in Luydeyard Milcent. Et de uno messagio et centum acris terrae cum pertinencis in Shawe. Et de uno messagio et sexagentis acris in terre cum pertinencis in Pyrton", all recorded in W.A.M. 18. Three hundred acres and 3 dwellings suggest a powerful influence and it was either John or Robert the 4th who was responsible for completing the tower, nave and chancel of the church after the premature death of its primary builder. However, the family's influence was nearly lost when John Collingbourne, who claimed to be heir apparent of Quidhampton in 1473, was executed for treasonable support of Henry Tudor just prior to the Battle of Bosworth.

After the Tudor accession, the Collingbournes, who had been subjected to a warrant of distraint following their claims to Quidhampton in 1473, were rehabilitated, and Edmund Chadderton, or Chatterton, grandson of William Collingbourne and son of Margaret Chatterton, was awarded all the possessions of his grandfather, and they included, Bradfield, Lydiard, Manton, lands in Hullavington, Wootton Bassett and Quidhampton, i.e. all of the Russell estates which he held before the Dissolution. (W.A.M. 1909). William Collingbournes offence was that he, "of Lydiard Millicent and of Bradfield, with others, was indicted for conspiring to bring over from Brittany, Henry, Earl of Richmond; for devising and circulating handbills to stir people to commotion, fastening the same upon the door of St. Paul's cathedral." (2 Richard III). Following his post-humous rehabilitation the estates were divided among his heirs and Lydiard devolved to a daughter, Joan Collingbourne, who as Joan Lowther, having no children, settled her moiety upon her nephew, Thomas Chadderton. His descendants sold it to his cousin William Chadderton.

"About this property there was a great lawsuit when terrible accusations were bandied about. William Chadderton was buried at Purton on the 2nd day of August

1599; Bridget, his wife, was buried at Purton on the 3rd of March 1596," according to W.N.Q. vol. 2.

Great Chaddington farm, of 13th century origin, is due south of junction 16 on the M4, and below Bassett Down; Quidhampton wood is due east of Bincknoll, but there is no relic of habitation.

The feudal lords were concerned primarily with power, position, rank, property and wealth. Apart from their fear of each other, they feared little else in this world but were apprehensive about the next one, for the church taught men to expect hellfire and damnation unless they earned redemption, so they marked their sojourn in this world by building chapels and chantries where masses could be said eternally for their souls. Little evidence remains of the cotters, vassals, villeins and serfs, peasant labourers all of them, who laboured to create the wealth upon which their masters' ambitions depended. They suffered greatly in many ways, but chiefly from endemic disease of which the Black Death, i.e. the bubonic plagues, were devastating manifestations. Their memorials survive in the outstanding craftsmanship of mediaeval design and architecture, music, literature, and the cultivated face of the land, but much as been lost, particularly from the monastic inheritance of illuminated manuscript and historical commentary. A few fragments of mediaeval glass survive in the windows of All Saints' church.

PICTURE

to be continued

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as compiled by D Payne) – Part 6

THE TURGIS and BASKETT TENURE

The aforementioned trusteeship on behalf of William Lard Clinton came to an end when, according to Manorial Court records, the Bishop of Bath and Wells made a grant of the manor to Robert Andrewes, and others, on the 11th day of July in 1429. The manor then passed through the hands of other trustees, including Lord Moleynes, because it was not purchased outright until 1459, when Robert Turgis, armiger, bought it for himself.

The Andrewes' family seat may have been at Melcombe in Dorset but they held property in the district. According to the Tropenell memoranda, an I.P.M. of 17 Edward IV, no. 8. states that, at an inquisition held at Cirencester, in 1437, "Robert Andrewes, long before his death at Bluntesdowne Andrew, Co., Wilts, gave to John, Bishop of Bath and Wells, Thomas, Bishop of St. Davids, and Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, all his lands in Co, Wilts." Robert Andrewes died on April 13th 1437 and was survived by his wife, Agnes.

The Manorial court was required to deal with some irregularities when Andrewes entered into possession. Most of its proceedings involved tenure of land, trespass, or failure to maintain property, and to enforce fealty, upon which the system of service and tenure depended. In 1430, William Reede was summoned to appear before the Homage to answer a charge of cultivating land "unjustly" in "le Stone upon Longford". John Maskelyn was accused of occupying land, the Lordes Marshe,

called Shawmarsh. John Russell, and 5 others who were not named and therefore his tenants, was accused of occupying unjustly, one field called Buryfield. William Maskelyns' bailiff was called upon to justify a sale of underwood out of Braden. Since Andrewes resided at Blunsdon St. Andrew his steward presided over the courts.

The tenure of Sir Robert Turgis was brief because he died in 1464, but it was long enough for him to make his mark upon the manor for he sought a licence from the king to build a new manor house and to rebuild the church. McKnight claims to have seen the licence which was a small piece of parchment, measuring 7 by 3 inches. He built the tower, nave and chancel on some earlier foundations and it is, more or less, as it is seen externally today except that the chancel was lengthened in Victorian times. There have been substantial internal restorations since it was built but traces remain of a rood vault over the entrance to the chancel, to which access was gained by an external tower with stairs. Traces remained of it until recent years. Access to the tower was by an internal door and stairs. The Font is Norman and therefore retained from the earlier building and the central pillars are said to be Early English.

After his premature death the church was completed by his widow, Mary, aided by a kinsman, William Browning, and John Russell, a descendant of the aforementioned Robert.

The new manor house was H shaped in plan and built near the site of the existing manor house, supplanting an earlier one which may have become the current Church Farmhouse. It was in an improved position for drainage, there being springs in the vicinity, and the need for impregnable defences was not so great. There is a detailed description of the house, as he knew it, in McKnight's book. Much timber was incorporated, in close proximity to the fireplaces, which were constructed first, and then the rest of the building was constructed around them. Timbers added to the fire risk which destroyed the building ultimately. .

More manorial records survive from this period and they offer an insight into life within the manor. In 1458, it was decided to enclose the Lord's Marsh, on his behalf, with a hedge, and to bound it with mere stones. There was, and still is, a deep ditch, known locally as a drain, which commences in the area of Brook House farm and proceeds northwards in the direction of the River Ray, which probably dates from this time, to improve access. Marsh fowl were an important resource in winter.

In 1453, the court held that Thomas Church, whose family were long standing freeholders, was adjudged to hold a cottage called Godearly and fields known as Stubber, Schabtarys, Cellys, Cardman and Ropes. The modern fields of Stubbs and Crabtrees, if their names are corruptions of the former, are adjacent, and immediately north east of the Beeches estate, but there is no trace of any closely associated dwelling unless it is Church Farmhouse; is it possible, therefore, that this is the house of Church?

In 1454, Thomas Saunders was confirmed in office as Praepositor, or Steward, and awarded Griffins, Brodiz, and Gosewoods, wherever they may be.

Following the sudden death of Turgis in 1464, there appears to be an interval of

23 years when occupancy is not proven until William Baskett assumed the tenure in 1487, but Jackson considers that it remained within the family because Turgis and Baskett were related through a common ancestry at Melcombe. Little is known as yet about the Baskett family who were Lords of the Manor for nearly a century, from 1487 to 1574. But the Turgis and Baskett tenure was a momentous period in English history. King Henry VII had initiated a long period of Tudor rule by defeating King Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth; his son, King Henry VIII, succeeded him and severed the connection with the Church of Rome, to the distress of many citizens. The monasteries were dissolved from 1536 and monastic holdings within the manor passed into private hands. The boy king Edward VI came to the throne in 1547 and died when he was 15 years old; his sister Mary succeeded him in 1553 and reigned for 5 years, vainly attempting to re-establish the supremacy of the Catholic church. Queen Elizabeth the 1st's long reign began in 1558 and national pride and prosperity grew despite, or because of, threats to national sovereignty. The manor of Lydiard Millicent, like many others in the realm, prospered from the trade in wool, although it was ruinous for many who came to learn truth of the old adage, that 'ta black sheep is a biting beast".

From Queen Elizabeth's reign onwards, manor records are more comprehensive. In 1563, one of them begins;- "The court of the Manor of Thomas Baskett, held on the 27th day of September in the fifth year of the reign of the Lady Elizabeth, by the Grace of God etc.,...

Anthony Bridges was essoigned, offered by Edward Saunders, and John St. John, offered by John Lyminge. . . (they were excused from attendance.) From this record it is noted that the St. John family had some proprietorial interest in the manor, which they were to develop substantially.

Jurors within the manorial court were people between the ages of 21 and 70, who held a property qualification, usually possession of property worth at least £10 per year by freehold, copyhold or life tenure. These jurors pledged their Homage, or oath of loyalty at the court of 1563, and they were;-

Edward Newman	William Cheney	Richard Churge sen,
James Lowker	Richard Churge jun,	Thomas Jeffery
James Pannell	William Saunders	Robert Church
Edward Saunders		

Widows who were land estate owners, or holders by right of dowry endowed on the morning of marriage by their late husbands, were also eligible and they who pledged their Homage were;-

Margaret Clarke	Marjery Smith	Margaret Lowker
Alice Motley	Alice Taylor	Alice Hamon

Complaints heard within this court were;-

Richard Church complains of Edward Newman of a plea of trespass of 2 pence, which was done at Subrock Hedes, "within the jurisdiction of this court, on the 1st of July in the 4th year of Queen Elizabeth (1562). And now comes the aforesaid Edward in his proper person and saith that the place is where he has a free separate

tenement in which 'Je' (ie. he lives), and he puts himself upon the homage of the aforesaid Richard in like manner theretofore and the said homage aforesaid say that the aforesaid Edward is culpable of trespass and assess the damages at twopence". Legal mumbo-jumbo is an ancient tradition. To this court comes Edward Saunders and pays a relief, ie. an entry fee payable by the purchaser tenant-in-chief, viz., 6s 8d, which was paid to the hands of William Webbe, bailiff to the Lord of the Manor, which was due to the Lord of this manor after the death of Richard Bridges, Kt. Decd.,.

To this court comes William Maskelyn and acknowledges himself to hold of the Lord, 21 and a half acres of land and meadow in Lydiard Millicent by the rent per annum of 21 pence (and) Fealty and Suit of Court respectively. He did Fealty to the Lord and was admitted tenant thereof.

However, the Homage say that the aforesaid William ought to have only 18 acres of land and meadow!

At the court the Homage say that the Mill parcel of the tenement of Edward Newman is yet in decay for default of repairs contrary to the ordination of this court; therefore the said tenement with the appurtenances thereof is to be taken into the hands of the Lord.

The mill was on the stream below Washpool; by and large such mills were not well kept, permanent structures, but it would be interesting to know what Miller Newman thought of being deprived of his living by his fellow jurors!.

The Homage, upon certain articles touching this court being charged and sworn, say, upon their oath, that Thomas Chatterton, Gentleman, and Zacharias Pledell, are free tenants (that is to say, they owe no obligation for military service) but, owe suit to the court and have made default; therefore it is commanded to the bailiff to distrain them by "suit of Court unsued".

Chatterton is evidently a descendant of the family which inherited the Russell lands. Pledell, later Pleydel, was an ancestor of a notable local family.

From subsequent courts come the following judgements or presentments:-

Item; That there is owing to the Lord of this Manor after the death of Jane Lowder, widow, for the relief, 40 pence at least, but how much more they, the Homage, are ignorant.

Item; They present that Thomas Gatterton Gent., broke the ordinance of this court in all that the last imposed; that James Forde hath not made his hedges between Watersclose and Henley corner, therefore that he shall forfeit 40 pence.

Item; that John Hayes, Clerk, Rector of the church there and John Wymioge, who have broken the same ordination, forfeit each of them, 3s 4d.

Item ; that John Hayes, Clerk, William Webbe and John Lyminge, have broken the ordination of the court because they have not sufficiently made their hedges about Sparsells, therefore each of them forfeit 3s 4d.

Item; that Edward Newman, because he hath not made 2 gates between Berrymarsh of South Liddearde to the ordination of this court, forfeit 40d.

Item; that lands be enclosed at Oxenhaye in Shawe, and Hampnit.

The enclosures came unusually early in Parish history. As a rule they did not

begin until after 1600. If records are complete, Johannes Hayes was a Clerk in Holy Orders, and Rector of All Saints' church for 59 years, albeit with a very flexible conscience since he accommodated the breach with Rome, the Marian restoration, and Elizabeth's Protestant accession.

Manorial courts also dealt with criminal offences which could be a harrowing ordeal for the accused, whether innocent or guilty, but few records survive. A gaol delivery of 1305 lists Alex Craddock, Peter le Coggere, John who was John de Clinton's hayward, and John who was John de Clinton's huntsman, for beating and wounding 3 of the Rector's men at Lydyuberd. The outcome is not known.

The long arm of the law reached out to one, John Benwick in 1509, concerning lands which ought to have been forfeited to the Crown after the Dissolution of the monasteries. Court record reads:-

"Parcel of land and possessions from our lady, the Queen, and her progenitors, concealed, and being lately discovered, and being lands and tenements in divers towns and places specified, in the county of Wilts.," The lands are itemised in Norton and Marlborough, and specify...

"The farm and messuage, and a virgate of land being in Shawe and Lydiard Millicent, with the appurtenances which lately belonged to the late monastery of Stanley in the county of Wilts.,

For this offence, John Benwicke was hanged at Oxford, "for divers felonies by him committed... by which all profits and pastures and meadows aforesaid, to the hand of the Lady the Queen that now is, and her predecessors ought to have come, by reason of the attainder before mentioned. All now leased to Henry Hawthorn after a court and inquisition held at Sherston under the Queen's Remembrancer."

Calendars of Feats and Fines are copies of agreements made after disputes over land ownership. They were often contrived and made harmoniously only to affirm ownership of specified land. From such a calendar, it is noted that Adrian Frye, in that agreement was made between him and Thomas Baskett concerning land and messuages worth £40 was a landowner. His will was proved in the PreRogative Court of Canterbury in 1603.

It was part of a tenants duty to make himself available for military duty when required, and to make himself proficient in a military skill. Musters in Wilts., in 1509 record that John Beke, Richard Churge, James Loker, Thomas Clerke and William Smyth, were available as Billmen; "bills" being hedge trimming tools. It is often said that places named as the Butts are relics of archery practice. This may be so but the Butts in this village is more likely to mean "an area of land left over after enclosure."

With few exceptions, most dwellings of this period were not substantial and their sites are not known for certain but proximity to a water supply was essential. The best source in the immediate area was a spring which rose, at the junction of brash overlying clay near the farm house, and flowed, via the fishponds, down the main street. It is piped now, but many elders recall it and its course may be discerned in places. During the Tudor period there was growing prosperity for many people. The labourers were beginning to throw off the chains of feudal bondage and trades

proliferated, many as a consequence of the trade in wool. Most people were not unduly concerned with politics or religion as national issues and were content to go about their business, but for those persons of rank and prestige who were troubled in their consciences, some hard times lay ahead.

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as compiled by D Payne) – Part 7

WILLIAM WEBBE, THE RECUSANT

In 1574, or 1575, an agreement was made between Thomas Baskett esq., and Bridget his wife on the one hand, and William Webbe, alias Richmond, on the other hand, concerning the sale of the Manor of Lydiard Millicent with appurtenances, together with one messuage with appurtenances, in Lydiard Millicent and Shawe, in the sum of 130 marks. A "mark" was worth a minimum of 10s 8d., later revalued at 13s 4d. At its highest possible value therefore, the value of the entire manor was not more than £90 at contemporary values, which is worth noting in the light of subsequent events.

The family of Webbe, alias Richmond, may have originated at Rodbourne Cheney since Aubrey offers evidence, namely, "there is a charge at Rodbourne Cheney of Richmond alias Webbe," and he depicts the charge at arms as "stars gule and a cross azure on argent".

In a Visitation of Wiltshire of 1623 there is a pedigree of the family which states that William Webbe was the youngest son of Anthonie Webbe, and grandson of Christopher Webbe, the husband of Jane Pulley. This lady, Jane Pulley, the grandmother therefore of William Webbe, was the daughter of Richard Pulley who had the distinction of being the last man to have farmed the lands belonging to the Abbey of Malmesbury, in the parish of Purton, where the Abbot's lodgings may still be seen.

Christopher and Jane Webbe had two children, Anthonie, who resided at Manningford, who married Elizabeth Moody, of Malmesbury, and Jane, who married George Maskelyne, of Purton, as recorded in W.N.Q. vol, 2 (Elyard).

Anthonie and Elizabeth Webbe had three children, Roger, John and William. This William, the youngest of the three, was the William Webbe alias Richmond, of Manningford, who married Mary, daughter of Ambrose Figg, of Nunton, Wilts., and who bought Lydiard Millicent manor. Both John and William Webbe appear in a list of registered recusants in Wiltshire of 1601. John appears as 'convicted', or proved in lands of £30 subsidy and £12 in the hundred of Cadon and Camsworth, Odstock. William may well be the man described as the Lord's Bailiff in Baskett's manorial courts.

It is clear that the Webbes and the Maskelynes had a strong proprietorial interest in the district, either by direct descent or through marriage. They were country squires, seemingly conservative and traditional in outlook, who could recall more prosperous and socially prestigious days from earlier in the century, for

Abbey Farmers were important and privileged persons. Like many others of their rank and calling, they would have regarded the Act of Supremacy, in 1529, as an attack upon Mother Church, and, indirectly, as an erosion of their way of life. Recusants were required, by law, to register as dissenters and to pay a fine if they did not attend the Protestant church. They were forbidden to harbour Catholic priests, particularly Jesuits, for these brave men, trained by the Society of Jesus in France, travelled incognito from one safe house to another, celebrating the Mass secretly, but risking their lives if they were caught. Officially, Queen Elizabeth's laws were tolerant of Catholics provided that their loyalty was not in doubt, but in practice Catholics were harassed because the Queen's Ministers responsible for national security suspected, quite rightly, that some were prepared to betray the country into the hands of foreign powers in order to restore Catholic supremacy. The National Security Service was founded by Lords Cecil and Walsingham.

In September 1581, William Webbe was apprehended for harbouring two Jesuit Priests and was fined the sum of £200, more than twice the value of the entire manor, which crippled the estate and initiated a sequence of events which were to have adverse effects upon the manor and the settlement for many years to come. It is true to say that the community reached the apex of prosperity in the 16th century which it never recovered until very recent times.

It is obvious that William Webbe knew the risks involved and had laid contingency plans, for McKnight was able to examine in his days an elaborate system of "priests' holes" and escape routes which in time were used in earnest. It is known that the two fugitives used the system to escape, and flee westwards through Greenhill, across Lydiard plain and into Webbe's Wood, where they took refuge in Skinner's Close, a clearing or assart, where there were some empty woodsmen's hovels in which they took refuge, but they were apprehended, and, like so many others, they were tried summarily and executed at Oxford. It is known that the "Posse committatus", or authority to search for suspected enemies of the realm, was implemented by St. John, a neighbour and the deputy County Sheriff.

Naturally, in an event of this kind, much myth and legend has grown up around the event. It has been said that suspicions were aroused when a "serving wench" overheard the two men, who acted as grooms, talking together in French. It has also been said that the fugitives might have escaped had they simply laid low, but, thinking themselves secure, they lit a fire in a grate, and the ensuing whisp of smoke led the specially sworn-in constables to their quarry. These are but legends, but "oral history" is not to be despised. In recent times, one man, whose family have lived in the village for generations, opined, without any great historical knowledge, that William Webbe was "a d.....d good chap; never sent a man away from his door without a piece of bread and cheese in his pocket". There is no reason for comments of this kind unless they are history, transmitted orally down the ages, as folk memory.

Despite the penalty, the family adhered to the Catholic faith. From 1574, William

Webbe had been the patron of All Saints' church and had presented in turn, Aegidius Webbe as Rector in 1574 and Johannes Crippe in 1579. Wiltshire wills for 1604 (Harte 75), lists the wills of John Crispe, Clercke, pastor of Lydiard Millicent. After the default, the patronage was conceded to Thomas Booth of Fawley, in Berkshire, and in 1612 it passed to William Locksworth, gent., of Gloucester, who presented firstly, Griffnus Lewis and secondly, Robertus Whitfield, in 1612. Both Locksworth and Whitfield appear to have been prominent in Protestant reformist circles.

Did Queen Elizabeth visit Webbe in 1592, just eleven years after the recusancy affair?. It would have been entirely within her character to have done so because the Royal Progress was notorious for reducing subjects whose loyalty was questionable to abject poverty, through the expense of prolonged hospitality for a substantial retinue, and the loyal subjects were not in a position to complain!

William Webbe died in 1610. Although the nation's anxieties were relieved by the victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588, the government was concerned about certain Catholic loyalties which were exacerbated by Guido Fawkes ill fated conspiracy in 1605. The Wiltshire Quarter sessions Rolls of 1611 confirm that there were 54 registered recusants in the county and, in 1610, there were two records of suspicious conduct, namely, harbouring "standes of armes," concerning the Webbes. One of them states , "... in the house of Sir John Webbe called Odstocke; imprimis:-

2 ould swordes and daggers ; 1 bastard muskett ; 3 flasketts ; ij lead peaces
1 qualliter (a caliver?); 1 corselet and pike"., and—

"in the house of Giles Webbe gent., at Lyddiarde Millicent,
1 corselet with pike furnished; 1 muskett and a head peace"

This, surely, is hardly a basis for armed insurrection.!

After his death in 1610, William Webbe's estate was sold to a relative, William Webbe the second, of Battersea. His eldest son was a lunatic so the custody of his person and estates were granted to his two brothers, Henry and Joseph Webbe. The former bought out the latter, but, in 1711, the estate was in such difficulty that it was mortgaged on demise to Thomas Edwin and, in turn, to a succession of others, and finally, into the hands of John Askew.

Little is known about the social life of the community in the 17th century. Feelings ran high when the remainder of Bradon forest was enclosed from 1630, which led to "riotous levelling" by the aggrieved holders of "rights of commons". The levellers were led locally by Sir Walter Long of Dauntsey. Religious upheavals during the Early Stuarts led to extremist factions where, generally speaking, the Laudists declared for the King while the Dissenters and others supported Parliament. Laud introduced sundry reforms aimed at improving the piety of the clergy, where parsons were enjoined to be "all to their parish, and not only a Pastour, but a Lawyer and a Phisician". The laity were exhorted to "sing their Amens thoughtfully and not in a slubbering fashion, gaping, or scratching their heads, or spitting".

No records survive to show to what extent the village and manor were

involved in the Civil War. There was a Royalist garrison at Lydiard Tregoze and a Parliamentary one at Littlecote manor and there are grounds for supposing that the two clashed periodically. Armies passed, and sometimes conflicted locally. The Parliamentary faction in Wiltshire was led by the Earl of Pembroke. Initially, anti-Royalist feelings predominated, but the King's armies at Oxford captured Marlborough and Malmesbury in 1642. The latter was recaptured by the Parliamentary General Waller. Hopton's Royalist army of the west was defeated at Landsdowne but were victorious at Roundway and again predominated in the west. Cromwell's New Model Army won the west eventually, and irrevocably, for Parliament. The depredations of foraging armies of both sides incurred the wrath of the local population. Goring's Royalist infantry and Heselrigge's "Lobsters" were particularly notorious and their ravages led to an informal militia called the "Club Men", tolerated by both sides when issues were in dispute, but suppressed rigorously after victory.

The St John family of Lydiard Tregoz lost three sons during the conflict. The loyalties of the Webbes are not known but it might be presumed that they did not conflict with their powerful neighbours. There were minor skirmishes locally and a small interment of Civil War personnel was found close to Rodbourne Cheney church during road widening operations a few years ago. In 1956, a sword of the period was found athwart a drain at Lydiard house farm as if it had been dropped in flight and been swallowed up by vegetation. It is most unlikely that the village would have escaped the periodic foraging parties which ravaged the countryside but this is purely conjecture. John Sadler was granted "Lawful Compositions" to raise money in the early days of Charles 1st from all possessing £40 per annum in freehold lands. Thomas Sadler of Purton raised £10 there in 1631. These taxes could not have enhanced the King's popularity. Compton's census of the county in 1676 provides information which can be used to calculate a population of approximately 188 persons for Lydiard Millicent.

The Reverend Edward Jenner held the living from 1665 until his death in 1724, which is a tribute to longevity or tranquillity, or both; otherwise the century is lost to local history for the being.

PICTURE

February 2018

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as complied by D Payne) – Part 8

SIR JOHN ASKEW'S GRAND PLAN

Sir John Askew inherited the manor through "succession of mortgage on demise;" in 1712. His family was reputed to be of Lancashire origin but owned land near Hungerford. He was a wealthy man and had ambitious plans to develop the manor, which, had they been completed, would have incorporated barns, stables, coach houses, extensive formal gardens and ponds to complement a Queen Anne style mansion house. The plans were begun, but never completed, owing to a radical and sudden change in his personal fortunes brought about by the sudden collapse of the "South Seas Shares scheme", following the notorious "South Seas Bubble" of 1721, which ruined many investors.

Some of the designs were completed and although many of them have not withstood the ravages of time and neglect, they can be ascertained by close examination of the large scale Ordnance survey map of 1882 and an estate map. The present owner has restored one feature, the 18th century dovecote, to its former glory, but he found the costs of restoration to be prohibitively expensive. Only crumbling walls survive of the vast red bricked barns ; the coach house has been incorporated into the modern building and one of the ponds survives as an ornamental garden feature within the curtilage of Church farm. Before Church Place was built, the road passed between the main pond and the manor house. An entrance to the fish ponds area survives, in the form of a stone pillared entrance, adjacent to the C24 and immediately opposite to a gateway in the boundary wall of Church farm.

The most conspicuous relic of Askew's Grand Design is the tall, brick built perimeter wall, rectangular in plan, with an apsidal western end, which defined a spectacular formal garden, with a broad grassed walk, formal flower beds, shrubs and specimen trees, all laid out, allegedly, to a plan based on an aesthetically pleasing "multiple of Five" ratio, attributed to a classical Greek design. The entire garden encompassed 6 acres. Flanking the curves of the apse were 2 summer houses and the design had a focal point in a distant Wellingtonia, which still survives, storm blasted, in the Manor farm field. The Broad walk was 450 feet long and 50 feet wide. There was a sun dial at the top of it. Flower beds on each side were 5 feet from the box and yew hedges which lined it and the beds were 10 feet wide. At each end of the Broad walk there were turfed areas and evergreen shrubs. The bricks were made locally; the pond in the Butts is an old clay pit and there was a very old brick works at Greenhill. That which remained of the "grand plan" was surveyed in 1967 and, as far as could be determined, the garden complied with the mathematical plan-

If Askew had been able to complete his project it would have been very advantageous to the community, for his neighbour Jethro Tull's methods of improved tillage would have provided employment for labourers and increased production, and a mansion dwelling would have enhanced the status of the village.

It was not to be; because he lost his fortune in the South Seas shares scheme, John Askew died, impoverished, in 1739, and bequeathed the property to his brother, Ferdinando Askew.

Sir Ferdinando and his wife came to live in the manor house and, in 1746, a daughter, Maw, was born to them of whom much has been both spoken and written, most of it speculative. She has been cast in the role of "une femme fatale", for, at an early age, she was affianced to a curate of the Church of England named Symson but continued to favour other suitors. One of the gentlemen favoured was Colonel Henry Blunt esq., of Ringmer, near Lewes, in the county of Sussex who, although a young "gallant", had purchased his commission in the Hussars as was customary at the time. The contrast between a dour and serious gentleman of the cloth, unfashionably clothed, and a colourful, accomplished, uniformed horseman can be easily imagined, and the dalliance led to what has become known as "a melancholy affair". The curate died from gunshot wounds in an upper room, probably of the old Rectory, demolished in 1857, which existed at the time on glebe land which is now the school's playing field; but possibly in the Manor House. The uncertainty arises from McKnight's statement that he was shown a stained area where the shooting took place. If it had taken place in the Manor House, he would have known about it since he lived there; further, the primitive circumstances described in a surviving account seem more applicable to a primitive dwelling than a country house.

An inquest was held but no records of proceedings survive except that which is implicit in a Coroner's Bill, no.,401 in Coroners' bills vol., 36. (W.R.S. Devizes), where it states;-

"November 6th 1764. Lydiard Millicent Rev., Mr. Harry Symson : on 3rd Nov., shot himself through the head with a pistol loaded with a brace of balls which he held in his right hand. Lunacy. (18 miles £1 13s 6d)".

Shortly after this tragic event occurred, a letter, dated Nov., 9th, appeared in the "Salisbury Journal", written by Simeon Edwards, Parish Clerk and an elder of the village, who clearly wished to express a point of view regardless of what may have been said in court. The letter reads as follows;

"Sir,

A melancholy affair has happened lately in this neighbourhood owing to the indiscretion of a young lady who was engaged to a young clergyman and everything settled by the parents.

The clergyman had for a long time suspected her of other engagements which at times had made him very unhappy, and among his acquaintances he would often appear little better than a lunatic.

The circumstances which appeared to the Jury were as follows ;

Some company had dined with him among whom was a gentleman whom everyone knew was privately favoured by the young lady. The unfortunate gentleman, (*presumably the curate*), appeared very much disturbed the evening before and all that morning, but at dinner assumed a cheerfulness which lasted

some hours. About 6 o'clock, he appeared to be in liquor, notwithstanding very little was drunk.

He went upstairs to his bedroom and stopping sometime, was followed by his company, but, on some account or other which does not appear, he was left alone in the dark with the lady and her gallant. If any words passed between them, or anything was done to displease him, it is concealed by the parties. They say he went out of the room and with violence burst open the door of another room, which was locked, and notwithstanding their efforts to prevent it, shut himself immediately in the dark, and they both had hold of him at the time.

The coroner has brought in his verdict of "lunacy" from his having made use of some expressions which threatened his own life and that of others, and happy was it, as he had another pistol by him, he did not do greater mischief.

I am, sir,

Your humble servant,

Simeon Edwards".

The author then added a postscript :-

"N.B. I had forgot (sic) to mention that when they went up to him he was laid on the floor in apparent insensibility from which he did not recover (as supposed) by some displeasing circumstance or other, for his rival and mistress only were present, and it was dark."

Mary Askew was 18 years old at the time. Five years later she married Colonel Blunt. The "Gentleman's magazine", vol., 38. stated, as a marriage announcement, "1768, Dec., 9th, Henry Blunt esq., of Lewes in Sussex, to Miss Askew of Lidiarde, C., Wilts"

If the Coroner was persuaded that Mr. Symson had committed suicide the villagers were not convinced and the incident soured relations between them and Lady Blunt until she died.

Simeon Edward's letter appears to cast some doubt upon the verdict and one may wonder why it was written if all of the evidence contained therein was available to the coroner, particularly as the postscript appears to contradict the information given in the main part. Mr. Symonds is supposed to have reacted with violence yet the postscript indicates "apparent insensibility". Why is there an apparent discrepancy?

Other questions have been asked. Is it reasonable to suppose that two people, one of whom was a soldier, could not physically restrain a third party from shutting himself in a room when they "both had hold of him" at the time? Was it customary for a cleric of the time to own 2 pistols? They were expensive to buy and they were only carried customarily by those who undertook journeys.

To load a contemporary single barrelled pistol with powder and two balls was to run the grave risk of the weapon disintegrating in the hand when fired, although it might have been carried out by an irrational person. On the other hand, double barrelled pistols existed ; they were cavalry pistols used almost exclusively by the

mounted soldiery.

The incident took place after 6 p.m. on a November evening when it would be dark. Some form of artificial illumination would be essential if the participants were to be aware of each other or of what was happening. Even by 18th century standards, a young woman who chose to be alone with a man, upstairs, in the dark, would place herself in a very compromising situation and she would hazard her reputation; an unlikely event if intentions were not devious. Finally, the "Rectory", where the tragedy may have taken place was a very small dwelling, found by Warneford in his day to be ruinous and quite unsuitable for a clerical residence. There was little scope for privacy and, in the circumstances, there appears to be a good case for supposing that the assembly was not only more aware of what was going on than was admitted, but were in a position to intervene more decisively.

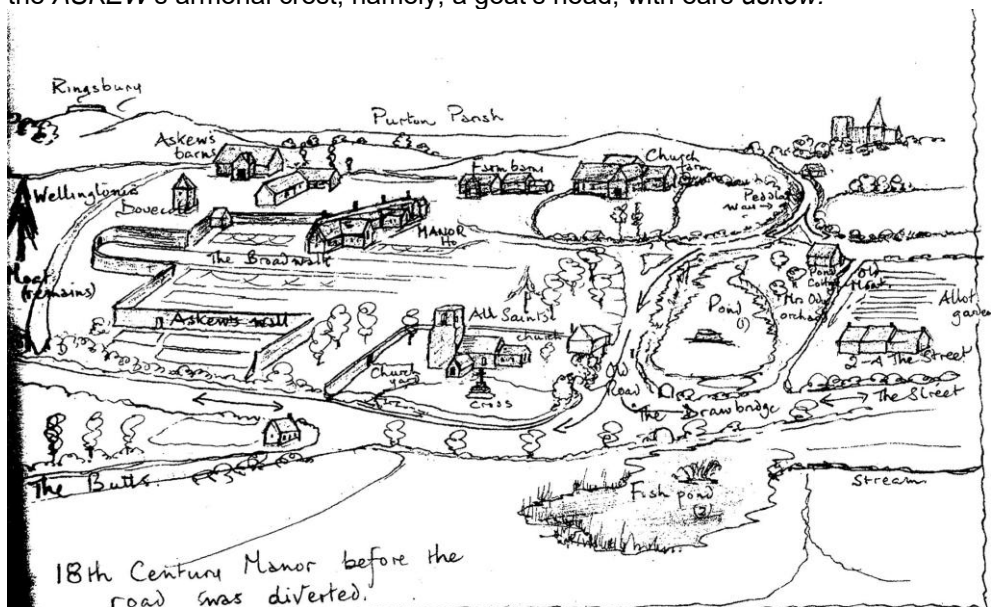
McKnight cites the lore of village tradition in support of a belief that the gallant

Colonel was forced into involuntary exile following an act of military insubordination. There is no proof of it but it is known that Lady Blunt returned home to live with her aged mother before her husband died in 1811. After the death of her mother in 1804 Lady Blunt became a recluse, living alone with a single manservant, Parsons, and bitterly aware that she was neither liked nor respected by the villagers. Her wild nature, or perhaps, antipathy towards her denigrators, led her to be friendly towards gipsies, who were encouraged to camp in the manor grounds, and according to legend, indulge in wild singing, fiddling and dancing around blazing fires. She spent much time, alone, in the enclosed part of the garden, pacing to and fro, and, reputedly, pausing at a vantage point from which the "old Rectory" could be seen. Her presence was associated with a particular tree which has given rise to numerous stories of her ghost, which is to be seen, allegedly, seated or standing beneath "her tree", on or near the fatal anniversary, November 3rd. Unfortunately, these tales suffer from two flaws. Firstly, Lady Blunt's tree was felled in a storm of cyclonic proportions which occurred on November 5th 1873 and which itself was the subject of much superstitious speculation at the time. Secondly, if it is true that her ghostly apparition gazes steadfastly in the direction of Cleobury's rectory, formerly old Honeywood house, now "Pera Ltd.," then she is gazing at the wrong one! The rectory known to her was at the bottom of Butt's lane, on what is now the school playing field.

Picturesque though these dramatic tales of human relationships may be, the Askew-Blunt tenure did nothing to further the prosperity of the manor, and the decline, which had begun with the Webbes' misfortunes, continued dramatically. At one point the village was little more than a series of hamlets grouped around farming communities.

The family vault is close by the walls on the north side of the church between the old north door, now built in, and the vestry. The access was partly blocked off when the Victorian stokehole was built to house an aptly named "Gillwarmer". There are

memorial tablets on the walls of the vestry, which must have been moved to these positions when the vestry was built, and a more substantial wall memorial in the nave above the pulpit. Ironically the family is the only one to be commemorated as Lords of the Manor. It has been suggested that there is an element of heraldic humour in the ASKEW's armorial crest, namely, a goat's head, with ears askew.



A View of Lydiard Millicent (as complied by D Payne) – Part 9

THE KIBBLEWHITE AFFAIR

As an indomitable old lady, Lady Mary Blunt had one more dramatic role to play. There was one son born to Col., Henry Blunt and Lady Mary, his wife, and his name was Charles Burrell Blunt. He grew up to be a rake and a man about town, given to indulgence in the fashionable vices of the gentry, mainly gambling. While patronising the taverns and coffee houses of London, Sir Charles became acquainted with James Kibblewhite, a remarkable self made man with a burning ambition, who exploited his talents as a lawyer to the full.

James Kibblewhite was born in 1770 to William Kibblewhite, basket maker, and Eleanor, his wife, who resided at no., 3, The Street, Lydiard Millicent. There were 6 syblings in the family and Grandfather Kibblewhite was parish clerk from 1757 until his death in 1802. According to Ivor Moore, a descendant of the family, many of James Kibblewhite's antecedents came from Castle Eaton and South Fawley in Berkshire. Sir Thomas Whyte may have been an ancestor. One Mary Kibblewhite married William White of Rickmansworth, and their son, Sir Thomas White, became Lord Mayor of London circa 1553. Since James's father, William, was an artisan it is not clear how the family's status had declined, but their connections evidently held good for James was not only literate, which was unusual for a boy in his circumstances, but he was articled to a local lawyer, and ultimately, to Bradfords of London. He was an enterprising youth, for the village churchwardens' accounts of the period record fréquent payments to him for sparrows' heads, which were regarded as vermin. After serving articles at Meakins in the Strand, he leased premises at Gray's Inn in 1793, qualified as a lawyer in 1797, and dealt with cases in the King's Bench and Court of Common Pleas, where, it may be noted, the work concerned land tenure. He was called to the bar in 1817.

In the course of his acquaintance with Sir Charles Burrell Blunt, Kibblewhite lent him money against notes of hand, fully aware that the profligate rake was in no position to repay them unless he mended his ways, or until he came into his inheritance after the death of his mother, Lady Blunt. There seems little doubt that Kibblewhite intended to foreclose and acquire the title when the old lady died. The plan has been called the "Kibblewhite conspiracy", but, unethical though it may seem to modern eyes, it was not illegal.

McKnight records a folksy tale of how the plot or plan was revealed. In a moment of indiscretion, Kibblewhite's mother revealed all when she was fetching her husband's nightly jug of ale from the Sun Inn. Lady Blunt's manservant, Parsons, was present and he wasted no time in informing his mistress. The indomitable old lady, now 71 years of age, yet realising what was afoot, gathered up the manorial papers and rode pillion behind Parsons as far as Highworth, where she boarded the stagecoach to London, consulted a lawyer, and by the legal process of lease and release, deprived her son of his direct inheritance. It is said that Kibblewhite

resorted to litigation for repayment but failed.

Lady Blunt's will provided that her grandson, William Oakes Blunt, should inherit the manor with a proviso that he should pay to his father two-thirds of the produce of the estate, for life. She died in 1822 and William Oakes Blunt inherited the property. He married in 1829 but died shortly afterwards leaving no issue and an invalid will. Sir Charles Burrell Blunt predeceased them both so William Oakes Blunt's widow took the income and departed back to her native Leicestershire. The estate remained unclaimed for several years; the Askews tried to claim it but failed, and the issue was further complicated by a law suit between Lord Shaftesbury and the Rev., Henry Streeten, who is thought to have bought it from the legal heirs-in-law.

Although the manor was but a shadow of its former self, some idea of its extent may be gleaned from the records of Bryan Bewley, farmer, land agent and Overseer, who was charged with collecting rates on behalf of the Vestry. The acreage is listed as follows :-

Stonefield 13 acres 0 rods 17 perches

Hydes 25 acres 2 rods 27 perches

Grove 36 acres 2 rods 13 perches

Buryfield North 13 acres 0 rods 0 perches

Buryfield South 4 acres 1 rod 28 perches

Lay field arable 10 acres 1 rod 23 perches

Ley field pasture 2 acres 0 rod 2 perches

Braches 47 acres 3 rods 2 perches

Gardener's Close 5 acres 2 rods 5 perches,

totalling 158 acres 3 rods 26 perches, plus the Manor house and curtilage.

Although James Kibblewhite's "conspiracy", if that is what it was, failed through John Parson's diligence and Lady Blunt's acumen, the family continued to exercise some influence in the neighbourhood. James Kibblewhite was very influential in local politics. Initially, he supported the Clarendon and Bolingbroke interests as Tories in the "rotten borough" of Wootton Bassett. These persons, although diverse in outlook, had made a political compromise to return one member each in order to avoid electoral costs, mainly bribery and purchasing of votes, which in 1754, had amounted to £5,789 per side, or 30 guineas per voter. Kibblewhite promoted their interests in the elections of 1807. However there was a parting of the ways, followed by acrimonious dispute and mutual vilification by means of political lampoons. Kibblewhite was described as Lawyer Kibbleblack alias Double-fee. Kibblewhite counter-attacked by publishing, in the language of the Bible, a work entitled "The Chronicles of Wootton Bassett in which the Philistines are led by Graspall", a reference to the 3rd Viscount Bolingbroke. He was elected as a Member of Parliament in his own right in 1812, but sold out in 1813 to Joseph Pitt, a celebrated "borough monger".

Despite his manifest faults and naked ambition, Kibblewhite was popular locally

and many would have preferred his administration to that of the existing moribund squirearchy. He left a will requesting to be buried in the family vault in All Saints' church. This was observed ; the vault is in the nave, at the back of the church, and extends laterally from the region of the font, northwards, to a point outside of the north wall in the churchyard.

The will also stipulated that a monument in memory of the Kibblewhite family, namely a tablet, should be erected against the interior wall of the south wall of the church, at the expense of his estate. This was not carried out and neither is there any indication that the parish ever benefitted from a distribution annually; of £100 in alms for the poor. He discharged his brother Edmund's debts and confirmed the practice of his late brother. George, of letting the "Downstreet" grounds as allotments for the poor. This field was literally "down the street", being part of that field now occupied by Park View drive. The late lamented George had also awarded alms of 5 shillings each to 8 poor people of Lydiard Millicent, annually, at Christmas, which James willed should be continued, but there is no record that this wish was honoured. James Kibblewhite held the freehold of many properties in the village, including Butcher's ground, the Titmarsh closes, Collyers (i.e Colliers row) at Shaw, Reynold's close, Willey close adjoining Godwin's farm. and Keeper's close , which is separated from Butchers by the road.

He exchanged Sander's close and Butcher's close for Gardener's close, described as being "next to my father's house", and all, or part of, Buryfield, which is adjacent to Gardener's close. On this land, which is now part of "the Close", a modern housing estate, there was until recently, a substantial dwelling of red brick, supposedly listed, dating from the 18th century. Attached to it there was a dovecote, which was traditionally an indicator of higher social aspirations, and also built in red brick, but in ill repair. It is supposed that Kibblewhite acquired this property for his own residential needs, but there is no proof positive. He died in 1845.

His grand step mother's son, Anthony Kibblewhite, also enjoyed a concomitant improvement in social status, graduating from village baker to tenant farmer, and ultimately to the freehold occupier of Godwin's farm. He served two terms of office as Churchwarden and three terms as Surveyor of the Highways.

THE LATTER DAYS

Following the death of William Oakes Blunt, the estate was in limbo for 9 years while legal problems were resolved, until it was acquired by the Rev., Henry Streeten, a priest of the Church of England who was Vicar of St Mary's, Rodbourne Cheney. The deed of conveyance, in 1845, was witnessed by Dame Sophie Blunt, widow of Sir Charles Burrell Blunt, by Richard Charles Blunt, and by Edward Charles Fletcher who may have been related by marriage. Streeten leased only the manor house and curtilage, together with a double tenement and gardens at Holborn for his staff. He was a tenant for 14 years and an owner for 4 years before

his untimely death. Streeten had no clerical jurisdiction whatsoever in the parish of All Saints', Lydiard Millicent, but he was aware that the plight of the rural poor was worsening due to economic trends and Malthusian doctrines. However, the Oxford Movement, which was revitalising the church and encouraging a more responsible attitude among clerics and laymen of influence, was gathering pace, sweeping away the state of lethargy into which priest and prelate had fallen during the 18th century. Even as Lord of the Manor he could not ordain what was to happen in a parish ; the Vestry and a growing band of Yeoman were more influential. However by exercise of his Christian conscience he could try to influence events. He made the initial moves towards introducing an allotment scheme and he was responsible for establishing the village elementary school in 1840. He used his social position to intercede with the absent Rector, Dr. Warneford, to begin urgent church restoration, and the box seats which are, for example, a familiar feature of St. Mary's church, Lydiard Tregoz, were replaced by open seats of oak, for which there were no pew-rent charges. Certain repairs to the roof were effected, but, as modern craftsmen remind us, the reduction of ventilating draughts and improvements in heating actually encouraged decay. Buckler's water-colour of 1809 depicts a chancel with two southerly facing windows. Either Streeten alone, or in conjunction with Warneford, extended it and inserted a third window. The extension of the wall plate and cornice are still visible beneath the eaves. The priest's door on the south side of the chancel and the north door of the nave, were filled in at the same time.

Much of McKnight's contribution to village life has already been recorded. The School for the Sons of Gentlemen which he established was remarkably innovative for its day, for in addition to the conventional disciplines of Greek, Latin, Mathematics, Scriptures, Poetry and Prose, there was a strong practical element in Carpentry, Metalwork, Beagling and boating. McKnight continued Streeten's church restorations. A "Gillwarmer" ducted heating system was added. and in the course of installation some unwarranted iconoclastic zeal has been suspected. The ancient rood loft, a Catholic relic, disappeared. He dismantled the musicians' gallery, and dispensed with William Wheeler's flute and Charles Ricks' violin-cello in favour of an harmonium. The Jacobean pulpit was removed, and replaced with a highly decorative, elaborate pulpit carved by two pupils. There is little doubt that he revitalised the congregation and in two decades he came to be an admired and respected man, but, for all that, priest and people were still divided by a wide social gulf. It is doubtful if the labourers who doffed their caps really understood him, or his 'Young gentlemen', and the school for the sons of gentlemen was useful to the parish only in that it provided casual employment.

The power of the Squirearchy was waning ; men looked, for better or for worse, to the aforementioned growing band of Yeomen. "Squire" Tuckey of Shaw was the patriarch of them all. Strictly speaking he was not of that rank, but, as the freehold owner of a recently enclosed and regenerated farm, he was regarded as such. He died in 1704. Richard Munde, of similar standing, died in 1707. Edward Millington,

who farmed throughout most of the 18th century, was Churchwarden and Overseer of the Poor for many years and was highly regarded as a charitable man. He died in 1804. Benjamin Bewley was also a churchwarden and, in his day, Constable, Surveyor of the Highways and Assistant Overseer. Few officers of the Vestry relished the task of Surveyor for, in those days, men could be compelled to work for a set number of days in the year on hewing or carting stone for road repairs, and compulsion made the responsible officer unpopular. There are depressions adjacent to Stone lane which are relics of this labour.

When Benjamin Bewley died in 1808, his widow, Martha continued to farm for 21 years. Their son, Bryan Bewley, farmed and served the Vestry until he died in 1849. His widow, Mary, survived for only 11 days more, and their daughter, Sophia, died in the same year, aged 34 years. Another Yeoman, George Franklin, was Parish Clerk for 33 years until 1832, and his tasks would have included implementing an emergency law to make preparations for the total evacuation by road of all livestock, if there had been a French invasion. He died in 1832 and his wife died in 1833. Stephen Cole, who died in 1822 aged 68 years, and Sarah Cole who died in 1833, aged 79 years, were other prominent farmers who survived some lean economic years of fluctuating prices and unpredictable harvests. Many of their kind were obliged to change from a largely arable production to dairy farming, producing milk, and butter, sold periodically at local markets, and soft, sour "Gloucestershire" cheese which was more accurately described as "Wiltshire" cheese! The annual procession to Chippenham Market with wagon loads of cheeses was a local festival. The families of Large, Plummer, and Sadler were all prominent folk and their descendants survive locally to this day. The master and man relationship has often been criticised adversely but there is one example, in All Saints' churchyard, of genuine mutual respect and affection. An employer had a gravestone erected in memory of an employee, which reads , -

"In memory of John Strange, who died March 7th 1875, aged 87 years. This stone was erected in respect by his master, George Horsell, as a memento of 35 years of faithful service". Regrettably, there are no other records extant of this relationship between master and man.

After MacKnight had relinquished his tenancy and departed to Silk Willoughby, the manor was purchased by Nevil Story-Maskelyne of Bassett Down in 1877. It is doubtful if he ever took up residence for on Sunday November 24th 1880, the manor house was almost totally destroyed by fire.

He had commissioned Messrs., Philip and Powell, builders, to carry out repairs. It has been said that workmen left a lighted blow-torch in the roof but they denied this accusation. It is known that Mr. Story-Maskelyne had the use of a room at the house and had been working there on the previous day. He left it at 5.30 p.m. leaving a small fire in the grate. It had been a cold day.

Later that evening, Mr. William Edmonds, who was employed as a night watchman at Lord Bolingbroke's house, Lydiard Park, observed that the building was on fire and he told Mr. Maskelyne's coachman, who rode to Swindon for the

Fire Brigade at 4.00 a.m. on Sunday. In the meantime, the Rev., Henry Hayward rode over to Bassett Down to inform Story-Maskelyne.

The horse drawn fire brigade arrived on the scene at 4.45 a.m.. Nine men and a pump under the direction of Brigade Captain W.E. Morris and Wiltshire Constabulary Inspector Porter fought the fire, and initially they were able to rescue all the furniture. The engine was placed adjacent to a large pond in front of Mr. Read's residence, (i.e. the Church farm pond as it is now), and ladders were obtained. Engineers and Powey climbed on to the roof and directed a "good stream of water." Other men used water from the tank on the roof to supplement the efforts of a growing band of villagers who formed a chain of leathern buckets. The hoses were not long enough to reach some rooms but 200 gallons per minute were pumped into the flames, enabling one room to be saved in 2 hours. The limestone walls and ancient timbers burnt freely yet the water froze into a thick sheet upon neighbouring walls. The heat melted an iron deed chest and many valuable books, documents and much china was destroyed. (So perished, it seems, much of the primary source material which local historians would have relished!). The brigade stood by until 1.00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon.

The old manor house remained as an ivy mantled ruin until 1963. Despite the loss of land and dwelling the Story-Maskelyne family still retained an interest, for, in 1896, the family clashed with the Parish Council which had superseded the Vestry as a unit of local government in 1891. Mr. Story-Maskelyne chose, unilaterally, to close and gate the old road which passed from Stone lane in front of Church farm and to the east of the church and divert traffic along the New Cut, i.e. Church Place, thereby enclosing the Great Pond. Strictly speaking it was not an Inclosure for Story-Maskelyne owned all of the land in question but the villagers felt deprived of a useful resource in times of drought, when wells and springs ran dry. Moreover, memories of the Great Manor Fire were still vivid. The only way they could protest was to petition the Parish Council which informed Mr. Storey-Maskelyne that statutory notice had not been given and that the barriers should be removed "until sufficient notice had been given". His reply was evasive. "It is of great interest to myself," he wrote, "that I should be acquainted with the feelings of the parish, and any remark that the Parish Council may at any time be good enough to address to me will have my great respect", but he took no action except to inform the Council that he would "erect a seemingly handsome low wall with rails atop and bushed behind". He reminded the parish that "spiteful mischief" had been done, i.e. "lawless violence has been committed to the ornamental gate which, I feel sure, was not done by Lydiard people". Two years later he incurred the displeasure of the people once more concerning the condition of the "boating lake", formerly the manorial fishponds on the south side of the Street opposite the church. It was stated that the "smell at times has been almost unbearable". In this case he was not at fault. There always has been an adequate supply of water to the ponds from springs to the east of the main pond and therefore no need for stagnation. There was an open water course drained the entire Street from Lydiard

Green to the stream at Holborn and it was becoming blocked and polluted.

Apart from these incidents Storey-Maskelyne's tenure was not remarkable. John Joseph Webb, farmer and market gardener, was in occupation of the Manor farm, and others, in 1907.

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as compiled by D Payne) – Part 10

CHURCH and CHAPEL

There has been a Christian presence in Lydiard since the 9th century A. D., and there may have been one in Roman times if Romano-Britons lived in the area. They are known to have settled at Pavenhill in Purton which is less than a mile away as the crow flies. Christianity was established in this area as a result of St. Augustine's mission and it owed its allegiance to the Pope until the Reformation. Thereafter, the Protestant Church of England was established and a succession of breakaway groups appeared, known collectively as Non- Conformists, some of which were persecuted in their time. Even if not directly persecuted, obstacles, mainly a consequence of the preservation of vested interests, were placed in their way. Secessionary groups often began as meetings in private dwellings which, in time, the authorities required to be licensed. A Meeting house certificate was issued in September 1821 for a house at Shaw occupied by the Rev., Walter Lowrie, an Independent, in the names of James Walter Lowrie, William Haines and Richard Woolford. In Jan., 1833 a building occupied by Benjamin Hollick was licensed at Shaw. The house of John Newth was licensed in Oct., 1833.

All Saints' church is situated within the boundaries of the Saxon tun of LIDGEARD. It consists of a tower, nave, chancel, vestry and south aisle with porch, dating from the 14th century, but few traces remain of the Saxon building which must have existed before the Norman Lords De Clinton, who held the manor from 1100 to 1429 A.D., and little remains which can be attributed confidently to the De Clintons themselves.

There is a balluster mullion artefact displayed in the south east corner of the south aisle which is all that remains of a Saxon window, and a capitol frieze incorporated into the wall of the vestry is also Saxon work. The tower, nave and chancel are the work of Robert Turgis, armiger, who acquired the manor from the De Clinton family in 1457 after they had been elevated to the Dukedom of Newcastle, and he sought a royal licence to build a manor house and rebuild the church. However he died in 1464 and the task of completion was left to his widow.

The south aisle and porch were built in the middle of the 14th century and, therefore, antedate the main building. As a result of roof restoration work carried out in 1992/93, English Heritage commissioned a dendrochronological survey of the roof timbers of the south aisle. A sample of oak indicated that the tree had been cut down in the spring of 1341 and had been used by 1345. The tree was 137 years old, and a poor specimen of its kind, having been grown in shallow soil such as is evident upon the western escarpment of neighbouring Greenhill which was then on the eastern fringe of the Royal Forest of Bradon. An expert appraisal of the roof described it as being a double arch-braced common rafter, which was originally plastered below, giving the appearance of a barrel vault. The only parts which are visible are the ornately moulded wall plates. Roof structures of this kind were assembled at ground level on trial runs and within living memory there was

an ancient sawyers' pit in Butts lane which may have been used for this purpose. Evidence suggests that a local family of mediaeval Wiltshire landowners named Russell, who were related to the Norman lords, De Clinton, and who owned land in the parish, may have been responsible for the south aisle. A Wiltshire antiquarian John Aubrey, (1626-1697), states that, "Bradfield House, in Hullavington, anciently a manor but now a parish, had a chapel, and in the windows are the coats of Clinton and Russell". He goes on to record that the Russells held land at Lydiard, inter alia, and notes that in the church at Lydiard is "an ancienne large seate now belonging to Antony Lord Ashley, Chancellor of the 'Chequer and on the seate thus

I. H. C. MARIA D.E.R. ROBERTUS RUSSELL ME FESTE".

If this inscription means "In the name of Jesus Christ, may Mary the mother of God aid me, Robert Russell", then it implies a proprietorial interest.

The Fropenell memoranda in W.A.M.XXXVII mentions the essential details, viz.

- that in 1329 Robert Russell the younger resided at North Lydyerd.
- that in 1362, one Oliver Russell is described as the son and heir of Robert Russell, High Constable of Marlborough, and,
- Robert Russell the third was High Sheriff of Wiltshire from 1341 to 1347. He died in 1350.

Buckler's drawing of 1809 shows that the chancel had only two square headed Decorated windows on the south side, with a semi-circular headed priests door between them. The chancel was lengthened and windows added as a result of Victorian restoration. The east window of the chancel is 15th century. The trussed rafter roof with moulded and transverse ribs has carved bosses at the intersections which were coloured and gilded at the 1963 restoration.

The north windows of the nave are pointed ones of three lights and labels and contain fragments of mediaeval glass. Indications of a blocked north door can be observed externally. The chancel arch is of two orders of cavetto and contains a small squint. The roof of the nave is; of collar and brace form similar to the south aisle but it has moulded transverse and longitudinal ribs with bosses at the intersections. It suffered from primitive Victorian repair work. Modern restoration has largely obscured evidence of a rood loft and stairs. There are 2 corbels in the east wall on either side of the arch which supported the back beam of the loft and 2 above them on which the rood beam rested. The roof bay over the site of the rood loft is narrower than the rest. Ponting F.S.A. states in WAM. vol, XXXV that in 1907 it was possible to trace a blocked up access doorway to the stairs.

The tower was built at the same time as the north wall and is of three stages divided by string courses on the outside with deep base and plinth. The parapet has 5 quatrefoils on each side. There is a gargoyle on each side of the cornice. In the stair turret there is an original inner door and an external one was added in 1858. The tower contains a clock with faces on the east and south sides which was installed after World War 2 as a war memorial. There is a fine Renaissance

weather vane atop the tower but it is not the one depicted in Buckler's early 19th century drawing and it is believed that it was given to the church after World War 1 by a gentleman who had once been a student at McKnight's school for the sons of gentlemen in the manor house. These young men were an adventurous breed and given to scaling the outside of the tower as a prank, often doing damage, and the rueful ex-student wished to make amends when his conscience pricked him years afterwards.

The Norman font has a circular bowl with arcaded sides and interlaced arches. There are fragments of mediaeval glass in the west window. Beneath the floor of the nave, adjacent to the font is the Kibblewhite vault. It contains 18 interments from 1814 to 1895, the most notable of them in terms of parish history and legend being James Kibblewhite, born 1770. died 1845. He was the eldest son of William Kibblewhite, basketmaker, and Eleanor his wife, of no. 3 The Street, Lydiard Millicent and was notorious both for his involvement in local politics and for an alleged conspiracy to acquire the manor after the widowed Lady Blunt was dead.

The pulpit is Jacobean. It was returned to the church in 1963, replacing a large ornate Victorian pulpit carved and installed by McKnight and his pupils which, although of excellent craftsmanship, proved aesthetically unacceptable to modern restorers.

In the east window of the south aisle, otherwise known as the Lady chapel, there is a fine stained glass window designed by M.E.A. Rope in 1964 and installed in memory of Col, Albert Canning C.M.G., a long serving churchwarden. Counting the number of birds depicted therein is a diverting exercise!

The plain uncluttered interior owes as much to parochial history as it does to restoration and latter day churchmanship. The De Clintons removed their family and influence to Derbyshire when they became the first Dukes of Newcastle. The widow of Robert Turgis married William Browning, and the Webbes, who were Tudor recusants, forfeited patronage of the church and status within the community. Several members of the Askew - Blunt family are interred close to the chancel and vestry within a vault, but Lady Mary Blunt's son and nephew were the last of the lineage. There is a memorial tablet on the south wall to the Rev, W.H.E. McKnight, the "Political Parson", who exercised a powerful social reformist influence when the parish was experiencing critical times in the middle of the 19th century, and adjacent to it is a memorial to Hannah Shore, an outstanding headmistress of the village school in the late 19th century. ministries of the Rev, Christopher Cleobury, who built the magnificent old rectory now known as Pembroke house, the Rev, Arthur G. Saunders, a Puseyite, and the Rev, D. Harrison are commemorated by wall memorials in the chancel.

The remains of the Rev, Edward Jenner are interred in the nave. He held a cure of souls for 59 years, from 1665 to 1724, but after his death the parish was held in plurality for over 120 years. Plurality had little to commend it and almost inevitably it led to neglect. The Rev, Dr. Samuel Warneford, of Sevenhampton, Highworth,

purchased the advowson in 1809. He was a philosopher, philanthropist, and benefactor of some repute, but, whatever his initial intentions may have been, he never took up residence in the parish because of an unfortunate dispute over the tithe. For many years he paid the Rev, Hugh Allan, of St. Marys Church, Cricklade, to ride over and conduct the essential services for a stipend of £100 pounds a year. Although he sold the advowson to Pembroke College, Oxon., in 1828 he remained non-resident rector until 1855. During this time the Rev, Henry Streeten, rector of Rodbourne Cheney, became resident Lord of the Manor, and although he had no jurisdiction, he attempted to intercede with Warneford, with great difficulty, in order to get repairs carried out.

It was the Vestry which initiated most of the repairs and improvements of the 19th century regardless of whether or not there was a resident incumbent. Thus in 1843 the Vestry determined to repair the church by voluntary subscriptions. This was not a popular move since there was a strong anti-clerical movement exacerbated by then notorious "hungry Forties". In 1844 it prevailed upon Dr. Warneford to make a contribution towards repairs which were placed in the hands of his agent and Streeten. In 1846 it considered ways to make the church warmer and installed solid fuel stoves vented by pipes through the windows. Streeten's initiative resulted in "the body of the church cleared of all pews and galleries and re-seated with open seats. The church accommodation to be increased by 60 places by means of a grant from the Incorporated Society, making 226 free seats"..

As a result of McKnight's further intervention with Dr. Warneford his solicitor attended upon a Vestry in 1852 and agreed the mode of rectifying defects in the church and nave. The churchwardens were authorised to make the repairs and a rate of 6d. in the pound was agreed for 1 year and 1d. in the pound thereafter. Baize covered doors were installed and problems with the solid fuel stoves overcome.

Twenty years later there was another burst of activity. In 1870 the Vestry voted that a 'faculty should be applied for to carry out the late Mr. Streeten's plan for the restoration of the chancel and the building of a vestry". Further, in 1870, a Gillwarmer was installed. This was an early form of central heating and involved the excavation of a stokehole and deep trenches for pipes throughout the church. Allegedly these trenches improved the drainage but led to the "disembowelling of the church".

McKnight relates an amusing anecdote.

"I was to get the old stoves and pipes out of the church, and so, as soon as the Gillwarmer was in place and tested, I asked the churchwarden, Mr. Plummer, for permission to remove and sell them. He demurred. "Wait a bit sir, wait a bit. Them new fangled things often fail. We shall most likely want the stove yet to help it." It was a raw December day. I had given Weaver, my groom, orders to be up at 5 a.m. and keep the roaring fire going till church time. He did his work well. When I went into the church at 11 o' clock, the thermometer stood at 58 degrees and still rising. Mr. Plummer came to church to see what the new thing

could do, and he evidently came prepared for the worst. He had a stout greatcoat on, a white woollen muffler around his neck, and thick woollen gloves. He was well defended against any cold. Very fortunately one of the gratings was in the aisle close by his pew, and as he came in, I noticed he held his face over it, and gave a quiet nod of satisfaction. It was better than he thought but he was not going to disrobe. He sat down, buttoned up and muffled as he came in. At the end of the first lesson it was clearly getting too warm for him, and as he stood up for the Te Deum, I saw the white comforter drawn from his neck and laid across the front of the pew. The gloves were also thrown aside. The greatcoat was still buttoned up, but was evidently becoming oppressive. The Litany ended, resistance was no longer possible, for the thermometer had risen to nearly 65, so he stepped out of his pew and took off his greatcoat, and then retired to the farther end of the pew. After the service I met him as he came out.... and greeted him with, "Well Mr. Plummer, will it do?" "Oh yes, yes, but bless me, take care you do not roast us!". "Well shall we want the stoves to help it?" "Oh no, sell them at once". I did, and cleared another disfigurement out of a pretty old church".

Not all of McKnight's changes were welcome. Charles Ricks' Violin-cello and William Wheeler's flute were cast aside in favour of an harmonium and Horne's hymns, on a sad occasion reminiscent of Hardy's "Under the Greenwood Tree".

Churchwardens' accounts date from 1772. One from 1775, quaintly expressed, reads:

Paid the ould arares for last year £2..16..0d

Hedghog 4d, fox 1s..0d

Jonathon Hiscox for Bel ropes 8s..0d

Robert Selling for paintin and whitewashing church £1..11..2d.

Ringers monney 12..6d Lickor 6d

Paid for a pass (authorised alms for transients) 2d

Paid for 6 yeards of gursewebbin to put the corps in the ground 1s..6d

Visitation 5s Robert Woolford for 12 sparrows 2d 4 foxs 4s

Pass to a souldars wife 6d

Clarks wages for half a yr £1..1..0d

4 foxs 2s . John Franklin 12 sparrows 2d, 3 foxs 3s, John Shildon 6

sparrows 1d Hollesters boy for a edgog 3d,

John Haskins a bill for bread and wine 2s..6d

Coppey of the register 2s..6d, Mr. Evans at the visitation 10s.

In 1786 the churchwarden paid 2s..10d for pulling up the Yupping stock.

All Saints' Church has a ring of bells as follows

Treble; cast by Gillet and Johnston 1932, and inscribed" The gift of Col., Canning C.M.G. and Mabel his wife."

2. Rudhall 1712, inscribed God save the Queen - Rudhall cast us all".

3. Rudhall 1712. Recast by Warner 1906.

4. William Green and Ambrose Mundee C.Ws. 1712 A.R-
5 Rudhall 1712. " Prosperity to our worthy
benefactors" A.R.1712
6 Rudhall 1712. Recast by Warner 1906
London.

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as complied by D Payne) – Part 11

Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, Robert Jenner, Rector 1712.

It may be significant that Sir John Askew acquired the manor in 1712, although his grand plans to develop the estate never materialised, due to insolvency. There are some interesting external features. A set of 7 sculpted heads set beneath the eaves on the south side of the south aisle are sufficiently different to be representational, and they may be a link with the De Qinton family. Two of them, in close proximity, are boys of similar age, young, and possibly twins. In the fourth generation of that family to hold Lydiard Millicent, William De Clinton had two sons, Hugh and Richard. William predeceased his wife and, unusually for the times, "Lady Milsent" held the manor in trust, but in a deed from the reign of King John, it is recorded that "Hugh sold his vill to his brother Richard aftey the death of their mother, the Lady Milsent". *It is from this lady that the village gets its name.*

The red brick wall on the north and west sides of the churchyard dates from 1715 and is part of the boundary of the manor which defined some elaborate gardens when they were part of John Askew's grandiose plan which was never completed. In the west wall is Lady Blunt's door. She was Sir Ferdinando Askew's only daughter and a tragic figure in a so-called "melancholy affair".

The churchyard cross is much restored but the shaft is alleged to be Saxon. Some fine box tombs guard the mortal remains of local notable families, mainly farming folk, from the days when agriculture was the dominant local industry. Children, among whom the mortality rate in the 18th and 19th centuries was high, were interred near the natural lych gate. There is an unusual tomb stone in the old churchyard which was erected by George Horsell in memory of his faithful servant, Albert Strange, but there is no trace in parish records of either man.

There is an intriguing stone in the church porch in memory of John Webbe, son of Ambrose Webbe, gent., who married Margaret Fisher, daughter of Henry Fisher, who was buried the 31st of May 1679. This memorial appears to have been defaced, possibly as an act of iconoclastic zeal, for this man was the last in his generation of the Catholic manorial lords.

There are memorial plaques dedicated to the memory of:-

Ferdinando Askew 1783 and Mary Askew 1784; their daughter Mary Askew (Blunt) 1822, and William Oakes Blunt 1831, and to -

Edward Millington, a respected churchwarden and an Overseer of the Poor, of charitable disposition, who died in 1804.

Also commemorated is the tragic family of Bryan Bewley, his wife Mary Bewley, and their only daughter Sophia, all of whom died in 1849,

Further, Hannah Shore, headmistress of the village school during a critical decade, who died in 1880, and the Rev., W. H. McKnight, died 1896, and, in the form of sundry windows, ,

To Edwin and Sarah Newman , who loved children, and Colonel Albert Canning C.M.G., who served his country loyally and who died in 1960, with Mabel his wife who died in 1933., and finally, A. M. Sadler, died 1890, mother of a legendary figure, James Sadler, J.P., D.L. Many other "Village Hampdens" lie interred in the much used churchyard, now closed for burials..

The Patronage of the church was held by the reigning monarch on behalf of the Priory of Newent from 1340 to 1392. Thereafter it was held by the monarchy of itself from 1392 to 1459 except in 1394, when Reginaldus de Cobham was patron. Since de Cobham appointed William Bacon, a notable Lollard, to be priest in his short patronage, this appointment. may have been an act of reformist zeal. In 1460, Robert the new Lord of the Manor and principal builder of the present church was awarded the patronage, which he held until his death. From 1465 until 1477, William Browning, was awarded the patronage on behalf of Sir Robert's widow, Alice. After her death William Baskett was from 1477 to 1515, followed by his son Thomas, from 1515 to 1574. Guilielmus (William) Webbe was patron in 1574 and a Egidius Webbe, was priest; in 1579 his son, William alias Webbe held it, and remained as patron despite his brush with authority, as a recusant 1581, until 1603. In the 17th century, gentlemen who owed their wealth and position to mercantile interests prevailed; men such as Thomas Booth of Fawley in 1603 and William Locksworth of in 1612. The latter was of sound Puritan tradition and retained his office during and after Civil War. He appointed, in succession, two members of a notable Gloucestershire family of Puritans, Robert and Thomas Whitfield as Priests. After the Restoration Guilielmus James of Marston was patron, and he appointed Robert Jenner who served a record cure of souls. By this time the influence of the patronage and clergy declined as the iniquity of plurality flourished. Joshua Hale of Halesowen had the living in 1724 but appointed others to be incumbents. Joshua Davis of Fisherton Delamere was patron from 1784 and in 1807 the benefice was bought by the Rev., Dr. Warneford LI.D., a worthy if obstinate Rector, whose relationship with the community has already been described. In 1853, the Bishop was persuaded to intervene and the patrons, Pembroke College, Oxford, appointed the first of a new generation of resident incumbents.

A list of priests survives but by whom it was compiled is not known and it cannot be authenticated. It is ,

1340	Johannes de Lalleford	1342	Ricardus de Evesham
1380	Howel Omaduk	1392	Ricardus Dygyl
1392	Robertus de Malton	1394	Williamus Bacon
1395	Robertus de Malton	1411	Johannes Gibbs

1416	Alanus Leverton	1417	Johannes Franklyn
1418	Johannes Duffield	1418	Robertus Burgh
1418	Johannes Oughtrede	1420	Johannes Bury
1422	Johannes Waite	1432	Williamus Bampton
1436	Ricardus Emplying	1437	Williamus Ingram
1442	Thomas Ingram	1452	Williamus Warmwell
1460	Williamus Mylton	1465	Petrus Warner
1497	Johannes Franklyn	1479	Johannes Lovekyn
1515	Johannes Hayes	1574	Egidius Webbe
1579	Johannes Crippe **	1603	Grifinus Lewis
1612	Robertus Whitfield	1664	Thomas Whitfield
1665	Robertus Jenner \$\$	1724	Johannes Butler
1724	Timothy Burrell	1784	Thomas Davis
1807	Samuel W Warneford	1853	Chris Cleobury
1864	Henry R Hayward	1881	Arthur C Saunders
1905	David P Harrison	1938	Henry F Shepherd
1949	William S Hazledine		

** Wilts., wills of 1604 (75 Harte) lists John Crispe, Clercke, Pastor of Lydiard Millicent

\$\$ Robert Jenner served a cure of souls for 59 years. It is interesting to note that after his death, the patron, Joshua Hale, appointed Johannes Butler as rector, but, in 1746 the parishioners complained of lack of service. They defined their needs as two services on a Sunday, with a sermon in the morning, and due observance of Holy days and Fast days. (Sarum Dioc., Reg., Misc. papers)

The Rector of the parish was defined as the person in receipt of the great, or rectorial tithes, and in most cases he was the priest in charge of the parish. He held his benefice freehold and, in addition to the tithes, held glebe land, as part of the church's endowment, which he could farm, or lease to others.

The tithes were commuted to a rent charge in 1836 and abolished altogether in 1936. It was legal for tithes to be paid in kind and if farmers resorted to this practice, as often happened if they were disputed, it could lead to friction.

The principal clergy dwelling was known as the Rectory if occupied by a Rector. The oldest Rectory known was in field 225, immediately south of Butts lane at the western end, which is now the school playing field, close to what is now known as the Rectory pond. It had glebe as follows :-

- 25/A 191 The Rectory on Middle Claydon
- 183 Land and outbuildings comprising 19. 5 acres
- 558 Alloments in Stone lane, 11. 0 acres
- 560 Land in Stone lane, 4. 0 acres
- 563 Land at Meet Furlong, 23. 5 acres

When Dr. Warneford inspected the living after purchase in 1807, he found that the rectory was in a ruinous condition, and he resolved to rebuild it with revenue to be obtained by increasing the tithe. The farmers objected since the tithe had been

raised in recent times by his predecessor. This was the prime cause of strained relations between priest and parish. This dwelling was used for some years by a tenant farmer, but it fell into disuse and was only rediscovered when the field was converted into the school playing field. Two very ancient pear trees are the sole remnants of the Rectory garden thereabouts.

Nineteenth century incumbents were often wealthy men. When Christopher Cleobury was appointed rector in 1853, he resolved to build a fine new rectory designed by Hardwicke of Gloucester. It was completed in 1855 at a cost of £4460, being £2760 from Cleobury himself, £1200 from the Queen Anne's Bounty, and £500 from another source, probably McKnight, who was administering a temporary cure of souls. McKnight was given £200 to spend on tree planting in the rectory grounds. Many of the trees were unusual varieties of oak and some exotic specimens were donated a Major in the Army, fresh from exploration overseas. The Rev., Christopher Cleobury was a well intentioned but sick man. He bequeathed £100 to the parish, to be held in trust, with the interest to be distributed annually. It still exists.

Although the church passed through some difficult times due to neglect and indifference, it has always exercised an enduring influence upon the community, and was a source of social support and comfort throughout two world wars and the intervening depression

The most numerous NON-CONFORMIST group within the parish was the METHODIST connection, which, at its peak, organised two chapels, one at Shaw and the other at Lydiard Green, but in different circuits.

Methodism began as a reaction to apathy and indifference within the Church of England. Anglican clergy, who for the most part were Tories, became progressively alienated from the bishops of the church, who were mainly Whigs, and the Convocation, or Church Parliament, had lost its power to influence religious life. There was an inevitable reaction by people who wished to live a more closely disciplined religious life and many of them were in awe of the traditional teaching concerning the nature of heaven and hell, salvation and eternal damnation, and the nature of good and evil.

In 1730 the principal advocates of a reformed Methodical life were John and Charles Wesley. At first they intended to lead a revitalised movement from within the Church of England but obstacles were placed in their way, so they resorted to open air teaching and began missionary work, often in the face of considerable hostility. Some historians believe that the Methodist movement was one factor which helped to save this country from revolution.

In 1802 there were 13 Methodist preaching houses in the county of Wiltshire. There was a successful Methodist Mission to Wiltshire in 1824 led by Mr. S. Heath, an itinerant preacher and scholar. This led to the establishment of a Methodist "Circuit" by 1828, by which time Purton and Lydiard Millicent were two leading centres of the movement. However, it took another 35 years to establish a registered place of Methodist worship in this parish.

The Greenhill Society began with 26 members in 1828 and services were planned there in private dwellings until 1849. For various reasons, chiefly social and political ill-feeling arising from the injustice of the land Enclosure legislation which was still a lingering sore in popular memory, the Greenhill community was not favourably inclined towards the Establishment and, initially, Methodism tended to flourish where there was popular discontent.

From 1849 it is claimed that Greenhill was "closed against" the movement and Methodist communities at Hook and Purton kept interest alive in this more remote corner of the parish. Local preachers of the time were scornful of the perceived opposition encountered from the local Squirearchy. Their wrath was misdirected. It should have been directed against a minority of wealthier farmers who opposed greater freedom within the labouring classes. The squirearchy was represented at this time by Streeten and McKnight, two gentlemen of the cloth with unusually liberal views, who encouraged the social reform which the movement fostered. In July 1860, preaching services recommenced at Greenhill and continued there until 1867. In 1863, Mr. Stephen Gleed's cottage at the Green was being used for services.

The prospect of building a chapel locally was vastly improved when, against all expectation, Mr. Tom Sheppard of Purton acquired land against stiff opposition at the Green. This land appears to have been a residue of "Manorial waste" which remained after people had settled there following the latter day Enclosures. To make use of it a title had to be established in law.

The building of a chapel at Lydiard Green began in 1863. A contemporary notice (PHS museum) exists which states :-

The services in connection with the laying of the
Foundation Stone
Of a new Primitive Methodist Chapel at Lydiard Millicent
will be held (D.V) on
Monday August 21st 1863 at 3 O'clock p.m.
Mr Samuel Humphries
of Normarsh
Will lay the Foundation Stone, when a Mallet
and Silver Trowel will be presented for the purpose.
The Stone having been laid, several short
Addresses will be delivered.
At half past Four o'clock
Tea will be provided for some hundreds in a
spacious marquee
Tickets one shilling each.
At 6 o'clock
A public meeting
will be held, when
The Revs., D.Williams, T. Mace, T. Powell, S. West,
G. Fowler, E. Alford, C. Portnall and other friends

will address the meeting.

A collection will be made and Subscriptions received at each service
in aid of a Trust fund.

Friends of Righteousness and Truth, come and help us!

During the first decade of a Methodist chapel in the parish membership of the Society rose to 43 Methodist full members, 80 Sunday school scholars, 23 C. of E. members and 41 Band of Hope members. During the first 20 years, William Hazell was described as fearing "neither man nor beast" and as one who "conquered spiteful efforts of bigotry at Lydiard". It is known that the proprietor of the brickworks at Greenhill objected to building proposals stating that he would rather sell bricks to build a public house rather than a chapel. It is also known that landlords threatened tenants with loss of leaseholds if they accommodated Methodist worship on their premises. and the landlords of public houses resented teetotalism and the activities of the "blue Ribbon army" who had taken the pledge.

It was the class of farmers known as Yeomen, freehold proprietors of small farms and who were the mainstay of support. In the middle period of worship in cottage, forge, and farmhouse, the Rummings and Morse families were local leaders, some of them acting as "stewards". The Rummings were described as a "Remarkable Family of Free Churchmen" by the Rev.; G. Fowler. a circuit superintendent. They included;-

William Rumming, father of William Rumming of Pitt's lane,

James Rumming, John Rumming and Thomas Rumming of Hook farm, and
Henry and Jacob Rumming of Pond's farm, Purton Stoke.

Mr. Thomas Rumming was especially involved with the chapels in Hook and Lydiard.

The emotionally charged events and involvements which prevailed during the building of the chapel are adequately described in "Bells in Horses" and "Victory in the Villages" (Tonks, pub., Aberdare 1907). The chapel opened on November 18th 1863 amid great rejoicing.

Apart from the regeneration of spiritual worth which is the greatest achievement and legacy of the Methodist movement, it should be noted that the Methodist conviction encouraged corporate consideration for others, worthy ambition and thrift. in a diary, currently in private hands, Elliott Woolford, born 1867, who lived and worked locally building up a trade as a market gardener, described the annual Fruit Festivals where members traded in fruit which was the product of their own labours.. It is clear, however, that they were more accurately engaged in a form of "exchange and mart", where fellow members bartered in surplus goods for their essential winter needs.

In 1930 there were 300 Methodist chapels in Wiltshire but by this time the movement had peaked in rural areas. Many factors contributed to its decline but among them was the devastation of a World War, which led many to question the value of religion, and the acceleration of rural depopulation, increased mobility, and growing affluence. Many chapels, which had been a labour of love and conviction to

build, struggled for years to survive until eventually they were sold into private hands for secular uses.

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as compiled by D Payne) – Part 12

EDUCATION

A note has been inserted in the fly-leaf of the first school log book stating that there were 3 Dames' schools in Lydiard before 1840 but no evidence has been found to corroborate this statement.

The Rev., Henry Streeten, Lord of the Manor but not Rector of the Parish church, is credited with the promotion of the first village school under the auspices of the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. He utilised a portion of Manorial lands called "Skinner's Close" which incorporated Manorial Waste adjacent to "The Butts", a lane which gave access to the open fields in Mediaeval times.

An application for a grant in aid towards the building and fitting up of one schoolroom, with a school house attached, was made to the National Society in June 1841. A subsequent grant of £45 was supplemented by public subscription in which the Rev., Henry Streeten and Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, headed the list of donors. Shaftesbury was a notable social reformer who owned land in Lydiard Millicent and the neighbouring parish of Purton. The Trust Deed is dated October 1841 and construction began immediately.

The premises were built with bricks obtained locally from the Greenhill brickworks in Purton and were brought to the site by means of Mr. Plummer's wagons and horses..

The schoolroom was 24 feet square with a door at the front and rear. It was of a standard Victorian design with a high ceiling which left trusses exposed. There were two windows at the front and a smaller one high up at the rear. Heating was provided by an open fireplace and there were vertical metal ventilation shafts, triangular in each corner of the room, which vented from the outside at ground level to an internal point six feet from the ground. The schoolhouse had one small living room with a kitchen at the rear and stairs leading to two bedrooms.

Both parts were roofed in Welsh slate and the sanitary arrangements were external earth closets. Two wells were dug, one adjacent to the school house and one in the exercise yard. All were accommodated on 1 rod and 2 poles of land, with 20 poles set aside on the south side of the lane for a school garden.

The school opened in 1842 and the conveyance is dated 1842. It is described in this extract from the Close Rolls of Chancery 1842, part 4, no., 11 which reads :-

"The Rev., Henry Thomas Streeten of the Manor, Lydiard Millicent, grants to :

The Rev., Samuel Wilson Warneford LL.D. Rector,

John Hinder and John Coles, Churchwardens,

Samuel large, yeoman, and Mary Herring of Ffoxbridge farm, Overseers ;

"all that piece of land now lying waste and situated in the Butts, containing 1 rod and 20 poles more or less, bounded on the southern side by a road leading up to a cottage and Parsonage farm; on the north side by a field belonging

to Mr. Large and on the south-west by a footpath", and

"all that piece of land lying waste in the Butts containing 20 perches and bounded on the south side by glebe land".

This piece of Manorial waste had never been utilised because, although it was bordered on both sides by ditches, it acted as a sump draining all water from the surrounding area, which created many problems in the years to come. Victorian schools were rarely healthy places for children. .

Little is known of its early history but surviving Vestry records suggest that it was not received with universal approbation, particularly by employers in need of child labour and by parents who needed children's wages. However, bearing in mind that the Great Western Railway factory had just been opened in neighbouring Swindon, it was clear to those of discernment that literate employees would be required within the works and allied industry. According to the census of 1851, Mr. J. Hawkins was the headmaster and his wife, Mrs. S. Hawkins, his only assistant in a school of about 95 pupils who were seldom present all at once, due to sickness, ill health, and the demand for seasonal labour on the farms. The curriculum was a basic scheme of numeracy and literacy, scriptural injunction and practical pursuits determined, initially, by the demand for agricultural labourers and domestic servants.

In 1858 the School managers decided that there was a need to extend the premises, so William Wheeler, a sawyer and joiner who had premises within the Butts, drew up plans on the back of plan for a wooden bridge over the river Clyde, for the erection of a "long room" as a linear extension of the existing single room, the inclusion of galleries, and some improvements to the basic school house. In the event, neither plan was implemented and they may have been merely the product of Wheeler's ambitious imagination.

An extension was built, eventually, by Wheeler circa 1865, with a single gallery. A new front porch was added adjacent to the old one so that boys and girls had separate entrances, and two rooms were added to the school house. Little survives from the period to indicate what effect, if any, these had upon the prevailing standards within the school but analysis of census returns suggest that more children were attending voluntarily on a part time basis.

Miss Hannah Elizabeth Shore was appointed headmistress of the school in 1870, coincidental with the implementation of a major Education Act, and the school improved substantially under her administration from 1870 to 1880 when she died, aged 43 years, from heart disease. There were villagers alive in the 1960's who could remember their tender years as infants under her guidance and jurisdiction, and, at a time when harshness and severity were characteristic of many schools, she was remembered with affection. Her determined efforts to implement legislation humanely are worthy of separate article.

She managed to secure a further extension to what is now known as the Victorian building, A small classroom for infants was added on as a linear extension, a new cloakroom was added to the north side and "lean-to" sheds, made of corrugated iron were added in 1879-80. The sheds survived for over one hundred years supported,

no doubt, by numerous coats of the ubiquitous dark green paint. They were used to accommodate the earth closets which also survived for 80 years.

Some documents relating to the school's finances survive. One of them, an Account of all Income and Expenditure, reads:-

Income		Expenditure	
By grant, after government inspection	£84..16..0d	To deficit on year ending May 31st 1879	£49..0..0d
Subscriptions Revs, H.R.Hayward	£40..0..0d	To Headmistress, her salary + 1/2 grant	£77..0..0d
Lord Shaftesbury	£4. 4. 0d	Assistants' salaries	£3..0..0d
James Sadler esq.,	£5..0..0d	Monitors	£8..0..0d
Rev., W.H.McKnight	£1..0..0d	Books and Stationery	£7..0..0d
J.Lee esq.,	£1..0..0d	Fuel and Light	£4..0..0d
Mr. Cole.	£2..0..0d	Furniture, repairs and cleaning	£25..0..0d
Mr. Badcock	£2..0..0d	Fire Insurance	£0..7..0d
Mr. Smith	£1..10..0d	Needlework material and sundries	£4..5..0d
Mr. Read	£1..0..0d	Other	£0..14..0d
Mr. Young	£1..0..0d	TOTAL	£237..12..0d
Mrs. Grymes	£1..0..0d		
Mr. Henly	£1..0..0d		
Mr. Hughes	£0..10..0d		
Mrs. Warman	£1..10..0d		
Mr. Edwards	£0..10..0d		
Mr. Kibblewhite	£0..10..0d	(*) Children's Payments refer to the obligatory	
Mr. W. Plummer	£0..10..0d	pennies which had to be paid before	
Mr. T. Sadler	£0..5..0d	education was free.	
Mr. W. Ody	£0..7..6d	(\$) The Board of Guardians payments were in	
Mrs. Tuckey	£0..S..0d	respect of children classified as paupers.	
Mr J. Hale	£0..2..6d	<i>The Grant</i> was "payment by results" based on	
From rent of land in the Butts	£0..10..0d	the numbers of children who "passed in their	
Children's Payments (*)	£40.5.5d	standards'! following annual examinations	
Board of Guardians (Purton PLU)(\$)	£1..2..6d	by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools	
Sale of Needlework and Books	£1..10..7d		
Deficit	£45..7..6d		
TOTAL	£238..6..0d		

Her Majesty's Inspector's report dated June 22nd 1880, shortly before Miss Shore's death reads as follows -

"The discipline of the school is very good and the instruction has been very satisfactory. The Spelling of the 3rd standard and the Arithmetic of the 6th standard were the weak points in the elementary work: the Grammar of the 3rd and 4th standards was below average. The Geography of the 2nd and 3rd standards was

fairly good—of the 4th, 5th and 6th standards was very good.

The elder infants did their work very well".

On Miss Shore's certificate, the Inspector wrote :

"The school is in very good order and has passed a good examination".

The Government grant earned the same day amounted to £87..12..0d. The average attendance for the past year was 105 but 13 children who were qualified for the examination, and who had been well prepared for it, were absent from the inspection on account of "the Fever", and there is no doubt that the compulsory closing of the school, ordered by the Medical officer of Health, just before the examination caused many more failures than there would otherwise have been. These accidents of fate were not taken into account when awards were made.

Mr Francis William Drew succeeded Miss Shore from 1880 to 1896. He did not have the difficult task of "working up" a school from minimal attainments which had confronted Miss Shore, but other problems lay in store. An Education Act passed in 1880 made attendance up to 10 years of age compulsory and, unless a certificate of exemption could be obtained, it was compulsory up to the age of 13 years. This led to a high rate of absenteeism and behavioural problems which seemingly merited corporal punishment. Education did not become free until 1891 and the combination of compulsory attendance and the obligatory "school pence" led to conflict and administrative problems.

In 1884, the School Board, comprising the Rev., A. C. Saunders, James Sadler esq., and Joses Badcock, churchwarden, issued the following printed circular

"Lydiard Millicent National School.

It has always been the rule of the School for the Children to bring their pence in advance on every Monday morning. The Committee is sorry to observe that, in some cases, the rule has been broken and that parents get behindhand with their payments. Irregularity in this respect is followed by bad consequences, temptation to children, difficulty for those who have to keep accounts and annoyance to parents. The Committee wishes it to be understood that the Master has strict directions for the future, in every case, to send back a child who does not bring its pence on Monday mornings. June 1884".

Poverty was widespread. It often happened that, as in the case of a boy named Carpenter who presented himself for admission unaccompanied by a parent in 1883, he was deemed to be "very ragged and indecently clothed and was therefore refused admission in that state". The lad presented himself again within a few days but was again sent home.

Five boys were severely punished for writing bad language in a desk; disobedience or wilful refusal was punished by caning on the back or hand. Punishment was a contentious issue. Teachers were often reprimanded for striking pupils with the hand. When a particular teacher was named for the third time in a year she was officially warned under pain of discharge.

Childhood disease could be very severe. Drew had 2 children in his own family by 1883 and it is recorded in the school log book that his wife, who taught needlework,

often had to remain at home to nurse them because they were severely ill. His eldest son, Albert William Drew, died in 1888 aged 8 years, and although 7 more children had been born by 1889, the two youngest, Gertrude Ellen Drew and Annie Drew, died in infancy in 1889 and 1892 respectively. Measles, Scarlet Fever, Scarletina and Gastric Fever were the most common afflictions but the most fatal were Diphtheria and Smallpox. The last outbreak of Smallpox was in 1885 and necessitated the building of a temporary tented isolation hospital adjacent to Manor hill between Lydiard and Purton. Children suffered from the itch, presumably scabies. Inclement weather could affect attendance radically owing to inadequate clothing or flooded roads. In March 1884 only 36 children attended school out of a possible 130 and there were numerous occasions when attendance was very poor. In the winter of 1879 to 1880, which was the worst on record in the 19th century, the snow lay for weeks on end level with the tops of hedgerows, fuel was short and wells were frozen. The District Medical authorities closed the school when epidemics were prevalent; in November 1886 it was closed for a month on account of Scarlet Fever. Premises and homes were thoroughly disinfected but, such was the fear, parents would not send their children to school if Fever was suspected. In May to June 1885, attendance fell to 14 (10%) and the Education Authority instituted a system of absentee notes and inspection by an Attendance Officer.

Nevertheless, the school usually presented a good report. That for April 1885 reads 'The school has passed an excellent examination. A classroom is imperatively wanted in this school. The accommodation in the Mixed School is eked out by the use of a room which is a lobby, and which should be used for no other purpose.' By September 1896, a new classroom, the last in the permanent building sequence, was in use, but it appears to have been nothing more than a remodelling of the old one for there are only three building phases discernible in the brickwork. In the central "long room" however, there is, or was, a movable partition.

Francis Drew left in 1896 and was succeeded by Henry Evans who remained in office until 1919. In some ways his task was easier than that of his predecessors apart from problems arising from rapidly expanding numbers on roll, which rose from 146 scholars in 1896 to 164 in 1899. The local Board, being well aware of the increased risks arising from overcrowding and poor hygiene, gave detailed instructions. Rooms were to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, particularly when epidemics were prevalent. In January 1898, following a prolonged closure due to Measles and Scarletina, they ordered that the premises should be "thoroughly cleaned, whitewashed, painted, varnished etc., during the Easter and Summer breaks, the walls repaired, the playground gravelled and the well cleansed". Her Majesty's Inspectorate considered that one fireplace to heat a large room was inadequate.

There is written evidence, however, to suggest that the quality of life for the community was beginning to improve, since many more men were being employed by the Great Western Railway. Holidays were granted by the school to coincide with the annual G.W.R., 'trip' week, and there were regular excursions by charabanc and

railway organised by the Band of Hope, the Sunday Schools, and the Chapels and Church. Barnum and Bailey's Travelling Show was eagerly anticipated, and so also, were the Temperance and Blue Ribbon Leagues' galas.

The Annual Children's treat organised by local dignitaries, particularly James Sadler esq., the unofficial Lord of the manor, was particularly welcomed. Usually it was nothing more than a leisurely journey in local farmers' wagons to Lydiard Mansion where Lady Bolingbroke would preside over festivities including sports, food and drink, and where "Jimmy" amused himself by throwing handfuls of sweets to a throng of scrambling children.

By 1900 the 'Department' considered that the school had exceeded the permitted number on roll. The Inspectorate concluded that levels of lighting were poor and required that a row of magnificent elm trees behind the school should be felled. The village was renowned for the number of elm and beech trees which bordered fields and roads.

An unduly high number of girls were guilty of indiscipline and were punished for it but the worst crimes, such as wilful damage to Wheeler's workshop in Butt's lane, and the trapping of wild song birds, were the work of boys.

In 1902 the school received an additional day's holiday to celebrate the Coronation.

In 1903, further improvements were required i.e. "the playground to be fenced and the surface made dry and suitable for drill". The gallery was removed. There were extensive floods in June. A child, taken ill with diphtheria at school, died at home.

When the Kibblewhite children were discovered with measles at school they were sent home : ultimately the school was closed. In 1909 the school was closed because of military manoeuvres in the district. In 1910, the Fever Hospital was opened in Stone lane and young Worley and the younger Edmonds were among the first patients. 'The Board of Education fixed the maximum number on roll at 125 in 1910

because it was felt that overcrowding contributed to disease. The school was placed on the official list for rebuilding but World War I intervened and it remained in its primitive condition until after W.W.2.

Henry Evans relinquished his post following illness in 1919 and Howard Ludlow's administration followed.

In conclusion, it may be noted that before Central Government tax payers and Local Government rate payers assumed sole responsibility for financing primary education, the school's Board of Managers had some difficulty in remaining solvent,

and was obliged to appeal to the wealthier members of the community for donations. For example, in the year 1886 to 1887,

EXPENDITURE was summarised as follows ;-

Salaries: F.Drew, headmaster, half of the school grant (£116.. 2.. 2d)	=£58..14..1d
--	--------------

F. Drew, Four quarterly payments of £17.. 10.. 0.	=£70..0..0d
Asst., teacher, Rose Beasant, Four quarterly payments of £4..10..0	=£18..0..0d
Pupil teachers, Frances Beasant, one payment only of	=£2..6..0d
Fanny Lewis, 4 payments of £2..10..0d	=£10..0..0d
Kate Tuck, 4 payments of £3..0..0d	=£12..0..0d
School cleaning, washing floors, sweeping chimneys etc	=£6..19..9d
Insurance	=£0..3..0d
Books and stationery	=£4..14..0d
Needlework materials	=£2..1..5d
Faggots of wood, per Saunders	=£0..7..6d
Sundries, per Lydiard Stores	=£0..16..1d
Fuel, per Wm., Morse	=£17..0..6d
Repairs, per Wm., Wheeler	=£17..0..6d
Blacksmith's work, per E. Gough	=£0..1..6d
Totalling	£205..17..9d
RECEIPTS until April 1887 were ;..	
Balance from the previous year	£16..5..9d
From the Government Grant	£116..2..2d
Sales of Needlework	£0..10..0d
Hire of premises	£0..10..0d
Rent of land	£0..6..0d
From School Pence payments	£42..6..0d
Subscriptions	£23..17..0d
Totalling	£200..8..8d

Clearly, at the current rate of expenditure, which had been already cut to a minimum, there would be a debt at the end of the school year so the Board invited supplementary subscriptions. people obliged, of whom 7 were new subscribers, and an additional £19 .. 7 ..0d was raised.

In subsequent years the balance of the School account was:-

Year	Receipts	Expenditure	Balance
1887 to 1888	£221 ..17 ..7d	£210 ..18 ..5d	+£11 ..3 ..2d
1888 to 1889	£225.. 11 ..3d	£223 .. 0 ..4d	+£2 ..10 ..11d
During the next year the school was closed for a long time due to a measles epidemic, therefore			
1889 to 1890	£189 ..13.. 6d	£157 ..9 ..11d	+£2.. 2 ..7d, but,
1889 to 1890	£217 ..3 ..6d	£181 ..3 ..7d	+£5 ..19 ..11d

The subscriptions were derived almost entirely from the landowners and farmers whose fortunes varied from year to year according to the harvest. Despite the proximity to developing Swindon, there were no industrialists of influence in the area and the Bolingbrokes of Lydiard Tregoz were in dire financial straits, so therefore,

neither school nor village ever prospered from them, and appeals for improvements went unheeded.

As early as 1914, there was a crucial letter in correspondence between the Rector and the Wiltshire Education department which read;-

"I, (i.e. the Education Officer), placed your letter of the 15th of October before the building sub-committee at their last meeting. The sub-co., agree that the present is not a suitable time for insisting that improvements should be made to the school premises.. They feel, however, that it is desirable that the Managers should take into consideration the question of alterations and improvements to the premises which may be desirable, with a view to formulating a scheme which may be carried out when a more opportune time arrives". (signed) W. Pullinger M.A. Dir., of Edn.

The Rector, Percy Harrison, had a long memory. In 1928, he wrote again,----and received an almost identical answer.

PICURE SCHOOL HOUSE

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as compiled by D Payne) – Part 13

A VILLAGE SCHOOLMISTRESS

On the west wall of the nave of All Saints' Church there is a brass plaque inscribed as follows;

"To the Glory of God, and in loving memory of Hannah Elizabeth Shore, ten years schoolmistress in this parish. This brass is placed by her scholars and friends, in thankfulness for her teaching and example. A.D. 1880".

Such an unusual distinction merits further enquiry which has been made possible by the fact that, according to the Revised Code of 1862, it was stipulated that "In every school receiving government grants is to be kept a diary or log book," ; and these documents have been retained by law.

An Elementary school had been established in Lydiard Millicent in 1841 by The Lord of the Manor, the Rev., Henry Streeten and some of his associates, with the aid of a grant from the National Association for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, and by public subscription. It comprised a single school room and a very small school house. Like others of its kind, it provided a very basic education for those who could afford the weekly pence. Following the recommendations of the Newcastle Commission in 1861, successive governments determined to "Extend elementary instruction that was both sound and cheap and to pay capitation grants based on pupils' attainments assessed through examination by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools' It was to be payment by results; Robert Lowe's famous dictum was if it is not cheap, it shall be efficient; if it is not efficient, it shall be cheap". To this end all schools in receipt of Governmental grants were to have a certificated headteacher aided by trained staff, and thus Miss Shore was appointed as the first qualified headteacher in November 1870.

She came from a talented family. Her father, a Wantage builder, had been a lace manufacture in Nottingham and, of her two brothers, one was Principal of the Hartley Institute in Southampton and the other was a graduate of St., Bartholomew's hospital. Prior to her appointment she had been employed at Loddington in Northants., Hurst Green in Sussex and, as headmistress, at East Challow in Berks. At this time, Education was neither free nor compulsory, but Governmental intentions were to enforce a parental duty to see that children received an elementary education. Children under 14 years of age were not to be employed unless they had reached specified standards, but those who lived more than 2 miles away from a school were exempt. In rural areas, these laws created difficulties.

When she opened school in November 1880, there were 42 pupils on roll. She held a "Short cursory examination to see what they could do". She reported, Attainments low; Reading on the whole not bad, but wanting in expression, Arithmetic was Standard I and II's best point, but Standard III and IV were very much behindhand. Writing and Dictation, with few exceptions, very indifferent". No Christmas holiday

was awarded that year. In Jan., 1871 she was coping, single handedly, with 62 children and she recorded that "Order not being very good, obliged to pause several times for perfect silence". She commented from time to time on the necessity for numeration exercises for one class or additional dictation for another. The first mention of syllabus content was in Scriptural teaching. By December '71, the 1st and 2nd classes were reading the Book of Genesis and the 3rd and 4th were studying the Gospel of St Luke. When the initial Working up was completed, the Rev., Henry Hayward completed A Government form for having the school placed under inspection to be filled up and returned". The fees for '71 were fixed at 1 and a half pence per child, per week, the fourth and subsequent child in each family to be free. In January '71, Miss Shore opened night school on 3 evenings per week for 12 young men and boys, each paying 3d per week. Despite government intentions, she knew that absenteeism from day school would be rife, but she was also aware of a growing demand for literacy and numeracy among the labouring poor, especially among those who sought employment in the G.W.R. works. A "sharp spell" of wintry weather effected a 25% reduction in attendance so after school she visited several homes and found, "many children quite ill with bad colds and coughs.

If it was difficult to get children enrolled at school, it was even more difficult to keep them there. An entry in March '71 reads, "Mrs. Grymes visited the school and took 3 boys for the 'scaring." (i.e. Bird scaring in the fields). Eleven days later 3 more boys left. Illness, and other seasonal demands, made by farmers for boys to work on the land in the summer months, created havoc in schedules. Often child labourers returned in late autumn just prior to the annual visit of Her Majesty's Inspectors conducting Government examinations. Since the amount of subsequent grant depended upon the number who passed in their Standards, it was a race against time to prepare pupils for the visitation. Her frustration is evident when she records, "Two of the boys have left. The farmers required them, and the parents were obliged to let them go or displease their Masters". Potato planting, haymaking, harvesting, gleaning and potato picking all took their toll. Greenhill pupils had two other distractions. There is a very large field south west of Greenhill cross roads which is known as "Pick Peas". It produced prolific crops which were harvested largely by women and children; there was also an abundant harvest of holly for the Christmas trade. One log book entry records that children were absent "for the stamping, which is assumed to be a reference to the preparation of clay for brick making at Greenhill. Miss Shore was a formidable woman despite her diminutive stature and, if circumstances warranted it, she would defy visiting farmers and refuse to let the children go.

Truancy and lateness were punished rigorously. Two boys from Shaw, who had walked two miles to school, were caned severely for being 5 minutes late, and when John Carpenter was late twice in a fortnight he was expelled and only readmitted after his mother had begged forgiveness.

Her Majesty's Inspectors' report, issued in 1872, commented favourably upon the instruction but criticised attainments. Nevertheless, two of them returned later to

examine 43 children in the Standards. All passed in the Reading, 41 passed in Writing and 36 in Arithmetic. In September the School managers decided to replace Miss Bessie Wicks, an uncertificated teacher, with Miss Thomas, who had been a Pupil teacher, i.e. an apprentice, before Lowe had abolished pupil teachers' spends. During December the two small schoolrooms were packed with 90 children. The air was considered to be "foul and oppressive", and numbers fell off rapidly when a case of the dreaded smallpox was diagnosed. It has been said that the overcrowded, insanitary conditions which prevailed in Victorian schools contributed substantially to the sharp rise in infant and child mortality figures between 1840 and 1880. Scarlet fever, diphtheria, gastroenteritis, measles, smallpox and even cholera were endemic, often lethal, and taken very seriously by School Medical Boards which arranged immediate closure and thorough disinfection of premises. Apart from inadequate ventilation, Lydiard Millicent school had earth closets, and a water supply, derived from a shallow well which still exists beneath the east window. Pupils were often poorly clothed and a lack of boots or coat was often quoted as an excuse for absence. Very often, pupils were poorly nourished. Miss Shore felt powerless to intervene but she did what she could to dry off clothes around open fires, to beg milk from farmers which could be warmed in the hearth, and to prevail upon the Managers and School board for an additional classroom. In '72 many parents withdrew their infants for the entire winter.

Miss Thomas was not a good disciplinarian. It was recorded, "Boys very rebellious and disobedient towards the Assistant Mistress. John Tyler severely punished". Nevertheless it is interesting to note that Miss Shore frequently expressed the opinion that the teacher was at fault.

In the spring attendance figures improved until Scarletina intervened although flooded access roads reduced the numbers. A new classroom was planned for the autumn but for the time being all were accommodated in a single room which was 24 feet long and 19 feet wide. To relieve the overcrowding she would send 2 classes into the playground until haymaking reduced numbers. In July pupils trickled back again until a smallpox scare arose, but neither an act of God nor man was allowed to mar the school treat after school broke up in August.

September 23rd 1872 was a red letter day. The school reconvened with a new extension which, "after great exertion had been made ready for us in 5 weeks. It is now that improvements may be looked for in the scholars", she wrote. "The difficulties of teaching in the old room, for want of space, were great."

In April '73 the school attended the funeral of John Simpkins, a fellow pupil, who "had wasted away before our eyes". In April Rose Beasant was installed as second monitress and Ellen Wicks as sewing mistress. Both received several commendations but the infant mistress was reprimanded for "dealing severely" with the Infants. Miss Shore begged her to deal gently with them. Gleaning in the cornfields, and a wet potato harvest reduced attendance but, at the end of October, she wrote, "Working hard with the boys that have been away, and despite all handicaps, have still managed to present 45 children in the Standards and 30 Infants

on the appointed day"

The regimented regime would have been quite alien to modern thinking but some aspects of it are open to reappraisal. In the autumn she wrote "The Infants now have a room of their own but as the door is not yet up, they have not begun their marching yet."

At the end of September the Infant Mistress resigned, but her successor failed to satisfy Miss Shore's high standards and she was soon replaced by Miss Herbert from a Cirencester school. A recalcitrant Albert Reeves received a clerical beating at the hands of the Rev., Henry Hayward.

In 1874 the Inspections were brought forward from November to June. To complete a year's work in half the time would have been difficult in any circumstances, but soon disaster struck. On June 2nd 1874, attendance was 104. The next day it was 85 and by June 5th it was 40. Measles had broken out and so the school was closed. More than 90 children were afflicted. When school reopened only 16 children could be examined and several of them looked very weak and ill.

September normality had returned with a record number of 128 on roll. An extra subject, was introduced and the task of recovering from the summer's disaster begun. However 1875 proved to be a tragic year. Let Miss Shore's notes speak for themselves :-

'Feb., 12th. For several days I have been obliged to send home one or more children who were too ill to remain at school.

Feb., 19th. More than half the children away with Gastric Fever supervening bad colds.

March 1st. Numbers are down to 40. Some of the children are dangerously ill. Scarlet fever and gastric fever very bad in the village."

By March 30th, Bessie Sturmeay was dead. Poor Bessie lived in a cottage in the Butts and the parents were afraid to send their children to school, since they had to pass the afflicted dwelling.

During May the children began to return but "parents beg that they might not have very much work given to them, the Fever having left them in a very weak state". On June 1st, "the attainments are very much lower than we. expected owing to the measles and the fever which, during the year, have been raging in the village". Then M. Greenaway is discovered bearing the Scarletina and is sent home. Another victim is discovered a week later, and yet another, a shy gypsy lad from Braden, dies of the Fever. Miss Shore adds sadly, "The Scarletina, the Fever and the Measles have followed so quickly upon each other that the children have scarce had time to recover. Some who will be presented in the examinations will have been too weak to do much mental work".

Fortunately 1876 brought comparatively few problems except for curricular revision imposed by the Government boards for examination purposes. The worst difficulty was the task of "working up standards" in Geography and English Grammar, to qualify for grant aid. She stated, "Find it impossible to get the Vth and VIth standards up to requirements.... a year ago they scarce knew the meaning of a noun or an

island"

However, the result of these endeavours was that when Sandon's Act became law in 1876, the influx of reluctant scholars was a less formidable proposition than it proved to be in some areas. By 1877 she was able to write, 'Nearly all the backward children in the parish have been admitted, many unable to make a figure at 7 or 8 years old, We may hope that the hard labour of working up such in this school is nearly finished'. Out of a parish population of 780 persons in 1871, with a rising trend, 126 children attended the village school.

In June 1877, 132 children were on roll, of whom 109 were presented in the standards at the Government examination, producing 230 passes and 52 failures in the subjects. The pass rate of 75% compared favourably with the national rate of 25%.

In 1877 Miss Shore made an interesting observation. She wrote, "About 5 months ago, the cane was broken. There is a little bit left in the school but it is used only with some of the infants when they are very troublesome, and that very seldom. The discipline appears to be as good as usual". She became an expert in working the system within the constraints of absenteeism and ill health which prevailed. In a daring move for the times, she departed from the strict timetable in June to implement a programme of practical skills. The period of 1878 to 1879 was the pinnacle of her administration. Her Majesty's Inspectorate complimented the school on, "Maintaining its character for the general efficiency of instruction". Miss Shore's main concern of the period was that the poor harvest of 1879 would make it difficult for some parents to find the school pence.

In the first quarter of 1880 there was a perceptible change in the tenor and content of her recording. The curricular demands were affecting the attitude of the teachers. Arthur Comely, who was a rebellious pupil, was readmitted after suspension but, "Several times positively refused to obey his teacher, and, "Without the least provocation begins to swear and strike his teacher". John Carpenter was logged for persistent harrassment ; Ellen Simpkins was caned for untruthfulness. The new VIth standard was giving cause for concern and bright boys were leaving. On June 4th, three children are stricken with Scarlet Fever and by June 6th two of them are dead. The teachers are sent in all directions to prevent the school assembling. Charles Fisher dies one week later and another unnamed scholar shortly afterwards. Only 80 out of 134 are examined and the Inspectors are critical of the results. Bessie Parsons, "a useful teacher", leaves to go into service as a Lady's maid. With the fever still flickering like summer lightning, she was relieved to close the school for the summer holiday.

In October the school reconvened for what was to be Miss Shore's last term. There was no enthusiasm in her words. Her last entry, dated November 1st 1880, reads, "A few of the elder scholars have returned, but many are away in the potato fields". The neat round hand then changes for the barely legible scrawl of the Rev., Henry Hayward.

He wrote ,

November 8th. Miss Shore, now being very unwell, was obliged to absent herself from school.

November 10th. Miss Shore was this day pronounced by her Medical Attendant to be in a critical state from heart disease and acute inflammation of the right lung.

November 13th. Miss Shore died at 1.40 a.m.

According to the North Wilts., Herald, Miss Hannah Shore was buried on Wednesday November 17th 1880. At 3'o'clock in the afternoon a solemn, horse drawn cortege left the School House. Ninety children bearing posies of flowers followed behind the mourners. The pall bearers included two local schoolmasters. Miss Shore was interred in the first grave in the new cemetery extension, and, at the funeral peroration following the interment, she was described as, "An earnest, high minded worker." At the conclusion of solemnities, in accordance with traditional rural custom, the children filed past, casting their posies into the open grave.

PICTURE SCHOOL

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as compiled by D Payne) – Part 14

COMMUNICATIONS

Before local roads were tar macadamised they were little more than cart tracks, often much wider than their present boundaries, so that alternative passages could be sought if sections became impassable through flooding or rutting

In the chapter "Origins of Lydiard Millicent" it has already been postulated that there may have been an ancient trade route through the district which connected with, or was part of, an ancient "Saltway" The oldest known road in the parish is the main village street between Mannington and Greenhill which used to connect the Anglo-Saxon assarts and agricultural settlements, following, more or less, the junction between the Blue Lias clay in the south of the parish and the Oolitic limestone in the north of it. At Greenhill, the track once penetrated the forest of Braden, and its great age can be determined by the dense mass of hedgerow on the south side. There are localised names which may be modern invention or indicators of ancient usage, such as 'Monks' way" or "Abbot's way" suggesting some connection with the great abbey at Malmesbury, for, before the Reformation, there were Abbey lands in Purton. Within Greenhill there is a field called, colloquially, "Sinkfof", which may be a corruption of "Cinquefois". Five routes connect near that point.

Springs arose at points along the junction of stone and clay and in winter they may be still apparent. Source of water, of which springs were a favourite, were essential in the establishment of any settlement. A spring arises at Godwin's farm and flows eastwards, defining the boundary between Lydiard Tregoz and Lydiard Millicent, before turning north-eastwards to Holborn (the Hollow Bourne) and thence to the river Ray. When this stream flooded in winter the road often became impassable.

A useful alternative was, and is, Stone lane, which was once an Anglo-Saxon herepath connecting Highworth and Malmesbury, both being "burghs" fortified by King Alfred against the Danish incursions, via the A. S. tun. Herepaths were regarded as strategic routes long after the Norman conquest, and maintenance was a local responsibility. "Stone" may be a corruption of a Latin word "Stane", or street, but since it was not a Roman road it is more likely to be an ironic reference to the fact that its considerable length had to be maintained by mandatory local labour, hewing stone from the wayside. The Highway Act of 1835 abolished statutory labour, i.e. the legislation which required every able bodied householder to give 4 days free labour per year, and empowered the levy of a highway rate and the unification of parishes into a highway district, for more efficient maintenance. A District Surveyor was appointed for the purpose.

In 1844, the Lydiard Millicent Vestry resolved "that the old mode of obtaining stone for the repair of the roads, by paying £4 per cubic yard to the occupants of land where they are obtained, should be given up, and the legal mode of breaking into ground and paying for damage done should be adopted. Shallow depressions in fields bordering Stone lane, where this was done, may still be detected.

Bagbury Lane, originating at Lydiard Green, was a "green lane" within living memory.

It may represent a 17th century boundary perimeter between the forest and manorial lands before Braden was disafforested, or it may have been the only 18th century access to the farms at Bagbury created by enclosures.

The former B4041 between Wootton Bassett and Purton, both Saxon settlements, has many bends, which are a sure indication that the adjacent fields were ploughed by teams of oxen, which require a very large turning circle. Ancient Ox stalls were found within the foundations of Breach Barn bungalow during building conversion work.

The road at Washpool served the mill on the river Ray and the mediaeval pool for washing sheep.

Watery lane, now defunct as a through road, was aptly described; it connected with Hay lane, a known saltway.

The C120 Lydiard to Purton road via Manor hill, deeply incised into the hill in places through usage, is another ancient road, otherwise known as "Peddlars Way". It used to pass through the village turn immediately in front of Church farm between the pond and the house, but it was diverted in 1890, by the Lord of the Manor, through newly cut "Church Place"

Vestries often submitted observations on the poor condition of roads. For example. October 10th 1846." .to consider a complaint made to the magistrates on the narrowness of the road on the Lydiard side of "John Colliers", i.e- "Collier's row", in Shaw.

February 27th 1847". . to investigate the poor repair of Wood lane, and investigate partial enclosure of adjacent land J. Mortimore. Surveyor to enquire. Also to investigate the narrowness of the road on the Shaw side of Holborn bridge".

February 1854. The vestry agreed to the repair of branch roads, vis:., one leading to the old

Vicarage house, (i.e. The Butts), and one leading to Godwin's farm, and one leading to Parkside farm".

October 1860. Concern was expressed at the ancient rights of road across Lydiard Plain, and the proposed abolition of tolls on the Cirencester to Wootton Bassett turnpike road from 1862'.

In 1868, Lord Shaftesbury made submission for the construction of a road, - commencing at a place called "the Drock", extending from thence 167 yards where it joins a road called Stone lane". (This was the first application for the construction of Church place). The proposal involved the enclosure of the great manorial pond, formerly a defensive work and fish pond, which had come to be regarded as the village pond. It was not finally enclosed until 1894, and the proviso was made that a horse pond should be left. It still is although polluted by roadside drainage.

In 1873, Charles Drury of Greenhill, William Hollick of Shaw, and Job Morse of the Green were hauliers and carriers. Until the advent of the railway residents rarely proceeded more than a day's walk from the village. They needed to attend local market at Old Town, Swindon, Cricklade or Wootton Bassett, and the twice yearly hiring fair at Wootton Bassett. When they did so they made use of the vast system

of footpaths, particularly those along the east-west axis, which were of great importance to railway and factory workers. Vestries and Parish councils were zealous in their protection of these rights of way. In an age accustomed to manual labour, people were remarkable for their endurance. Railway workers would walk several miles to work via the footpath system, labour in the factory for a twelve hour day, return home and cultivate their allotment until dusk. Only the sick and the aged travelled by carrier. A Carrier earned a living by fetching and carrying goods, often in quite small amounts, for payment. Hawkers were equally popular in bringing to the community cheap manufactured goods, but many goods such as footwear, clothes, baskets, wagons, wheels and harness were made locally. The advent of the canals, and later the railway, made new building materials available and changed the face of the community.

PICTURE MAP

FACTS and FIGURES

Despite the Duke of Wellington's acerbic reservations about the use of statistics, some locally accumulated facts and figures can shed useful light upon the life of this community. The sample is too small to have any relevance elsewhere.

The Census returns show a steady increase in population from 1801 to 1891, except that for 1841, when there was a temporary increase out of scale, due to the presence of railway navvies in the vicinity completing the Great Western Railway and its facilities.

The Church keeps rosters of baptisms, marriages and burials. Baptisms are not complete records of births; marriages are not a total record of co-habitation and burials are not an accurate record of all deaths in the parish, since interments can take place elsewhere. Nevertheless, they can indicate some social trends. The following table of Burial rates has been derived from the registers of the Anglican Parish Church of All Saints. (Dissenters may not be recorded therein)

CHART????

A lack of sanitation, polluted water supplies, ill-nourishment, poor living conditions, bad harvests, inclement weather and an increasing population, all contributed to the increase in mortality, but the percentage average death rate is known to have exceeded that for rural areas nationally on only four occasions namely 1828 to 1832, 1848 to 1852, 1878 to 1882 and 1888 to 1892. The reasons for high death rates in the 19th century are complex, and compounded by several factors, but it may be noted that infectious diseases among children were potentially fatal until vaccinations and inoculations became common place. The elderly succumbed to the effects of bad winters which were particularly severe in 1829/30, 1848/49, 1851/52, 1859/60 and 1879 to 1881. Wet summers in the 40's contributed to the spread of potato blight. Wiltshire and Dorset, where potatoes were a staple food,

suffered badly from the effects of the blight which devastated the Irish potato crop of c. 1846. Locally, the effects were partially mitigated, belatedly, by the distribution of Carolina rice. There was a great political reluctance to interfere with the economic laws which ensured that when yields of corn were high, prices were low, but when yields were low and prices were high, labourers' wages did not reflect the economic trends. Public Health boards were created from 1848. Vaccination Acts against the smallpox, which was lethal in 30% of all cases, date from the 1840's ; a compulsory Vaccination Act was passed in 1853. Tuberculosis was common among young adults. The Public Health Act of 1848 which provided for local Public Health Boards was the first step towards improving health and hygiene. Shaw appears to have enjoyed the first local piped water supply when a deep well, with wind powered pump, and privately owned, was established by 1880.

The Parish Vestry took what practical steps it could to alleviate distress. On the 12th of March 1846 it recommended to the magistrates that 34 named persons should be released from paying rates.

It arranged apprenticeships for paupers, e.g. in 1831, Charles Jordan, aged 16, son of Edward Jordan, deceased, was indentured to John Jordan, cordwainer, of Avebury, until 21 years of age, in the sum of £5. It encouraged emigration. In 1848, Charles Norris aged 27, John Norris, 18, John Chivers, 21, George Chivers, 20, John Chivers, 18, James Ferris, 18, Richard Simpkins, 20, and Charles Hollick, 20, agreed to emigrate if passage could be provided for them, and, in consequence, £30 per person was provided from the rates. Richard Parsons and his family asked for an assisted passage in 1849. The Vestry agreed to pay £16..7..0d to Mr. Butt, of the Purton PLU, in passage money for "the 2 girls Smith to America".

The "Poors' Ground" land in Shaw produced 10s p.a. initially, rising to 20s p.a., and payable to the poor of the parish, as alms, every Easter until 1880. Thereafter, the title deeds passed mysteriously, into the hands of others. The Cleobury charity paid a dividend for blankets and coal.

However there was little which it could do to alleviate distress en masse except to refer the needy to the Workhouse, and when a breach of the peace was threatened by desperate men in 1830, which led to machinery riots at Wootton Bassett, Cricklade and Swindon, it rapidly recruited 13 additional Parish Constables to be sworn in. They were :-

John Beasant, Thomas Peer and Job Morse at the Green,
Cornelius Kibblewhite at "Goddings" (sic) farm,

John Cannings, James Clarke, Stephen Gleed, and Edwin Newman at
Lydiard Street,

John Hale at Greatfield, Richard Marshall of Wood lane, Willam Price at
Washpool, and

Joseph Greenaway and Henry Hiscocks at Shaw. None of them were
labourers.

Punishment for wilful damage could be severe. Peter Vines, aged 19, was committed by H. N. Goddard esq., for having set fire wilfully to a rick of straw, property of

Ambrose Goddard of Swindon, and also to a cow-house, property of Elizabeth Bradford, of Swindon in 1831. Subsequently he was tried, convicted and transported. According to the Church marriage registers approximately 70% of all marriages conducted locally between 1837 and 1846 were between people of the labouring class. It remained at that level for most of the century except the period, 1847 to 1856, when it fell to 45%. It seems that the fall was largely due to an influx of persons who were artisans and craftsmen, most of whom were employed by the Great Western Railway company. The figures were :-

Years	Total marriages	Professional/independent	Labourers	Others
1837-46	42	2	30	10
1847-56	31	4	14	13
1857-66	32		23	11
1867-76	49	2	34	13
1877-86	38	2	18	18
1887-96	39	3	18	18

If "local" marriages are defined as those where both parties are derived either from this parish or from an immediately adjacent one, the %age of local marriages remained fairly constant except in the period 1840 to 1860, when it fell to 60%. This may be a result of improved communications due to the coming of the railway. Taken over periods of two decades, the figures were :-

Years	Total marriages	Number of locals	Percentage
1760-80	44	33	74%
1780-1800	43	38	88%
1800-20	40	30	75%
1820-40	57	51	89%
1840-60	94	57	60%
1860-80	105	83	80%
1880-1900	89	67	75%

Church marriage registers also provide a basic indication of the growth of literacy in that brides and bridegrooms are required to sign the register. If unable to do so they make their marks which are then attested by the celebrant, thus : x- John Jones, his mark". In the period 1840 to 1846, when elementary education for the people was just beginning, 48% of all bridegrooms and 41% of all brides were unable to sign

their names in the marriage registers. In the period 1850 to 1854, these figures rose to 73% of all bridegrooms and 75% of all brides respectively! Was this due, perhaps, to more emphatic moral teaching by church and chapel, ensuring that unions were legal? Thereafter, figures improved dramatically. By 1870, when education was compulsory, 33% of all 'grooms and 36% of all brides were still illiterate, but by 1890 all who wed could, at least, sign their names. Witnesses to marriages tended to be older people, such as uncles, aunts, and parents. Not surprisingly, by end of the century, 13% of them still made their marks.

Figures can only indicate social trends. A process of accelerated social change began from the middle of the 19th century onwards, due to the decline of agriculture through international trade, increased mobility and removals from one parish to another, new employment opportunities in local industry, and a newly emancipated, increasingly literate, numerate, working class.

PICTURE GREENHILL

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as compiled by D Payne) – Part 15

CATASTROPHE

According to newspaper reports a cyclonic whirlwind ploughed a narrow but destructive passage through Wiltshire in November 1873, touching briefly at a point within the Glebe lands south of Butt's lane in this village, and spinning away from it at Plummer's Moor, north of Stone lane. It was regarded with awe by superstitious villagers who had never forgotten May Askew's alleged indiscretions. In its passage through the Manor grounds close by the church tower it felled the special tree beneath the shade of which it is supposed that she kept a lonely vigil in her declining years. Was it, perhaps, a judgement? Apart from felling sundry trees and carrying off a few hen houses and haycocks, it was spectacular, but of short duration.

Eight years later there was another event which might have excited superstitious dread, but strangely enough, although it was dramatic, few local people were involved and most people seemed indifferent towards it.

On Sunday November 24th 1880 the old Manor house, which had been built De Clinton and modified by Turgis, was destroyed by fire. It had been newly acquired by Edmund Story-Maskelyne of Bassett Down. A member of the Maskelyne family had been a freeholder in Lydiard Millicent in 1345. The property had descended through 4 more generations, and in the 5th generation, George Maskelyne, the holder, had married Jane Webbe alias Richmond, a relation of the aforementioned William Webbe alias Richmond, the Recusant. Jane's mother was the daughter of the last man to farm the pre-Dissolution Abbey lands in Purton, so Story-Maskelyne had a family interest in the locality.

Prior to occupying the Manor house Story-Maskelyne had engaged Philip and Powell, builders, of Swindon, to carry out some necessary repairs, mainly in the roof. In the meantime he had the use of a room in the house and on Saturday November 23rd, after spending the day working on some papers, he left it at 5.30 p.m., leaving a small fire in the grate. Later that evening, Mr. William Edmonds, who was employed as a night-watchman on Lord Bolingbroke's estate at Lydiard Park, observed from afar that the building was on fire. In a curious sequence of events he did not inform His Lordship, who might have expedited firefighting procedures more quickly, but he rode to Bassett Down to inform Mr Maskelyne's coachman, who, in turn, rode post haste to Swindon to summon the fire brigade, at 4.00 a.m. on Sunday. It was left to the Rev., Henry Hayward, of Lydiard Millicent, to ride over and inform Mr. Maskelyne personally!

The horse-drawn fire brigade, comprising 9 men and a pump under the command of Brigade Captain W. E. Morris, arrived at the scene at 4.45 a.m., in good time, but when the building was well ablaze. Captain Morris, and Wiltshire Constabulary Inspector Porter, directed operations and initially were able to rescue most of the furniture. The fire engine was drawn up adjacent to a large pond in front of Mr. Read's residence. Since Mr. Read lived at Pond Cottage before Church place had been constructed, it was Church Farm pond as it is now called, which was used. Ladders

were obtained and Engineers Affleck and Powey climbed on to a portion of the roof of the three winged building not yet in flames, and directed a good stream of water into the blazing void. Other men were able to utilise water from a tank in the roof and it was at this point that they were joined, rather belatedly, by villagers who formed a chain gang with leathern buckets. Although the hoses were not long enough to reach all of the rooms, some 200 gallons per minute were poured on to the billowing flames, enabling one wing to be partially saved by 6.45 a.m. The limestone walls and ancient timbers burnt freely yet the waters froze into a thick sheet of ice upon the walls. The heat melted an iron deed chest and many valuable documents, and much china, was destroyed. The brigade stood by until 1.00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon. Little of the original building remained, but it is said that what was left of a capacious library remained open to the elements for many years.

Opinions differ on the cause of the conflagration. It has been said that builders left a blowlamp alight within the roof space but Story-Maskelyne does not seem to have held them responsible. Fragments of the ruins survived; there is length of carved Tudor fireplace surround in the Purton museum.

Mr Story-Maskelyne's tenure was not without incident. He was in conflict with the Parish Council on several occasions. In 1896 the Council considered that he had enclosed the "Manor Farm Pond" and had erected barriers across the old road, thereby diverting it via the New Cut later known as Church Place, without due notice being given. In a reply sent from Hat House, Box, he stated that he had obtained an order at the Quarter Sessions, so he saw nothing untoward in acting without public notice, and he added that the Parish "may rely on me to put (up) a seemly handsome low wall with rails on the top and bushed behind". He went on to record that "some kind of lawless violence has been committed to the ornamental iron gate at the other end of the road. I feel sure that this was not done by Lydiard Millicent people". Relics of this enclosure remain.

In 1898 the Council complained about the "unhealthy state of the Island Pond for during the summer have been great complaints from the parishioners as the bad smell at times has been almost unbearable. In 1907 the Council prevailed upon him to agree. that, "with all reservation of your manorial rights, the Council should again try to let the Plain to the highest bidder and to run a wire fence along the road to prevent cattle straying". This agreement was in response to a perennial complaint by him, and others, about trespass by gipsies. He agreed, and the parish has enjoyed an annual income from it ever since.

Shortly afterwards Mr Jasper J Webb, a market gardener, acquired the Manor farm and what remained of Askew's formal garden' was used for crops. Mr J. J. Webb became the new Lord of the Manor but he was not related to the afore William Webbe. A new Manor house was built in 1965 but the documentary title to Lord of the Manor was sold on, and at present it is in the hands of a lady.

PICTURE SUN INN

RANK, FAME and FORTUNE

On New Year's Day in 1885, Mr. and Mrs. Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin, of Hill House, Station road, Purton, gave a Grand Ball for the benefit of all the land owning gentry and gentlemen farmers of the district. It was intended to be the event of the year. The Wykeham-Martins and their seven children were highly respected in the district by all ranks in Victorian society. Anne Wykeham-Martin was greatly admired for her charitable work among the poor, especially among young mothers, and her husband was a notable benefactor, who had provided a cottage hospital for the village, and had been the instigator of the Working men's train, the "Zulu", so-called because returning passengers were blackened from day long toil in the railway factory in Swindon. Grateful passengers, who had hitherto walked to and from their labours, compiled an address and presented him with this corporate expression of their thanks. The Wykeham-Martins were an affluent family who could afford to employ a coachman, a parlour maid, a cook, two housemaids, a scullery maid and a governess.

According to a local newspaper, "An elegant supper was provided by the cook of the establishment, and the Hawkins band was in attendance for dancing which continued until 3.30 a.m. on Friday morning". The guest list was very exclusive ; no tradespersons or tenant farmers were present but their turn would come a week later, at the Wykeham-Martin's annual "Tradesmen's Ball", and they would vie with each other for the distinction of being invited. Local people came out to watch the honourable gentlemen and their elegant ladies dismount from their broughams, landaulettes, and wagonettes. Some owners of more expensive equipages would "put up" for the evening at stables behind the Angel Inn or at private residences, but young men and youths, with some experience of handling horses, also gathered together at Hill House hoping for temporary employment as ostlers during that long cold and frosty night. He who touched his cap or forelock respectfully, and caught the eye of a benevolent gentleman, could expect to earn handsome tips, as much as half-a-crown for holding a horse's head all night, at a time when a labourer's wage was 10s per week.

Among the guests on that glittering occasion were Captain' James Henry Sadler, his wife Matilda, and his two stepdaughters, Annie and Marion Fisher, who had driven over from their home at Lydiard House, Lydiard Millicent, which is not to be confused with the present Lydiard House, the Mansion, at Lydiard Tregoz, otherwise known as "Fine Lydiard". Captain Sadler employed a groom but is likely to have driven himself, for he was an accomplished driver and horseman. He placed his wagonette and pair of matched greys in the hands of Elliott Woolford, a young and ambitious market gardener and entrepreneur, who cherished horses and needed the money. Although both men originated from opposite ends of the social spectrum, each was to leave his own mark upon the local community.

Although he was not entitled to call himself "the Squire", Captain Sadler took upon

himself the rights and privileges and the social obligations of the Lordship of the Manor at a time when that role was becoming obsolete. He did so, presumably, because tradition demanded it and he did not anticipate radical changes in society. Elliot Woolford had no such presumptions, but, while remaining an admiring sycophant of privileged rank in society, he anticipated and desired social change which, by good fortune and prodigious effort, would lead to greater fortune and fame in rural society for determined labourers like himself.

JAMES HENRY SADLER, J.P., D.L., and Captain in the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, was born in 1842, the second son of Samuel Champernowne Sadler, J.P., F.R.C.S., of Purton Court. He was educated at Hoddeston, Herts., and the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester.

He married Ann Matilda Fisher, daughter of T. P. Butt of Arle Court, Cheltenham, Glos., and widow of the Rev., James Fisher, in 1879, when she was 50 years of age. In doing so he acquired two stepdaughters, namely, Annie Marion Fisher and her younger sister, Alice L. Fisher.

Upon marriage, he purchased Lydiard House, adjacent to Bagbury lane in Lydiard Millicent, and he was described in the 1881 census return as a farmer of 250 acres, employing 8 men and 2 boys. At that time only 44 acres were within the curtilage of the tenement; the remainder of his holdings were in lots in Shaw and Purton. His critics have described him as being adept in acquiring lands to which there were no apparent title deeds, and assuming ownership of them

Captain Sadler is more accurately described as a "gentleman farmer", which was an important distinction in Victorian society. His appearance was always immaculate, and his customary dress was a tweed riding jacket, waistcoat, breeches, riding boots and a brown bowler, all of which he wore regardless of the season. He was not accustomed to soil his hands in toil. He cultivated a well-groomed beard and, in posed photographs, he always presented the left side of his face to the camera, because, it said, of a facial blemish. There are painted portraits of him in Purton library and the Council Chamber- He built the stables which are, presently, Lydiard House Cottage, and surmounted them with a bellcote. The tolling of the bell marked conspicuous features of his daily routine, such as a call to lunch or the arrival of important visitors. The stables were sufficient to accommodate 2 horse drawn vehicles and 4 horses, including a pair of matched greys. The house, grounds, stabling, equipment and harness were always maintained in an immaculate condition- Captain Sadler, or "Jimmy" as he was known, employed three indoor female servants plus a butler, groom and gardener. In his latter days the men were Messrs., Godwin, Selby and Barnett respectively.

Up until the death of Lady Blunt the village had always known the presence of a resident Lord of the Manor who was expected to assume a dominant, controlling role in the rural community. Some people expected this role to continue ; others who were no longer dependent upon rural occupations, resented apparent assumption of superiority. Captain Sadler appears to have assumed the role as a natural right and he played the part. He expected all villagers to acknowledge his presence or his

passing by doffing caps or curtsying. If he felt that he had not received due deference, he would stop long enough to remonstrate with the offenders, particularly with children, who were in awe of him. It must be said that he invariably acknowledged courtesies by raising his riding crop or bowler, depending upon the status of those who greeted him, and he would do so even if he was driving a four-in-hand at a gallop! He was renowned for his horsemanship, both as a rider and as a driver. When summoned to return home by the tolling of the stable bell, he would race through the village at a gallop, on horseback or in conveyance, handling both with consummate skill.

The Sadler family had a long connection with the village. In the days of Charles 1st, John was granted a lawful composition to raise money from all possessions amounting to £40 or more freehold lands. Later, the family possessed substantial shareholdings, particularly in developing railways, but whether out of necessity or not, as the case may be, Captain Sadler utilised his lands to prime Hereford cattle, for which he had some reputation. These animals were often to be seen grazing in the pastoral setting of the Home Grounds, south of Lydiard House, among the elm and chestnut trees planted by previous owners of Lydiard House and the Grove, when the open fields were emparked after enclosure.

He hunted frequently with the Vale of the White Horse hounds when their kennels were at Cricklade, and he was the instigator of the occasional stag hunt, when a caged animal would be brought from Dauntsey and released near Purton Stoke, to be hunted but not slaughtered, for the animal invariably broke southwards and ran for home. In the course of hunting the "Squire" took many falls after one of them he lay quite seriously ill but he rebuked an incautious sympathiser with the words "It is an honourable death to die in the hunting field

He was a Justice of the Peace for Wiltshire and for many years he was Chairman of the Bench of Magistrates at Wootton Bassett. Also, he acted as Chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Purton Poor Law Union, and as Chairman of the Rural District Council. When the old Church Vestry was replaced as a unit of local government by the Parish Council, from 1890, he served as the first Chairman and lectured the villagers on their new rights.

There is some evidence to support the contention that he could be both vindictive and benevolent. As

a magistrate he was reputed to be more generous than most of his peers towards poachers who took only "one for the pot", to feed their hungry families. He reserved his wrath for the mothers of illegitimate children, and putative fathers. Naturally, there are many stories which are alleged to depict trends and traits within his character, and many, no doubt, are apocryphal, but some remain which are attributable, according to those who had first hand evidence. One such story states that at the time of a General Election, when the Liberal candidate favoured by Sadler was a portly man, two labourers, both slightly intoxicated, were sat on a wall opposite the church, when the "Squire" strode by. Seeking some amusement at the great man's expense, they chose injudiciously, to break into the words of a song, observing that...

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall

He affected not to notice the affront and went on his way, but when the two men arrived home that evening, somewhat inebriated; they found that their families, goods and chattels had been evicted from their tied cottages, for he had a powerful influence upon their masters.

A more charitable side of his nature was seen when he intervened with the Overseer of the Poor to obtain more generous relief for widows and families, and if this was insufficient he would supplement the dole out of his own resources. He was keen to see that allotments were taken up by all who could cultivate them, and he would provide the essential seed potatoes, gratis. He organised "charitable feasts" for villagers and was patron of the Ancient Order of Foresters, a benevolent society based in Purton, which provided sickness benefit, and help for the unemployed in finding work. The Annual Church Sunday School treat was organised by him at his own expense.

Captain Sadler was responsible for much building work in the district, including "Sadler Cottages", which he leased to suitable tenants. Being built of Blunsdon limestone and roofed in Welsh slate they were a great improvement on the traditional thatched ragstone of earlier dwellings. All were supplied with well water and privies, and were equipped with accommodation for two pigs; as an early tenant described it, "One to feed the family and one to pay the rent!" He gave a cricket field to Purton which still exists on the ridge between Lydiard and Purton, albeit with a clause enforcing teetotalism, which cannot be circumvented. When the club was at a low ebb, he paid for the services of a professional coach. He gave a Reading Room to the villagers of Lydiard Millicent which was sited adjacent to the wheelwright's shop and the Sun Inn, where newspapers could be read and edifying games played. Initially, it was adopted from existing dilapidated outbuildings but was replaced after W.W.I by a larger ex-army hut from Ogbourne camp. It was intended to lure people away from the pleasures of alcohol, but, for his own part, the Squire was partial to a daily bottle of Madeira. The Workmen's Institute at Purton, adapted from the Miriam Stevens old 18th century school, which is now the library, was rebuilt by James Sadler and dedicated as a memorial to a "dear and only sister never weary in well doing", in 1879. The stairs, office and gallery remain much as he would have known them. There is a window in All Saints' church which is another family memorial.

Apart from seasonal balls and country house parties, Captain Sadler participated in most rural sports appropriate to his status in society. He attended point to point race meetings at Oaksey, and a favourite sport was shooting rooks in spring, in the company of Colonel Canning, the clerical brothers Harrison, and the Bolingbroke entourage, shooting fledglings out of their nests as a form of pest control.

Captain Sadler is thought to have had one son, referred to universally as Master Stewart. One contemporary has stated that "he, the son, always rode with Mr. Sadler and Miss Marion Fisher in the carriage, and, when he was not away at boarding school, sat with them in church." It is thought that Master Stewart emigrated to

Canada as a young man.

Old age mellowed him somewhat, but he remained an influential figure long after the official holder of the title, "Lord of the Manor", ceased to have any influence. It is recorded that, "in his last years Les Selby used to drive him up to the cricket field on Saturdays in the pony and trap. He never alighted but he expected everybody, rich and poor alike, to speak to him, or just walk by and raise a hat".

He died on March 27th 1929, and is interred in the old cemetery in the same grave as Annie Marion Fisher, who predeceased him in January 1929. The late Joe Beasant's father was present at the funeral and has said, "When he was buried, it was a lovely Saturday afternoon for his burial. Lydiard United Football Club stopped their match and stood for one minute's silence. His coffin was conveyed to the church, and then to the cemetery, in Dixon's farm wagon".

There is no doubt that he offered leadership in the local society, perpetuated traditions, and proffered a helping hand in many different ways, always providing that his position in society was not compromised. Some accounts of his presence and personality remain

One man, whose father was an original tenant of a Sadler cottage, has said, "Each of us in our row had two pigs, one to keep the family, and the other to pay the rent. Jimmy would let us kill them in turn, between Michaelmas and Christmas. He would see to it that you had weaners damn quick after they was gone! We shared the offal around between all the neighbours because it wouldn't keep, and do the same for you when they killed a pig. Also, if a man lost a pig; I mean, if one died on you, you could always rely on Jimmy for a licence to beg for the cost of a replacement. That law was never repealed that I know of... Mind you, if there was anything wrong with your house, you could always stop him in the lane and raise your cap and tell him, and he'd generally send Wheeler around..." (Wheeler was a village carpenter),

Another contemporary has stated, "At one time he had a phaeton pulled by two bays...He was the villages first road hog. If the outside bell rang he would drive like the very devil, often standing up to do it. My father said that people used to come out of their houses to see him go by!"

Again: "Once he tried to get rid of the Workhouse Master. There was some bother over a pile of carrots I think, but the real reason Jimmy wanted him gone, was that he used to make short work of Gin that Jimmy brought in, out of his own pocket, for the relief of inmates' coughs and colds... they rarely saw any. I don't think he had his way, 'though, and that was pretty unusual!"

And again: Les Selby used to hate driving with him because he was so critical".

An elderly lady, reflecting upon the more leisurely days of her childhood, when the annual school treat was a ride to "Fine Lydiard" in a farmer's horse drawn wagon for sports, games and a good tea., has said, "Every summer there was a treat, either on Jimmy's front field or over at the Park. Both of them (i.e. Sadler and Bolingbroke) were as bad as one another. They would think it funny to stand up in a cart and throw ha'pennies or sweets and watch us grovel in the cow pats for them. We grovel no more to the likes of them of course, but, mind you, if they hadn't done it, we wouldn't

have had a treat".

The last word on Squire James Sadler remains with a man who is, currently, the oldest inhabitant.

"What made him the man he was? I think it was because he came here just after McKnight left, and the village was pretty cut up about it because "Mac" had done so much. Jimmy wasn't much of a churchman, but he was anxious to be a squire so he tried to carry on where "Mac" had left off. Building new cottages and putting in drains and water is what "Mac" would have done if he had stayed, but he couldn't stay because he had this accident. Jimmy built quite a few houses and; after all, they were a good investment.

Captain James Henry Sadler fulfilled a role in- society, but that ancient role was rapidly becoming redundant when he died. On the other hand, Elliot Woolford was struggling to create a place in society for himself which would rapidly become commonplace in an entrepreneurial world.

PICTURE STABLES

A View of Lydiard Millicent (as complied by D Payne) – Part 16

RANK FAME AND FORTUNE

ELLIOT GEORGE WOOLFORD was born in 1866 at No. 9 Dogridge, Purton. The house has since been demolished. His father was William Woolford, a mason employed by the Great Western Railway Company, and his mother was Francis Ann Woolford, nee Fletcher, who had lived in Lydiard Millicent before her marriage, when she was employed as a servant in Viscount Bolingbroke's household. Both parents were devout members of the Primitive Methodist church.

Elliot attended Purton St. Mary's school and left at the age of 14 years to work on the land. Up until the middle of the 19th century most boys born into labouring families became labourers in turn, and usually remained as labourers for the rest of their days. Later in the century Education nurtured ambition in the hearts of many young people, and some new opportunities arose in industry and commerce, particularly among those who were literate and numerate. There was a growing appreciation of a wider world beyond the parochial boundaries.

Despite the fact that agriculture was a depressed industry at the mercy of Government policy, seasonal variations in the climate, and international competition, Elliot made up his mind that he would become a market gardener and entrepreneur, for there were signs of a growing demand for market garden produce among the rapidly expanding community of New Swindon. Shortly after his 18th birthday in 1884, Elliot and his younger brother, Rowland, who had just left school, set up in business together to earn a living, buying and selling locally grown produce, supplemented by what they could grow themselves on the small, scattered plots of land which they were able to rent.

Initially, their sole assets were "Garnett", a colt purchased by Elliot for £6..10s..0d, and used by him for both business and pleasure, a second hand cart, a few hand tools and a set of essential weights and measures, and ten shillings. The land under cultivation was

the family garden at Dogridge,
allotments known as the Stoney allotments in Poor Street, Purton,
some of the Kibblewhite allotments in Lydiard Millicent, opposite the current P.O.,
small clearings in Braydon and Brockhurst,
the Pike Ground rented from the Purton PLU,
Mrs Ody's orchard at Lydiard and
"Newfoundout", which was a field near Godwin's farm.

At most, the land amounted to 12 acres, and they were well aware that agricultural leases were often terminated, without reason, at Lady Day or Michaelmas.

At most, the land amounted to 12 acres, and they were well aware that agricultural leases were often terminated, without reason, at Lady Day or Michaelmas.

Because they lacked any sophisticated equipment, ten of the 12 acres were dug by hand with garden forks and, when the weather was suitable, they were "bushed", which is a primitive alternative to harrowing, by fastening hawthorn bushes to a wooden framework which was to be dragged backwards and forwards by Garnett,

until a tilth had been prepared. Initially, all vegetable seeds were sown by hand in rows drawn out by hoe. Corn was broadcast with a "fiddle" and "bushed" to cover some of it up. It was harvested in due course with the scythe, ensheaved by hand, stooked, and carried when dry. Brassicas, particularly Brussel sprouts, were grown from seed in the domestic garden and transplanted, in rows, by the hundred, by dibbling. Many buckets of water to nourish the young plants were carried by hand, often using the ancient carrying aid known as the yoke. All subsequent cultivations were by use of the hand hoe. It was backbreaking toil, often carried out from dawn to dusk when necessary, and there were many disappointing results due to inclement weather, and pests, such as "the vly on the termite". Since these were years of agricultural decline, the lands, drains, drocks and hedges were often in poor condition and needed emergency repair. Occasional acquisitions, such as a rusty harrow found in a hedge, or an old cart purchased at a farm sale, were greeted with enthusiasm. All farming and market gardening operations were recorded with meticulous detail in annual diaries, together with some account of the social life of the two young men. However the records are very parochial; whereas every periodic variation in sales, purchases, prices, receipts, failures and successes is recorded, there is some account of local social events but little mention of events and developments in regional and national affairs.

When the land was not fit to work, the brothers drove into the surrounding villages of Minety, Brinkworth, the Somerfords, Charlton, Oaksey and the Lydiards, covering up to 30 miles per day, in search of produce, buying from, and selling, to cottagers en route. On a good day they were pleased if they could buy, for example, 8 sacks of potatoes for eight shillings in one village and sell them in another place for twelve shillings. On a bad day it was not unusual to do no trade whatsoever and return home in the evening "through wet to the skin". (sic) Every Saturday they loaded the cart with whatever was in season and drove to Swindon to sell their wares in the market.

No quarter was given and none was expected in an enterprise of this kind. Young men with ambition were often derided by those of their own social class who considered them to be presumptuous in seeking to "better themselves". Curiously enough, their support came mostly from men who were already established in other walks of life. On two occasions in his career, Elliot sought the advice and support of James Sadler esq., when he needed references, or a bank loan. He was, asthmatic which created problems during haymaking, and some ventures, such as breeding from pigs, proved unprofitable. More than once he was tempted to give up. He received much encouragement to continue from his mother, a devout if unlettered Methodist, from his father who was a self educated and fervent supporter of the Liberal Land Reform movement, and Liberal Party political agent in the Purton area, and from his eldest sister Ellen, who was a cook-housekeeper at Howe Halstead.

An appraisal of 1885, his first full calendar year in business, and his social Life as a young villager, may be derived from an extant diary.

The smallpox epidemic which had raged during 1884 was coming to an end.

Nineteen people had been stricken, and 14 of them had been accommodated in an emergency isolation hospital, comprising 4 large tents and 2 small ones erected in a field between Manor Farm, Purton, and Lydiard. Cooking was carried out in an adjacent outhouse and patients were isolated. The epidemic began with John Bunce who died. Before it was over it had claimed the lives of Mary Eatwell and George Jones.

By the end of January 1885, his cash in hand, derived from local buying and selling, was £7.-2s..6d, whereupon he rented an orchard. By February he had accumulated enough cash to purchase a waterproof loincloth, head stall, and chain for Garnett, and harness for the cart, without which he not venture into Swindon, where Market regulations were strictly enforced. Later he acquired a saddle, for Garnett was a versatile animal of some spirit and quality. He would "run away and throw down a rick" on one hand, yet "perform with merit in the novices' events at the Oaksey races. The brothers had completed most of their winter cultivations by the middle of February except for the land at Brockhurst, which was too wet. Anticipating an increase in domestic poultry, Elliot bought 5 bushels grains" (small corn), from Mr. Howard Horsell at the Beaumont Brewery. En route, he helped a man to retrieve his horse which had fallen. On the following Friday he went hunting when the hounds met at Purton House, but he lost them on their first run to Lydiard Park mansion, so he returned home. It was not the chase which interested him so much as the opportunity to meet influential people. Trade was poor at the Cricklade market but potatoes were selling well, so he retrieved some from the garden storage pit in anticipation of a good price at the weekend market. From the beginning he was determined to buy only the best seed, as advertised in the trade press, so he bought "wrighting paper" (sic) for 6d, and six penny stamps, and sent for Brunells peas. A fiery Temperance lecturer, Mr. Jasper began to make regular appearances at "chapple" (sic). Early March was fine and sunny so both brothers were busy digging and manuring. Elliot acquired six bushels of "Magnum" and 2 sacks of "American Rose" seed potatoes. Ultimately, the latter variety was to be preferred to any others on account of size and keeping qualities and the local variant, crossbred and rotated among growers, became known as "Purton Roses", for new certified Scotch seed was expensive. Together, they took a load of tail corn to Mr. Hitchcock's mill at Brinkworth for milling, but the miller would not accept it, being wary of fungal disease in second quality com which tainted flour. Rowland carted all the dung for the Pike Ground single handed. Blood manure from Harris's bacon factory at Calne was bought in Calne on March 16th and potato planting began next day. Completion of this task was regarded as a red letter day and it was always recorded in the diaries in a bold, flourishing calligraphic hand. Beans were planted on the heavy clay at Brockhurst. Four piglets from a litter of 12 were sold for 16 shillings each but on Easter Monday he had to bury two young pigs, valued at £1..5s..0d each, which he considered had been poisoned, since 6 had died in mysterious circumstances shortly beforehand, This was blow to the family economy. He sought some solace in the company of pals at Wootton Bassett fair later that day and arrived .home at "a quarter

to one o'clock" The "cricking", or cricketing season, opened at Easter and in his youth the diarist was regarded as a good all rounder. A photograph exists, showing three rows of solemn faced players with arms folded ; among them stands their patron, James Sadler esq., breeched, gaitered, jacketed and bowlered, standing sideways inclined to present a pleasing profile. During Easter week, Elliot and five friends travelled to Cheltenham by train, for the line from Swindon to Gloucester had been newly opened, to attend an Athletic Sports meeting organised by the Liberals. Athletic sports were popular in the area for Purton had a star track performer, named Kibblewhite, who held the World record for the mile for a short time. The party stopted at Gloucester to bring sister Ellen home with them for her annual holiday. The return railway fare was 5 shillings each. Returning to work after the holiday break, the brothers burned off cleared turf at Brockhurst in preparation for potatoes. Four passengers were driven to Bremhill, a return joumey of 36 miles, for 7s..6d. By now a sufficient supply of produce was forthcoming to ensure a visit to market.

During May, Roland was able to buy a new suit and hat for 15 shillings. Elliot made several attempts to buy weaner pigs but found them too expensive at 16 for £1. His father's sow gave birth to a small litter of six, but one was still born, and another died soon afterwards because the sow would not lie down to suckle it. She was very savage ; when another piglet died the remainder were brought indoors to be hand reared with milk, but they did not survive.

Being short of grassland they gathered hay from the hedgerow banks and Lydiard churchyard. "An acre less 20 perches" was sown with grass and clover at Braydon and on Ascension day Elliot fetched wood from the drift which he had rented at Solomon's lodge. Garnett was overloaded ; he fell down with the load but he was not hurt. On Saturday May 23rd, Elliot scored 10 runs at cricket before being run out. On the following Wednesday two sacks of grain were obtained when their corn was threshed by Mr Henbury's trail, i.e. a threshing drum driven by a steam engine, at Mr. Beal's barn. The corn was "fanned" on a wet afternoon to clean it and the straw was brought home. There was a week of very hard toil when the potatoes were hoed, cleaned, and moulded up in their rows, and Saturday's market day came as a relief. Elliot records that an elderly neighbour died from "a stoppage of the water" on June 11th. The funeral, in which he had some part, was a bizarre consequence. He fetched a board from the undertaker for the laying out of the body, and the funeral bell was tolled. On the following Monday he prepared Mr Sheppard's trap with a cover for the funeral cortege which he was to drive. Owing to the large coffin and narrow stairs, a window had to be removed from the bedroom , and a ladder brought to it, so that the coffin could be lowered to the ground. Then it was found that the coffin was not deep enough to accommodate the corpse, so the sides had to be hurriedly made up. Even so, the corpse was still visible through the chinks. The very hot weather caused it to "stink fearfully", and Elliot was extremely relieved when the cortege, which left Dogridge at 4. 00 p.m., completed the slow journey of one and a half miles to the churchyard by 5. 40 p.m. Nineteen mourners followed. Death loomed large in the Victorian psyche and the incident made a profound impression

on all concerned.

Returning with relief to the business of survival, it was to dibble out the first brassicas. On June 18th, the potato planting was completed. Elliot attended "Fine Lydiard Church" for the first time in June 1885, so called because persons of rank and quality worshipped there. His presence there, as a strict Methodist, may have been due to the companionship of Miss A. Hapgood. After 2 weeks of fine weather, June 21st proved to be "colder than at Christnas", and the period was described as "very bad haymaking". However, the dampness accelerated the growth of potatoes and the two brothers earthed up 50 poles in one afternoon. Haymaking resumed on June 26th which was the first dry day in 10 days. Elliot scythed one half an acre of orchard grass in 7 hours on one day, and 140 poles of clover in 7 hours on the next day. After summer ricking in the fields, six good loads of hay were brought home for winter ricking. He dug his first early Gloster Kidneys, for market on July 10th.

After completing the haysel, the brothers began harvesting the summer crops which needed to be sold on, but trade was dull. Twenty four quarts of raspberries sold for a mere 12 shillings. The Potato crop, which had appeared so promising earlier in the season, was disappointing, for 'We are in want of rain ". Some of his rented land still had to be cleared and the "thickthles" (thistles) burnt off. When the drought broke he planted out 100 Savoy cabbages, repaired an orchard gate, "thorned" gaps to make them stockproof, and repaired mounds. All brassica plants had been dibbled by mid-August and he sowed field rows of turnip and rape seed. On Monday August 17th, he joined a Temperance Society excursion to Weston-super-mare by train. Upon his return it was to start harvesting. He scythed, bonded, and stooked the wheat from small areas where it was grown as a residual crop. Every sheaf was valuable. The potato harvest was a trying affair for there were only 12 fine days in September and 15 in October. Nature's bounty provided 7 quarts of "slons" (sloes) from the boundary hedge. On September 17th, he had a pig slaughtered and watched it being transformed into salty bacon, because certain persons were "inclined to go away with the trimmings". Three loads of field beans and 2 loads of wheat were brought home and placed on a staddle.

The Michaelmas Fair in Swindon was very dull. After playing his last cricket match of the season against Minety, where he scored 23 runs, he paid his annual subscription of £1 to the Oddfellows and dug some potatoes. So far the crop looked promising but later that day a sharp and early frost set in, spoiling those near the surface. The harvest now became a rescue operation and was not completed until October 23rd.

On October 10th, he travelled by train to London to see the "Inventors' Exhibition". He tried to purchase eggs in Minety. They were in short supply but he bought hand picked apples at 7 shillings per bushel. He attended a liberal Party meeting, with his father, to discuss Land reform, but in his view, 'Vested interests prevailed against reform". Carrots and parsnips were dug and potatoes sorted into pig potatoes". The best of the crop were sealed, or clamped in a lined garden pit.

November was a month for cleaning up fruit beds, sowing winter wheat, paying land

rent to Nevil Storey-Maskelyne M. P., and settling accounts.

The night of Friday November 27th was very rough and "stars shot constantly". Heavenly events of this kind were regarded as ominous by country people, and it was a disastrous night for Jumbo, the family's cat, which was "shot through by Blanchard, a man of ill disposiūon". Within 2 days, gales and great floods prevailed. The brothers were still trying to sow wheat in December. It was badly needed because if cattle were to be kept, profit would depend on a supply of cheap, home grown food.

After an early market on Friday, the following day was spent in support of the Liberal Parliamentary candidate. After cleaning harness and greasing the cart's wheels, F. Eatwell, a contemporary, came up to breakfast, and afterwards they took a party of voters to the National Schools. Once again, it was desirable to be seen "doing the right thing" in certain circles. Later that evening they went to Swindon to cast their own votes. After witnessing "some rough goings-on in the evening ; some 10 couples fought", they returned home via the station with Elliot's younger sister, Agnes, who had been in service, away from home. It had been a wet and snowy day. On Sunday December 6th, he went to Brinkworth with the young local blacksmith, Fred Sheppard, who was to fade away and die within a few years from consumption, and "partook of tea" in the company of the Misses Selby and Hapgood.

Wheat planting was interrupted celebrations when Nevil Storey-Maskelyne was re-elected as M. P. the Cricklade division with a majority of 1770 votes. Severe frost, lasting a week, impeded further wheat planting, but the work was completed by December 11th. when the weather reverted to "being hot and close, like a summer's day". Father's red sow had to be slaughtered and sold as hounds' meat at 4s..6d, but two porker pigs were successfully sold on.

As the winter progressed and the brothers struggled to manure and dig their acres, they realised that they were desperately in need of a single furrow plough, even though this would mean that Garnett have to be sold and replaced with a heavier draught horse. Carting and spreading animal dung, and digging it in, was not only very hard work, particularly if the ground was wet or frosted, but time consuming and so much work needed doing in the short hours of daylight.

Since December 19th was Elliot's nineteenth birthday, he bought an overcoat for 11s..9d and was given gloves, collars, necktie and a hat. was kitted out with an overcoat and hat. Christmas day was spent quietly at home. On Boxing day, 36 bushels of carrots were brought from a field pit and secured more safely it was hoped, in a refurbished shed in the garden. Elliot took a walk around Braydon in the company of pals and afterwards attended a "Teafight and Service of Song " at the P. M. chapel. Another brother, named Sam, who was a policeman stationed at Notting Hill Gate, London, came down for a brief holiday, spent, mostly, shooting pigeons over the Braydon land.

Elliot's verdict upon the year was that they had done tolerably well and were in fair health, except that Mother was afflicted with the rheumatism. He recorded receipts and expenditure in detail, noting that in their first year of trading, they had received

£65..8s.3d and spent £67..10s..9d, but all profit had been invested in stock and sorely needed equipment. Potatoes and vegetables had been the most profitable ; eggs were profitable in winter and pigs, although a risky proposition on account of disease and their inexperienced husbandry, sold well upon maturity.

It is neither necessary or to give a full account of their subsequent endeavours within the scope of this treatise, but some highlights are worthy of mention. Despite the agricultural depression and their relative inexperience, the business grew steadily. On Friday February 14th 1890, Elliot Woolford signed a tenancy agreement for the lease of Bagbury Lane farm, property of E. Kempster esq, at a rent of £106 p. a. for 41 acres, 3 sq. rods and 25 sq. poles of land which was partly arable, partly pasture. It was a major landmark in climbing the farming ladder. Eventually, he would own Hook Farm and Woodshaw Farm and his brother would own his own farm at Brinkworth.

Despite their long working day and exhaustive labours, they had been able to enjoy a social life in intervening the years which sheds some light upon local concerns of the age. When Mr. and Mrs. Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin celebrated their Silver wedding anniversary with a Grand Ball in Jan., 1886, Elliot waited at table on the male servants who had their own celebration at the Purton Institute. In contrast, there was some local concern about the severe rioting by the unemployed and anarchists in the streets of London. He joined the Oddfellows and dined out with them at the Angel hotel, and he took the pledge at a Chapel Temperance meeting. When the late Mr. Warman's effects were sold at a farm sale he attended in order to assess prices, and determined that there was more profit in property than farming, when two cottages and half an acre sold for £99. At the same sale all Greenbridge sold for £112. Purton May Fair was held at the Playclose with stalls, entertainers and coconut shies. A local Glee club, the Purton Minstrels, put on their first performance for the Cricket Club ; Elliot noted wryly that the organisers' daughter was the only "dancing belle". On WhitSunday the Lydiard Brass band and the "Foresters" band joined forces to raise £8..8s..0 for charity. The Lydiard band practised in the forge under old Tom Sheppard's baton. There was a village exodus to see Blondin demonstrate his skills as a tightrope walker in Cirencester, and Elliot's friends were enthralled by the performer's daring and varied acts. Storey-Maskelyne's rivals in the Parliamentary elections, Messrs., Bennet and Costelloe, were described as time expired Union men, or Gladstone men. Sanger's travelling circus wintered in the area and sometimes put on popular impromptu performances if fields could be found. Cheap day return railway fares enabled the entire family to visit the Colonial Exhibition in South Kensington. Both Church and Chapel promoted social occasions, such as the Feast day in September and the important Fruit Festivals run by the Chapels, whereat impoverished families bartered surplus produce in exchange for winter clothes. The Victoria Benefit Society began fund raising in anticipation of the new hospital to be opened in Swindon. Sister Fanny returned home to take up a teacher-pupil appointment at Braydon school, and Agnes moved to a new situation in Bristol. Work always took priority ; Elliot spent much of Christmas Eve night

attending a farrowing pig, and he spent some time and effort in trying to sell potatoes in bulk, to a merchant in Iron Acton, who wrote, "If you can pick up 70 to 80 sacks per week of good quality, let me know".

March 1887 was remarkable for snow, hail, frost and gales ; April was very cold and May was very windy, which made the planting of crops difficult. However, it was Queen Victoria's Jubilee year and local celebrations were keenly awaited. On June 11th, Lydiard celebrated the event in James Sadler's park where afterwards "parishioners partook of a good tea between 5 and 7 p. m". There was a Lawn tea meeting at Lydiard Park house, (the Mansion), when "there was a good attendance by all ranks, including a great many aristocrats". The major event, however, was Swindon's celebration on June 21st. A Grand procession, including 3 bands, paraded the streets of Old and New town, whereafter Mrs. Goddard laid the foundation stone of the Victoria Hospital "on the sands". So many people were present that only a selected few could enter the field, by ticket only. In the afternoon 8000 children attended a tea in New Town park, and were entertained by the band of the Manchester Regiment with 2 stage performances. In the evening the town was magnificently illuminated and fireworks and bonfires could be seen from distant places." The G.W.R., employees, including father, received 1 day's paid holiday. Races were held at Braydon using horses, ponies, donkeys and Galloway cattle. The village Cricket Club challenged a team of 22 villagers. It was not too serious for, although it rained, fiddling and dancing enlivened the intervals between overs.

Mother's 60th birthday on November 1st included a felicitation from her sons which read, "Continual rule over us and finally to dwell in the Celestial City through our Blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

In 1888, Aunt Caroline, and Cousin Edith Cowley, emigrated to America. The first telegram which Elliot ever received reported that their ship, the "Western Land", had passed the Lizard on April 8th, westbound. They were part of a large party of local people who had accepted an offer of an assisted passage, which was a sign of hard times. Later, cousin Edith was to send an intriguing letter stating, inter alia, that "I am glad that you knew better than not to run away", which comes at the end of wistful reminiscences about home and England. Concerning Elliot, she wrote, "...for surely a man like you, with such a family as you have got, ought to be happy when you can look around and say I am Lord of all I survey", and "I think you are going to be a flourishing business man. I am looking forward to a time when I shall hear you being spoken of as a Squire". Her view is understandable but at no time did Elliot ever show that he aspired to that position ; it was a social ranking which was not within his grasp or desire, mainly because it was becoming increasingly irrelevant in a new society.

Elliot Woolford became a prosperous farmer in his lifetime. His life, in comparison with that of James Sadler, is but one example of the many accelerated changes which have overtaken Lydiard Millicent during the twentieth century. Much has been gained therefrom but inevitably much has been lost in the process, to the detriment of village life in Lydiard Millicent in particular, and to rural society in general.

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