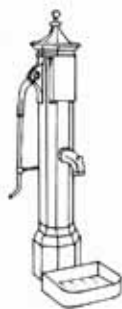


No:77



Newsletter

Sherington Historical Society



September 2012

www.mkheritage.co.uk/shhs

Special dates for your diary

Saturday 6th October

Open Day, Sherington Village Hall 12 noon-4.30 pm (Set up from 9 am). Sherington at Work. Our exhibition will show trades, crafts and businesses that have taken place in Sherington over the years.

Tuesday 9th October

'The Hanslope Murder'. Roger Drage is coming to talk to us about the Hanslope Murder. Find out if it really was the Butler what done it!

Tuesday 13th November

Members Can Talk. It will have been a busy year with the Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee. This is a potpourri of an evening with members own talks.

Tuesday 11th December

Christmas Party. Games, wine and nibbles.

Tuesday 8th January 2013

Members Meeting. Please come for a low key evening archiving and chat.

Mid-January 2013

January Jolly. More details nearer the time.

Tuesday 12th February 2013

'Lacemaking'. A talk by Julian Hunt about the history of making lace.

Tuesday 12th March 2013

Annual General Meeting.

Our Tuesday monthly meetings start at 8.00 pm unless otherwise stated.

News Snippets

The subject of our Open Day in October will be Sherington at Work. The exhibition will show trades, crafts and businesses that have taken place in Sherington over the years. If you have any information or photos on this topic, please let a member of the Committee know. It would be good to show as many different trades as possible that have taken place in the Village.

Just after the Open Day we have our next monthly meeting on Tuesday 9th October when Roger Drage from MK Heritage Association is coming to talk to us about The Hanslope Park Tragedy, where the Squire of Hanslope Park was shot dead as he returned home from church one Sunday morning in 1912.

Our Scarecrow Competition took place over the Flower Festival and Open Gardens weekend of 22nd-24th June. There were 15 entries from the public this year, plus 'Old Boy' by Philip Smith and 'Her Majesty' by Kay Turrell. The judges, Peter and Sue Blake thanked all the people who entered for their excellent efforts and chose the winners as follows: First prize went to The White Hart in Gun Lane with Lunch at the White Hart (see photo on front cover). Joint 2nd was awarded to the O'Loughlin Family at Sherington Place with Jed-lympics and the Charles Family of 29 Perry Lane with Greg the Real Olympian. The judges also awarded two special prizes to the Taylor Family at 10 Crofts End with Everything Rosie and The Leslie Family at 20 Crofts End with Harry and Wills (see photos on page 11) Thanks to everyone who took part from the Committee.

Thanks to St Laud's PCC for giving us permission to take digital copies of the Parish Registers now held at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies at Aylesbury. Ian Collinge has been to Aylesbury to copy these registers. There are 11 volumes in all covering the period from 1698. In addition, there were a lot of so-called 'Bishop's Transcripts' (copies of the registers sent to the Archdeacon) covering the period from 1576 to 1839. An example page from 1718 is shown on the right.



After Carole Shergold's request for anyone else who was interested in the Joyce/Betts names in the last newsletter, we have put Josephine Heather in touch with her as they are both descendants of Samuel Joyce and Mary Betts, married in Sherington on 19th April 1761.

Community Archives and Heritage Group

We've had an email from Dianne Sutton about her recent trip to the Community Archives and Heritage Group conference in London. She says:

“It was very interesting to hear about what people involved in community archives and heritage are doing all over the country.

You may like to look at the website (www.communityarchives.org.uk) and consider whether you or your group might like to join – it's free – or sign up to receive the CAHG newsletter.

I was particularly interested in the Making History project, a 'who do you think you are' for young people, which is encouraging the young voices who will be the community historians of tomorrow (www.making-history.org).

The conference also made me aware of how important it is that we are recording 20th and 21st Century history, not just concentrating on times past.

It is important for heritage groups to record memories, regularly take photos of their area and try and find homes for local artefacts.

I hope this information is of interest and use to some of you and has given you some ideas you might like to follow up.”

Digital Scrapbooking

Living Archive offers this free creative IT course, starting on Friday 21st September for six weeks, 10.30 am to 12.30 pm at the Old Bath House Community Centre, 205 Stratford Road, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5RL. Create your own website using your life story or the history of your area as an inspiration. Learn how

to scan photographs, newspaper cuttings and documents into a computer; restore damaged photographs and learn useful editing techniques; download photos from digital cameras and insert them into websites, emails and documents, file images and documents on your computer for easy access.

This is a varied course aimed at beginners, although applicants will need to have some basic IT skills. To apply please phone 01908 322568.

The Jefferson family in Sherington and further afield Part 1

Lynda Jefferson sent us this article about the research she has done into her family. You may remember that we published her family tree in one of our newsletters last year. Thanks to Lynda for this interesting article. Part 2 will appear in January's newsletter.

Edward Jefferson 1798-1854

The first Jeffersons to live in Sherington were Edward (1798-1854) and his first wife, Sarah Checkley (1799-1849), who had only been married in 1821. After living at Newport Pagnell, where Edward had been born on the 16th March 1798 and baptised on the 21st, they took over the tenancy of Mercers' Farm at Calves End from Benjamin Griggs in 1822, paying £200 a year in rent (with a 25% rebate).

Mercers' Farm house had not long been built when the Enclosure Act of 1796 came into force, which gave the Mercers' Company the opportunity to increase the rent from £105 to £175. The poor rate Benjamin Griggs was expected to pay had increased dramatically and the tolls, especially to Newport Pagnell, to take goods to market would have been an extra burden.



Benjamin got into arrears with the rent and had to leave. He had a small piece of fortune, in that members of the Mercers' Company gave him a £50 pension per annum out of their own pockets for the few remaining years of his life. This was at a time of great poverty for the ordinary working man. Twenty-three people who had owned their own cottages in Sherington had had to sell their properties in 1810 – mainly being due to the enclosure of the common land.

Luckily for the tenants of Mercers' Farm, it had been made tithe free at the time of the Enclosure. Not all farms were so lucky. John Pretymen was rector of Sherington and also of Winwick, as well as having the prebend of Aylesbury between 1811 and 1842, was at one time drawing up to £1100 per annum. His income, coming mainly from the corn rent or tithe which was based on the average price of a bushel of wheat in the preceding 21 years, so when the price dropped the farmers would have still been paying the higher rate. The Corn Rent had been set at 10s 5½d per Winchester bushel between 1818 and 1839. The Anglican church was very powerful in its control of the ordinary villager. But this kind of social control was bitterly resented and Edward following in his father's footsteps turned to the Independent Chapel.

Between 1796 and 1832 the price of wheat fluctuated wildly. The price had risen sharply during the wars with France, as that country had been one of our main sources of imports. But after 1815 at the end of the Napoleonic wars the price plummeted, and so the Corn Laws were introduced to give the farmer in England some protection. Something that Edward would have benefited from, but as this pushed up the price of bread it would have been deeply unpopular with the labourer. Later, in 1846, this was to lead to the repeal of the Corn Laws that had protected him from cheaper imports. This was a time of deep depression for the whole country. There was a stock market crash in 1825, not helped by the Bank of England trying to look after its own shareholders and not the wider country. Agricultural prices didn't start to improve until approximately 1836. Sometimes the farmers were a victim of their own success, as there were years of good harvests, but then there was too much corn, and according to various select committees, in 1820, 1821, 1822, 1833 and 1836, on the depression people had turned to eating potatoes and so the price of corn went down.

Edward was of the first generation to go into farming at Sherington. He would have had to contend with some very difficult farming conditions. Apparently, the weather was atrocious, severe rain in 1828 and 1829 caused harvests to fail and sheep to die from infections, from foot rot and liver fluke. 1829 had a severe winter with hard frosts, and in 1830 there was a wet summer followed by a spectacular white Christmas.

The 1830s were a time of great unease – the Swing Riots took place where machinery was destroyed, Buckinghamshire being one of the counties affected. The population was increasing and employment was getting difficult for the working man. Just as well that Edward had some money behind him. His father, William (1775-1844) had owned several properties in Newport Pagnell, mainly Inns – The Bull at Tickford End being one. This would have been in the heyday of coach travel, before the railways took over. He was also listed as a maltster.

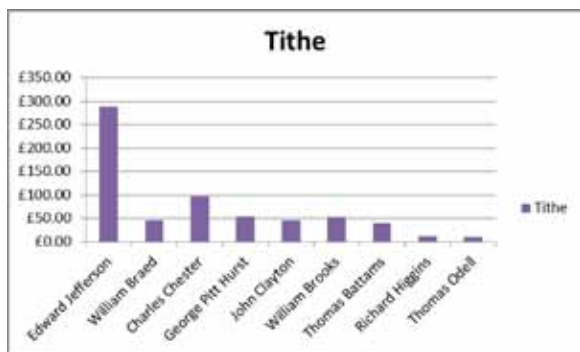
Jefferson v Pretzman

On the 20th April 1832 Edward Jefferson's patience finally ran out and he wrote to the rector of Sherington in Buckinghamshire, a letter that clearly showed his frustration and anger at the injustice he felt had been done to him by John Pretzman, the rector of Sherington over the Corn Rent. Although seeming quite understandable now, at the time it probably did not make a good impression on the jury, and certainly would only have antagonised the rector. But Edward was obviously seething with anger and past caring – he accuses the rector of covetousness, oppression and avarice, and that's just the beginning! The whole letter is recorded in the court case Edward brought against John which is in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies at Aylesbury (D/B/320).

It all goes back to 1797 after the Enclosures had taken place in Sherington, when the Rev Samuel Greatheed had owned the farm (thought to be Manor Farm), he later sold 17 acres and 84 acres to a Mr Capron, who sold it to a Mr Leckie, who in turn sold it to a Mr Ivison in approximately 1825. He also sold 33 acres to the Rev T P Bull – but he managed to pay all of his Corn Rent.

After the Enclosures of 1796 a Corn Rent replaced the tythes payable to the rector and his successors in 4 quarterly payments, as agreed by the rector and the main property owners. This was meant to have been valued as 1/5th of arable land and 1/9th of other lands and could be lawfully demanded after 20 days of the due date by the Rector. If this ran into arrears he had the power to raise a 'distress', whereupon he could send in his agents to seize the goods, who would – in the case of wheat – thrash them and sell the corn to pay the rector.

The Corn Rent of 10s 5½d per bushel set on the 24th June 1818 meant that in 1819 the Rev Samuel Greatheed was paying £187 0s 6½d for 357 bushels of wheat on his freehold land, £90 5s 1½d for 172 bushels on land he owned with his wife Ann and another smaller piece of land which was lifehold, he paid £11 1s 3¾d for 21 bushels of wheat.



Others in Sherington were paying: William Praed £45 18s 6¼d for 87 bushels, Charles Chester £97 6s 4d for 186 bushels, George Pitt Hurst £54 17s 3½d for 104 bushels, John Clayton £46 7s 9½d for 88 bushels, William Brooks £53 0s 11¼d for 101 bushels, Thomas Battams £39 13s 7¾d for 75 bushels, Richard Higgins £11 4s 8¼d for 21

bushels and Thomas Odell £9 9s 8¾d for 18 bushels. Giving the rector an income of £646 5s 11¼d.

It is probable that Edward's father, William, hired the attorney, George Watts, from 29 Dean Street in Southwark to represent his son at the summer Assizes at Aylesbury in 1832, whilst the local firm of Lucas, Lucas and Powell from Newport Pagnell represented John Pretyman.

Basically, Edward brought the case against the rector in the belief that a Bill of Sale dated 16th September 1829 showed that an arrears of corn rent of £187 0s 6½d had been paid by the previous tenant Joseph Ivison, whose brother William actually owned the land. In the judge's notes (terrible handwriting) he notes that there is sufficient doubt of Edward knowing about the arrears still owing when he took over the tenancy at Michaelmas 1830. Unfortunately, what Edward didn't realise was that although the rector had allowed Joseph Ivison to raise the Bill of Sale as an indemnity for £187, when William Ivison saw the auction advertised to raise the necessary money, he came to Sherington, making Thomas Borton his agent, who thrashed the wheat and sold it, but then William, for an unknown reason, stopped Borton from proceeding. So the arrears were never paid.

The Corn Rent had been paid up to 1829, but when Edward took over the tenancy in 1830 (owner William Ivison) John Pretyman demanded 2 years' Corn Rent (minus £30 which Joseph Ivison had paid) of £344 1s 1d, and when Edward didn't pay he made a 'distress' order on the 26th October 1830. The rector's agents took away a rick of clover and part of one, raising £234 6s 7d, leaving £109 6s 7d to pay. Edward signed a 'request' to allow the rector's agents to come onto his land and take the ricks of clover and to sell them on 1st November 1830. On the 22nd December 1830 another £29 3s 6d was paid, now leaving £80 3s 1d in arrears up to Michaelmas (29th September) 1830.

On 10th August 1831 Edward prevailed upon John Pretyman to delay proceeding with his rent collection, which he did, so Edward could stack all the crops on the farm liable to the corn rent with the exception of some oats. So, it wasn't until January 1832 that Edward made a payment of £100 by thrashing and selling 2 stacks of wheat. John Pretyman then demanded £260 13s 10d on the 14th April 1832.

That evening Edward went to the Swan public house, no doubt to drown his sorrows. There he met up with his friends to talk over the latest demand from the rector – something that would have rankled with most people who had to pay the Corn Rent. He talked to John Leete and Richard Tandy about his plans. He wanted John to go with him, along with William Brookes, Thomas Borton and James Marshall (Edward's brother-in-law) to visit John Pretyman, which they did on April 16th in the presence of H Lucas. Edward wanted to enter into an agreement with the rector that allowed John Leete and William Brookes to thrash and sell the crops on the farm, that had been discussed on the 10th August 1830, and by being willing to do this to make a trade off, in that the rector would let him off paying a quarter's corn rent, as the owing arrears had been built up before his tenancy. But of course, John Pretyman was having none of the latter part of Edward's wish. However, he did say (and this does sound like his attempt at a bribe) that he would make Edward a handsome present at the end of his lease next Michaelmas if he left the farm in a proper manner. Eventually, they agreed to meet up at the solicitors, Lucas, Lucas and Powell in Newport Pagnell to draw up an agreement about making a 'distress', giving John Leete and William Brookes the authority to thrash the corn and sell it. John Pretyman said he would defray the cost of the distress. On the 17th April the distress was made, but Edward refused to sign it, saying he wanted time to think about it. This is when he writes his letter to John Pretyman.

Obviously, by now Edward had worked himself up into such a state that nothing would have satisfied him. He talks about the rector wanting to see his family being brought to poverty and rags (he still had Mercers' Farm thank goodness, and his father William was reasonably well off for the times, so he wasn't exactly destitute). There is much sarcasm about his role as a clergyman. He proceeds to tell him that he acted imprudently in allowing Joseph Ivison to build up such a debt and now expected Edward to pay it. How he has such a mean, narrow, suspicious and miserable mind that he, Edward, wouldn't give ninepence for!

John Leete and William Brooks were sworn in by Mr William White, the Chief Constable of the Hundred (Newport) on 23rd April to value the stacks of corn, which they valued at £280. John Leete sold the wheat – 88 loads and 3 bushels for

£102 7s 6d, and William Brookes sold the beans – 102 loads 1 bushel for £106 11s 6d.

So, Edward brought a case against the rector on 5 counts. (The following is a rough explanation and is one interpretation of all the legal wording and phrases.)

1) On 17th April 1832 the Rector's agents took 5 stacks of wheat and 500 cart loads, 5 stacks of beans and 500 carts of beans which were valued at £300 and sold for £260 13s. Edward thinks that he could have got £500 for them. That the Corn Rent was not in arrears anyway and his goods were wrongfully seized.

2) That the rector maliciously and falsely pretended that the sum of £260 13s 10d was owing in arrears and that the crops had been wrongfully seized when really only £144 10s was owing.

3) On 17th April 1832 he did not give due and proper notice of when he was going to seize the goods.

4) That Edward's goods had been taken 3 days after the 'distress' had been issued, when it should have been 5.

5) The rector did not get the best price when the goods were sold, they were sold for £100 less than their true value.

6) That the Defendant (John Pretyman) intended to deceive the Plaintiff (Edward Jefferson) and had converted and disposed of some of the goods and chattels for his own use and not included them in his account – had casually lost them.

The last count seems particularly strong, however, there is no mention of this being discussed in the case notes.

At the end of the day, it appears that Edward might have got a reduction in paying the £187 0s 6½d as it was left to the court to decide. (How did that letter go down?) Frustratingly, there is no clear record of the result, so perhaps it was decided that there was no case, as the rector was legally entitled to the Corn Rent arrears. There was also a mention to move for a reduction in costs, which were a substantial £500.

It is also stated, by the defendant's solicitor, that Edward was compensated by his landlord William Ivison, so not all is as it first appears or it could have been smear tactics – that will always be a mystery.

(To be continued)

Scarecrows in Sherington - June 2012



Joint 2nd was awarded to the O'Loughlin Family at Sherington Place with Jed-lympics (left) and the Charles Family of 29 Perry Lane with Greg the Real Olympian (right).



Special prizes were awarded to the Taylor Family at 10 Crofts End with Everything Rosie (left) and The Leslie Family at 20 Crofts End with Harry and Wills (right).



Sherington Historical Society

Open Day Sherington at Work

Saturday 6th October 2012
12.00 pm to 4.30 pm

Sherington Village Hall

**Come along and see the trades, crafts and
businesses that have taken place
in Sherington over the years.**

**Do you have any information on any
Sherington trades or businesses?
If so, we'd love to hear from you.**

Full archives open to all

**Raffle, Refreshments available
Free entry**

Web: www.mkheritage.co.uk/shhs

Email: SheringtonHS@yahoo.co.uk