

The Holliday Family Tree Newsletter

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N I C K Y S T E P N E Y

CHANGING TIMES BRINGS FORTH NEW CHALLENGES!

I hope those of you in the UK have had a lovely relaxing summer. To family and friends out in New Zealand, I hope that by the time you get this newsletter the extreme weather conditions and the earthquake and aftershocks you have experienced are starting to calm down. As I write this newsletter I am on tenterhooks, waiting to hear whether or not I will receive redundancy from work. We have been going through lots of changes at work the past couple of years, what with several staff leaving, service reviews, restructuring and now budget cuts across local authority departments. I have opted to request voluntary redundancy as this will give me the opportunity to sit back for a while and think about what I would like to do. It will come as no surprise to some of you that I am considering studying to become a qualified genealogist but this would be quite a commitment and something that I will need to think through carefully—it would certainly give me a new focus though and lots of challenges to work on. As well as all of this going on through the Summer, we have had a family holiday in

Devon by the seaside and visited the Isle of Wight to see relatives. Rachel our eldest daughter has achieved passes in three 'A' levels, started college and also passed her driving test. Megan our youngest has returned to school to start her last year of GCSEs before she chooses her subject options for sixth form.

In this newsletter you will see what a lovely day we had when the Caudwell family came over from France and also hear the story of how my mum found out she was adopted—such a terrible shock at the time but it turned out to be an event that led us to a whole new family.



THE VILLAGE OF KINGSTON BAGPUIZE



Photo of Newbridge, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor taken in 1890

Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor is a village in Oxfordshire, ten miles from the centre of the city of Oxford. It is not the quaintest of all the villages our family have been connected to, but it is surrounded by some beautiful countryside. The village is probably most famous for its hops, pigs and the various fruit it once grew. It was nicknamed 'Kingston Bagpipes' following the second world war when a base camp for the RAF and the USAF men was situated there. In parts of the village several old thatched cottages still exist which is a reminder of how the village used to look. This is a village where employment was once mainly agricultural, but now many of its residents are city and town workers.

VILLAGE OF KINGSTON BAGPUIZE & SOUTHMOOR

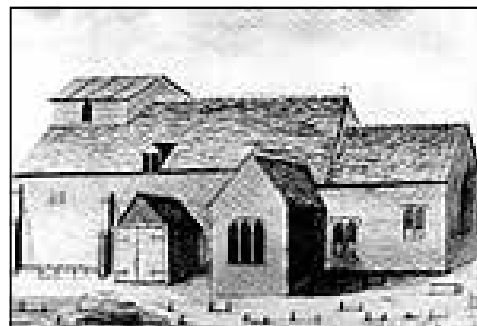
Kingston Bagpuize House is a beautiful Charles II manor house. It is very likely that the house had connections with the Lowsley/Lisle family but I will explore this further when I go back a few more generations and have had chance to visit the house to see what more I can find out about its history. It is thought to have been originally built in the 1660s but was re-fashioned in 1720 with its old part Saxon church being re-built in 1799 by John Blandy. John's cousin Mary Blandy was a frequent visitor to Kingston Bagpuize House and in 1752 she became renowned as being the last woman ever to be hung in Oxford.



She had poisoned her Father with a mixture of arsenic powders because he had disapproved of her lover! She was 31 years old when she was executed and her ghost is supposed to haunt the Westgate where she was hung and the Little Angel Inn near Henley. She was buried in between the graves of her parents in the chancel of Henley Parish Church in Oxfordshire. This much loved family home is opened up to the public at certain times of the year and is also available for wedding receptions, corporate events and filming.

KINGSTON CHURCH

The first church was built on the site of the present Kingston Bagpuize church, shortly after the Conquest (1076-1099). Before then the people of Kingston worshipped at nearby Longworth. It was built jointly by Ralf De Bachepuise and the Lord of the other Kingston Manor, Adeilm and was consecrated by Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury. This church remained here for nearly 700 years. It is likely that it was near what was then the centre of the original village.



The early church



St John the Baptist church in Kingston as it is today

The tower was rebuilt in 1603 by Sir David Williams, a judge of the King's Bench, it is also recorded that in the same year 13 people died of plague in the village. The church was largely rebuilt in the early 18th century in the same style as the original. It was demolished in 1799 and in 1800 it was rebuilt from the £2,000 bequest of the second John Blandy (Sheriff of Berkshire). The church was modelled on one he had seen in the Apennines in Italy. John Fidel of Faringdon was the builder. It was entirely refurbished in 1882 when the high box pews, gallery and beautiful Georgian font were swept away in the name of progress! Several monuments from the old church and churchyard have survived, though many have over the years disappeared completely.

JOSEPH LOUSLEY (1733-1810) & ELIZABETH CLACK (c1734-1796)

Joseph Lousley was born on 3rd November 1733 in Kingston Bagpuize, son of Joseph Lousley and Mary Collins. He was christened there on 24th March 1734. Joseph was only 17 years old when his father died in 1750 and being the only son he inherited unexpired leases for property at Aston in Gloucestershire and also the freehold tenure of a manor in Kingston Bagpuize. As explained on page 2, I will be looking into this property in more detail in future newsletters when I research the Lousley family further back.

Joseph had an older sister Elizabeth who had been born in Kingston Bagpuize in 1731 prior to their parents' marriage and she had been christened on 1st October 1732. According to a family story passed down over the generations, Elizabeth was reputed to have been renowned in Berkshire and the neighbouring counties for her good looks and fine figure, having pale blue eyes and a profusion of fair hair. Elizabeth had supposedly attracted the attention of Lord Craven, Lord of the Manor of Lambourn.

He was a considerate man, releasing land for a pest house to be erected to accommodate sufferers of smallpox and other infectious diseases, as had his predecessors also done before him. Elizabeth truly believed that her liaison with Lord Craven would result in a marriage, but for some reason he broke off their friendship. This rejection apparently affected her mind and she spent the last part of her life in a confused mental state in a house in the village of Blewbury called 'Gilmore'.

This house was an ancient villa and in 1897 was still in the family, but sadly had fallen into disrepair and had become a poor thatched cottage.



Gilmore Cottage, South Street in Blewbury in the background. The cottage now has a tiled roof instead of thatch

Elizabeth was remembered by Ruth Robinson who later became Mrs Job Lousley (1804-1889) as "Aunty Betty who used to go about in a bath chair somewhat frightening the local children with the 'humph, humph' noise that she used to make".

Elizabeth died unmarried and was buried at St Michael's church in Blewbury on 22nd February 1812 aged 81 years of age.

An example of an early 19th century bath chair. They were used to carry the sick from their homes and by the rich and famous going about their daily business. A modern day version of this would be the mobility scooter



Returning to Elizabeth's younger brother Joseph, on 16th September 1757 Joseph married Elizabeth Clack in Great Shefford, Oxfordshire. I have not found a record of Elizabeth's birth, but it is assumed to be around 1734. Elizabeth was reputedly "an attractive, shrewd and helpful partner for Joseph".

After Joseph and Elizabeth's first two children Hannah and John were born in 1758 and 1760, Joseph sold his freehold estate and other property in 1760 and leased a farm at Bridgecombe (now Britchcombe) near the White Horse in Uffington. I wrote about this farm in June 2009 as it was where John and Elizabeth's youngest son Joseph was born in 1765 and where he grew up until he was 9 years old.

The farmlands here were on chalky terrain covered with thin grassy soil and the land was then used as it is today for mixed cattle, mainly dairy herds.

In 1774 the family moved to Blewbury where Joseph leased Blewbury manor house for £1,300, exclusive of a rent of £250 per annum.

JOSEPH LOUSLEY & ELIZABETH CLACK (CONTINUED)

The Corporation from whom Joseph rented the lease allowed him £400 to build a new barn of 5 bays, a new stable to hold at least 12 horses and for any repairs that were necessary.

The manor farmhouse was in a poor state when he leased it and consisted of only 10 rooms. It was Joseph who enlarged it and generally modernised the building by using mainly brick-work.

Joseph's wife Elizabeth died in June 1796 and was buried in St Michael's church, Blewbury. There is a lovely inscription to her which reads :

"A loving wife, a friend most dear, A tender mother lieth here. Affliction sore, she with patience bore, physicians were in vain. Till death did seize and God did please to ease her of her pain. Tho great my loss I hope with joy to meet in Heaven again".

Shortly after his wife's death, Joseph acquired a fine property in Gloucestershire, lying in the parishes of Avening, Minchinhampton and Cherington. The greater part lay in Avening and was known as the Aston Manor Estate, consisting of approximately 1,000 acres of land. A few years later Joseph also purchased the Lowesmore Estate of 500 acres. Both estates had previously belonged to the Estcourt family.

Joseph lived at Aston Manor House but relinquished it later to his son John in about 1803. Joseph instead lived in a delightful cottage called "Cherington" which he bought from a Mr Samuel Fowles. It was the only property in the village at the time that did not belong to the George family and after the sale of the cottage to Joseph there were unfortunate disagreements

between the George and the Lousley families.

Joseph was lonely as a widower and was keen to remarry and had a proposal of marriage accepted. The marriage failed to materialise however, possibly because of objections raised by Joseph's eldest son John concerning the inheritance which would be left to Joseph's descendants. Joseph consoled himself by buying property in Blewbury for his other son Joseph Junior.

Joseph died at Cherington in 1810. Joseph's Last Will and Testament dated 5 June 1806 was witnessed by Elizabeth White, Sarah Pitt and George White.

Joseph gave all his property in Avening, Minchinhampton and Sapperto in the county of Gloucestershire to his son John Lousley and male heirs, and in the default of any heirs, to his

youngest son Joseph Lousley and his male heirs and in the default of any heirs, to his son-in-law Thomas Humfrey and his male heirs and in the default of heirs, to his own legal heirs forever.



Aston Manor House

He gave his son Joseph Lousley, all his property now in his possession, plus the property at Cherington.

He gave his daughter Hannah Humfrey £500 pounds and all the rest of his personal belongings and household goods to his son Joseph. He also appointed his son Joseph to be the sole executor of his estate.

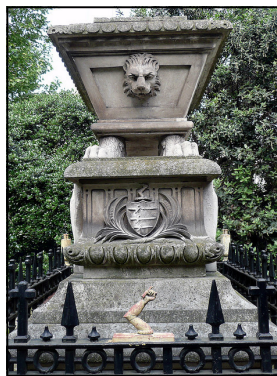
HANNAH LOUSLEY AND HER DESCENDANTS

Hannah was the first child born to Joseph Lousley and Elizabeth Clack. She was born on 2nd October 1758 in Kingston Bagpuize and christened on 19th November 1758.

Hannah was another Lousley female who attracted the attention of many suitors because of her lively personality and good looks. It was reported that during a stay with friends in London, she was introduced at a civic ball to William Rawlins, Alderman of London. He was so captivated by her, at this and subsequent meetings, that shortly afterwards he visited her father Joseph in Blewbury and asked for her hand in marriage. Joseph would have agreed readily to this wealthy alliance, but Hannah was already promised to her local sweetheart Thomas Humfrey from the village of Upton in Berkshire.

When I first read about this in some notes I had acquired from another Lousley researcher, I did think first of all, what a lovely story which certainly helps to put "*flesh on the bones*" and makes an ancestor appear that much more interesting, but really how much truth was there in it? I have to say when I did a bit of digging around, I was as usual not disappointed. Invariably family stories passed down over generations do have an element of truth in them, even if the story gets slightly distorted over the years.

From a book entitled "*Feather bedds and Flock bedds: the early history of the Worshipful Company of Upholders in the City of London*" by J F Houston (2006), I discovered that a William Rawlins did exist (1752-1838). He was described as "*undoubtedly one of the most significant masters of the Company in the 19th Century*". William was initially apprenticed to Thomas Harris, a weaver in 1770 and then apprenticed to Samuel Swaine, Alderman. William was admitted as a Freeman of the Borough in 1778 and progressed through the Company becoming Master in 1811. In 1801 he had become Sheriff of the City of London. By this time William had become one of the wealthiest men in the upholstery trade at the time. He was knighted on 13th May 1802. To this day Sir William Rawlins' tomb stands in Bishopsgate churchyard in London—he represented Bishopsgate for the rest of his life and died at the age of 85 years in 1838. His was one of the greatest business minds of the City in the



19th century and he founded the company now known as Eagle Star.

This is all well and good, but where was the proof that he once proposed marriage to Hannah Lousley? Of this I cannot be hundred percent sure, but when I discovered that William Rawlins had been born in 1752, son of Simon Rawlins, farmer of Bridgcombe in Berkshire I couldn't believe it—this had to be more than just coincidence. Hannah's father Joseph had leased Bridgcombe in 1760 and her youngest brother Joseph had been born there in 1765. The families must have known each other before Hannah met William later on in London.

Whether the marriage proposal took place or not, Hannah went on to marry Thomas Humfrey by licence on 21st December 1789 in the parish of St Dunstan, West London when she was 31 years old.

Thomas Humfrey had been born in Upton in 1756. The Humfrey family were not without wealth and power themselves. They were landed people and were constantly increasing their position within society. However, something I discovered in the parish registers of Upton did give me a shiver and reinforced the fact that these were times when this very power and wealth meant that some people felt they could do what they liked to those who were considered beneath them. It concerns the death of poor Elizabeth Pope of Upton and comes from her burial notice. She was "*miserably whipt by T.Humfrey, Jnr and died and was buried in the ground on 15th October 1773*". Whether Elizabeth Pope had been one of the servant girls in the house in which the Humfrey family lived and what she could have possibly done to inflame Thomas we will never know—I have found no records or mention of the event in any of the early newspapers. Thomas would have only been about 19 years old when this event happened, long before he married Hannah.

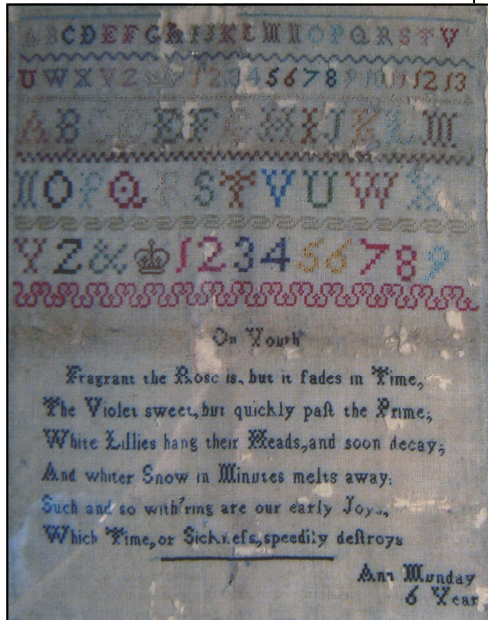
Hannah and Thomas had seven children who you will read about on page 6.

Hannah died on 3rd February 1824 and was buried in Blewbury on 10th February in the Humfrey vault in St Michael's churchyard. Thomas died in January 1836. A marble plaque to her memory and that of Thomas is on the wall by the south aisle of Blewbury church.

HANNAH LOUSLEY'S DESCENDANTS (CONTINUED)

Thomas was the eldest child born to Thomas and Hannah in 1790 in the village of Upton. Thomas married Ann Munday from Culham in Oxfordshire on 30th December 1819 at Culham Parish Church.

When Ann was only six years she embroidered this sampler.



Thomas and Ann had 6 children; Ann (b 1821), Thomas (b 1824), Jane (b 1826), Joseph (b 1827), Mara (b 1832), Heber (b 1833)

In 1841 the family were living in Odstone, Berkshire, with Thomas working as a farmer. By 1851 the family were still living in Odstone, but we find out more about their status in that Thomas was now farming 1,020 acres of land and employing 42 labourers. Five live-in servants were also employed to help with the household. By 1861 Thomas was retired and living with Ann in Upton—all their children had now left home. Thomas died in 1865 and in 1871 Ann was living at Odstone Farm with her two sons Thomas and Joseph. Ann died in 1876.

The second child was a daughter Elizabeth christened in Blewbury on 1 January 1792. She married Richard Newton and in 1851 they were farming in Britwell Prior, Newington in Oxfordshire. A daughter Mary, aged 30 was living at home with her parents. By 1861 Elizabeth's husband had died and so both she and the unmarried Mary were staying with Elizabeth's brother Thomas and his family in Upton. Elizabeth died in 1870.

Jane was christened the year afterwards on 28 July 1793 in Blewbury and that's as much as I know of her at present. I believe she died in 1846 but as this time frame only captures the 1841 census, I do not have enough detail to be sure who she married and what children she may have had.

Joseph was born on 5th September 1795 in Blewbury. He went on to marry Martha Lousley in 1823 and I wrote about his marriage and their children on page 11 of the June 2009 newsletter.

Eleanor was born on 4th January 1798 in Blewbury. She married William Herbert from Aston in Berkshire. He was also a farmer and in 1851 they were living at Westbridge Farm in Streatley. In 1861 they were living on the same farm and were employing 16 men and 8 boys and working 570 acres of land. By 1871 they had moved to Aston Upthorpe in Berkshire. Living with them were their two unmarried sons William H (aged 37) and Thomas H (aged 35).

In the census at this time there was a column where the enumerator could indicate whether a person was 'deaf and dumb', 'blind', 'imbecile or idiot' or 'lunatic'. I think the word lunatic is awful, but both brothers were marked as lunatics and in fact within the household staff was an Alfred Harper whose job was "attendant to the lunatics". It must have been a very hard life for Eleanor bringing up her sons. She died in 1872 aged 74 years. In 1881 both brothers were still alive and living in 'Lower End Town' in Aston Upthorpe. The letter 'H' in both their names I discovered was for Humfrey which had obviously passed down from their mother. They were both still marked as lunatics but had a number of people looking after them. I tracked them through the census and found out that Thomas died in 1892 and his brother William in 1899.

John was born 4th November 1799 in Blewbury. In 1851 John was aged 52 and unmarried living at Humphreys Farm Upton, Blewbury employing 27 labourers. He also employed a live-in housekeeper and a house servant. John died on 10th May 1860 in Upton aged 60. He was buried on 12th May 1860. His memorial reads "The memory of the just is blessed".

The last child William was born on 16th March 1802 in Blewbury. William married Ann Herbert at Ardington on 28th November 1829. A child called Herbert was christened in 1841. By 1851 William was a widower living at Oak Ash Farm in Chaddleworth, Berkshire. In 1861 he was described as a landed proprietor and farmer employing 15 labourers and 6 boys. His unmarried son Herbert was also living with him along with a housekeeper and a cook. William died in 1867.

BROTHERS JOHN AND JOSEPH LOUSLEY AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

John Lousley was the first born son to Joseph and Elizabeth. He was born on 2nd April 1760 in Kingston Bagpuize and christened on 18th May 1760. On 17th September 1765 Joseph came into the world, a younger brother for John. I wrote about Joseph Lousley in June 2009. John and Joseph grew up together at Bridgecombe Farm in Uffington until their parents moved to Blewbury manor house when Joseph was 9 years old and John would have been aged 14.

Although Joseph was the younger brother, he had been married by 1784 and yet by 1795 John was still single at the age of 35 years old. At the time of his marriage, John was said to be of athletic build, about 5ft 11 ins tall with blue eyes, light brown hair and regular features. Although inclined to have a kind nature, he could also be obstinate and self-willed and tended to lack the aptitude for work, unlike his brother Joseph who worked hard.

Although I have not found a marriage record for John, I have been informed by other sources that John married a Mary Holliday about 1796/7 and I shall return to her in a little while.

John and Mary had a son John who was christened on 31st August 1800 in East Hagbourne. However he died 6 months later and was buried on 1st January 1801 in the church in Blewbury. His memorial reads:

"In memory of John Lousley who died 27 December 1800 aged 6 months. Sweet innocency's form lies here, lamented by his parents dear - who hope at last in endless joy, to meet again their lovely boy"

Maybe it was for a fresh start after losing their son, but in approximately 1803 John's father Joseph gave up his house in Gloucestershire so that John and Mary could live there. A daughter Mary was born in late 1803 and the following year in 1804 Harriott was born. John's wife Mary died in 1807 and was buried in Avening Church on 22nd August 1807.

When John's father died at Cherington in 1810, John found himself in the predicament of being owner of Aston Manor and Lowesmore estates for life only. Joseph's last will and testament had indicated that these estates were to pass after John's death to his male heirs and if he had none, then they would pass to his brother Joseph's males heirs. As John's only

son had died as a baby and he only had two daughters he was not free to leave his property to them. His brother-in-law Thomas Humfrey who was married to his sister Hannah, encouraged him to see if the reversion to 'male heirs' specified in Joseph's Will could be changed. Thomas may have been feeling annoyed and snubbed at the disproportionate share that his wife Hannah had received of Joseph's wealth (£500).

A Hungerford lawyer named Hall was appointed for the task. He found that the Will neglected to appoint trustees to the real property and this with other less significant flaws was sufficient for the entailment to be barred. A deed specifying this was issued in 1811 and the lawyer Hall was paid £1,000 for his pains. John made his own Will on 3rd May 1820 bequeathing to his daughters Mary and Harriott all the Gloucestershire property as tenants in common. They were required to leave their property to any children they bore, or if this did not occur, were free to nominate in their Wills any relative as a beneficiary or if they died intestate, for their estate to pass to their next heirs by law whether they be male or female.

John continued to live at Aston, a fine old manor house up until 1812 when he moved to a large house in Minchinhampton close to the church. This house was pulled down after John's death and was replaced by a state school in 1833. John was respected by his tenants for the kind way he acted as landlord and he would receive cheery comments when coursing his greyhounds over his estate. John died in July 1822 and was buried with his wife in Avening Church on 15th July 1822 in the family vault in the south transept.

I would now like to come back to John's wife Mary, as I strongly believe that this Mary Holliday was in fact Ann Holliday from East Hagbourne who was the daughter of Thomas Holliday. I mentioned in March 2010's newsletter (see page 5) that I had reason to believe that Ann married well and that her descendants led interesting lives but that until I had found the proof I couldn't say for sure if this was one and the same person.

I am a little nearer to finding the evidence but as I was writing about John Lousley in this newsletter I couldn't avoid writing about his wife. The majority of us descend from John's brother Joseph so we already have the family connection here, but I

THE LIVES OF JOHN LOUSLEY'S DESCENDANTS

would really like to find that we have a connection through the Holliday line as well if I can. In order to prove that the Mary Holliday that married John Lousley was the same person as from East Hagbourne, I would need to find their marriage record which has proved to be so elusive. Family documents indicate that they married in London around 1796/7 but I have poured through all the marriage registers online at present and nothing comes up. I have tried with various spellings, including the *Lowsley* spelling variation which is what John appears to have used later in his life and has been carried through by his descendants.

The other thought I had was that if I could locate the graves of John and Mary, it may give me their ages in their memorial inscriptions so that I could make that connection between Mary and Ann. Ann was born in East Hagbourne in 1768 and if I could see that Mary was approximately 39 years old when she died that would be more proof. Mick and I visited the church in Avening in the summer and looked in the south transept for any sign at all of their graves, but there was nothing. I left a message in the church for the vicar requesting any further information he may have. I received a telephone call a few days later from Fred Vening, the church archivist and he said that I was one of three people who had contacted the church in recent years declaring that they believed that there were more graves in the south transept than could be currently seen. Apparently there was a fire in the church in 1901 and a lot of rebuilding work had to be carried out. Fred thinks it possible that there are more graves buried underneath the floor and he and the vicar are seriously thinking about having the floor raised to see what is underneath. There is also a very large crypt outside the church that has no inscription on it whatsoever and they are looking at that as well and have promised to keep me informed of any updates.

Returning now to John Lousley's descendants. As you know, his eldest son John died when he was just six months old, but fortunately his two daughters Mary and Harriott grew into adulthood. Mary was born at Aston manor house in 1803 and was christened in Avening church on 30th November of the same year. Harriott was born a year later in 1804. Mary was 18 years old when her father John died and she inherited, along with her sister, the Aston and Lowesmore estates, although they were kept in trust until they came of age. The Lowesmore estate was put up for sale in 1832 and in 1838 it belonged to Joseph Hort, who was perhaps acting as trustee for Mary and Harriott Lowsley of Aston Farm.

After living in Minchinhampton and Gloucester for a while Mary acquired in 1839, from her trustee Joseph Hort, a property known as Mugmore House. This was a very large residence in the Parish of Rodborough but quite near to Amberley and situated at the edge of the plateau called Minchinhampton Common.

At times, sisters Mary and Harriott would stay in Gloucester and they regularly attended services at the cathedral there. Mary in her 41st year met a parson, the Reverend George Williams; they became acquainted, engaged and married shortly afterwards on 24th April 1845 in Cheltenham. This marriage took the Gloucestershire estates out of the male branch of the family and ended correspondence between the two branches (i.e between John Lousley and his brother Joseph Lousley's family). The marriage was registered under Mary's assumed surname of Lowsley and her maiden name spelt with a "u" was forgotten. The following year in 1846, she gave birth to the heir of the Lowsley Estates, Mary Caroline Eleanor Williams. In 1858 the Lowesmore estate was owned jointly by Harriett Lowsley and the Reverend George Williams, and it descended with Aston Farm until about 1919. In 1972 the estate was owned by Lowsmoor Farm Ltd.

In 1864 Mary, under her husband's direction, had Mugmore House rebuilt in a grandiose style to accommodate their large family of her sister Harriott, Mary and George's daughter and a regiment of domestic staff. The house still stands in its large grounds surrounded by a dry-stone wall and has a substantial gateway house. Mugmore House is now called Moor Court.

After her death in 1871, Mary left all her property to her husband. Mary was buried in Brompton Cemetery in London. George died in 1874 leaving his property to his grandson George Williams Lowsley-Hoole. Mary's sister Harriott never married and for most of her life had been under the domination of firstly her sister Mary and later on her brother-in-law the Rev. Williams. Harriott died on 28th February 1880 at East Holme, Weston-Super-Mare in Somerset aged 74 years. Her last Will and Testament demonstrates the influence of George, as she left her property very much as he had left his—to her great nephew.

Her Will was proven on 14th May 1880 and the personal estate sworn at under £18,000.

THE LIVES OF JOHN LOUSLEY'S DESCENDANTS (CONTINUED)

George was bequeathed the Lowsley Estate by his grandfather before his death in 1874. To inherit the Lowsley Estates, on his coming of age, the young George had to add to his surname by Royal Licence and was thereafter known as George Williams Lowsley Hoole-Lowsley Williams.

In 1891 George came down from Yorkshire with his father, Colonel W W Hoole, to view his inheritance. Neither of them were attracted by Mugmore House and whilst they were guests of Sir George Holford at Westonbirt, Sir George informed them that the Chavenage Estate in Tetbury, Gloucestershire was for sale. Sir George's father R S Holford had been mortgagee of the lands since the last of the Stephens family had left Chavenage in the middle of the 19th century, the estate having been in their ownership for 350 years and nine generations.



The Holfords had overseen the lease of the property to the Chaplin family (1868-1890). In 1903 the Lowsley-Williams decided that the house was not big enough. They sold the property at Lowesmore at less than £10 an acre to fund the building of an extensive new wing. George was the owner of Chavenage until his death in 1937, when the property passed to his eldest son, Colonel John Savile Lowsley-Williams.



John never married and lived at Chavenage with his mother and his two sisters, until in 1958 he gave the estate, the house and its contents to his nephew David as a wedding present on his marriage to Rona McCorquodale. Colonel John was suffering from cancer and died three days after the wedding service in the knowledge that the Chavenage estate had been safely passed on to another generation. The Lowsley-Williams still live at Chavenage to this day.

Mick and I visited Chavenage last year and it really is a beautiful house with lovely grounds. The house is open to the public and I think the owners are now used to various descendants of the Lousley family turning up from time to time over the years to see the house and to find out more about the family.

Chavenage is also used a great deal for television and film productions, for example, 'Casualty', 'Cider with Rosie', the 'Ghost of Greville Lodge', Poirot's 'Mysterious Affair at Styles' and more recently it was featured as the Squire's residence in 'Larkrise to Candleford' (one of my personal favourites)



Here is the link to the website if you would like to find out more about Chavenage:

<http://www.chavenage.com>



Cromwell's room, showing the 1640 coarse-weave tapestry with its forest design

THE FRENCH CAUDWELL'S VISIT TO THE UK

As I mentioned in my last newsletter, Antoine Caudwell was coming over to the UK in July with his wife Christiane, his daughter-in-law Helene and his two grandsons Nicolas and Martin. They planned to visit Drayton, the Cotswolds, Bath and Lincoln and they very much wanted to meet up with Mick and I. We arranged to meet them early in the morning at their guest house, just outside Oxford on 8th July. We had planned to show them around the villages of East Hagbourne and Blewbury and could not have chosen a warmer or sunnier day on which to meet. Fortunately Antoine's knowledge of English was a little better than our French, but we managed to make ourselves understood most of the time, sometimes with a little help from an English/French dictionary which was pulled out from time to time.

We took them first to the village of East Hagbourne to show them where the Hollidays came from and where our ancestor Elizabeth Caudwell was buried in the churchyard of St Andrew's with her husband John Holliday. We explored the village showing them the beautiful cottages and explaining the various houses where members of the Holliday family had lived. They seemed quite taken with the village and took plenty of photographs. We then went to the *Fleurs de Lys* where we had lunch and this gave us the opportunity to talk about the Caudwell family and our mutual interest in family history research.

After lunch we drove the short distance to the village of Blewbury where I had arranged for us to visit the gardens of Blewbury Manor House where Joseph Lousley from Uffington had spent most of his life. In my newsletter of June 2009 on page 4 you will find a photograph of the outside of the manor house. The house is not open to the public but at certain times of the year the gardens are open to the public as part of the National Garden Scheme. A few weeks before the Caudwell's visit I emailed the gardener of the Manor House to ask if, although we had missed the official opening day, there was there any chance that as we



Mick and I with the Caudwell Family in the grounds of Blewbury manor house

were descendants of the Lousleys who had lived there in the late 18th century, we might be able to have a quick peak. To my delight, Richard Roslyn the head gardener replied saying that he had spoken to the owners of the manor house and that they were more than happy for us to come and

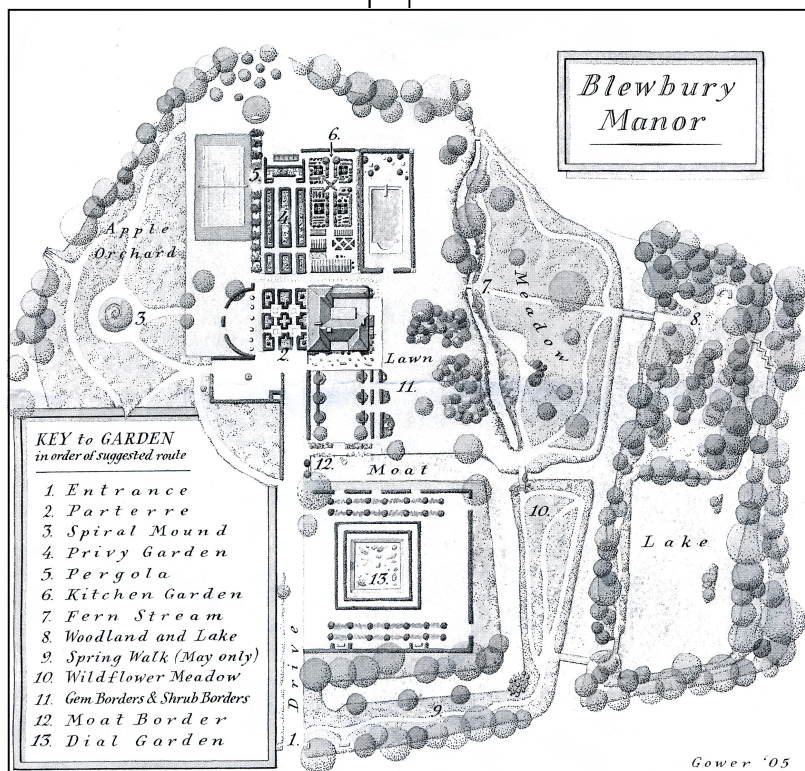
take a look.

The owner came out to meet us when we first arrived and gave us a plan of the gardens so that we didn't get lost! We spent a lovely couple of hours walking around the grounds of Blewbury manor house—far bigger than I thought it would be and very beautiful. I think the Caudwells were also quite surprised at its size.

We finished off the day by taking

them to St Michael's church in Blewbury to look at the memorials and stained glass windows and to show them where some of our ancestors were buried in the churchyard.

We stopped to have coffee before taking them back to their guest house. We had all enjoyed the day and were pleased to have met each other.



**THE DAY HELEN HOLLIDAY FOUND OUT
SHE HAD BEEN ADOPTED
AT BIRTH... ..!
WRITTEN BY HELEN HOLLIDAY**

The Christmas of 1982 is one that I will never ever forget. I had always enjoyed the season and still do with my family and friends, but that year was one of my most memorable for the reason I am now about to tell you.

My husband Allan had gone up into the attic to gather up the Christmas tree and decorations ready for the festive season. I called up and asked him to bring down a bundle of letters and other bits and pieces that I recalled storing up there when my mother had been taken into hospital quite suddenly some time back. She had had a severe stroke which resulted in her having to move into a care home, as she was no longer able to cope on her own. The arrangements had been made very quickly and hence my storing all her papers in the loft without having had a chance to look through them before now. That evening I read through the letters and cards one by one, but couldn't register what was written. They appeared to be written about a little girl that had been adopted at the age of 6 weeks and that little girl had been renamed Helen.



This of course was my name and I remember feeling confused until it dawned on me that the little girl referred to was in fact me. The shock, as you can imagine, was immense and I struggled with many emotions trying to come to terms with what I had discovered. I was 41 years old and had just found out that I had been adopted at birth. Allan and I have three daughters, Nicky, Alison and Lisa who are now all grown up and have families of their own, but back then they were only in their teens. Several days after my discovery, I told them what I had found out and bless them they replied by saying *"but you are still our mum and nothing will ever change that"*. To start with, I was unable to research or find out anything about my adoption as everything was still so raw and I was trying to adjust to what felt like a new identity, whilst struggling with the feeling that my past no longer had any meaning to me.

My mother was still alive and was unaware that I had found out what she and the family had tried so very hard to keep secret from me. I felt very upset that she had been unable to tell me herself rather than let me find out the way that I had.

The ten letters I had found had been written by my biological mother to my adopted mother every birthday and Christmas for the first five years of my life and they must have enclosed money as she was asking my parents to buy me a birthday and Christmas present with the money she had sent. She had obviously found it hard to let me go, but under the circumstances probably felt it was the only thing she could do. It helped me to know that she had cared enough to remember me at these times.

As time passed and the shock and the hurt grew a little less, I decided I needed to know more about my roots and where I came from.

The letters had given me a clue as to where to start, as they were signed by a Vera Whitewood and the envelopes were postmarked from the Isle of Wight. I visited our local general post office and proceeded to look up every Whitewood in the telephone directory from the IOW. With trembling fingers I started dialling from the list of numbers I had written down. Little did I know at that point that it was the fourth call that was to change everything for me.

A man's voice answered and rightly or wrongly I told him that my mum Mary Edna Pike from Reading was looking for an old friend called Vera Whitewood as she would like to get in touch with her. His response was to say that this sounded like his mother and that she had worked in a

munitions factory in Portsmouth during the second world war. I knew I must have the right person as one of the details in Vera's letters was that she was working in a factory in Portsmouth at the time.



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I continued on with the conversation, not revealing the truth of why I was ringing—my heart was in my mouth as this was obviously my brother to whom I was speaking! He told me his name was Brian and that he would speak to his mother when he saw her. I left my name and address fully aware of the possible consequences that could happen once Brian had mentioned our telephone call to his, or rather, our mother. All I could do now was to sit and wait.

I received a letter a week later from Vera, my birth mother, but with no forwarding address. She explained that she was married and that her husband knew nothing about me and could I please make no further contact. As you can imagine I was upset and felt rejected but had no choice but to accept her decision.

However, the knowledge that I had a brother gnawed away at me as I had always wanted a brother. I eventually plucked up the courage to write a long letter to Brian (using the address I had found in the telephone directory) and explained everything to him, who I was, what I had found out and apologising for the way in which I had tried to make contact. I received a reply from my brother Brian shortly afterwards.



My Wedding Day

He admitted that he had been quite shocked, but that he had in fact been told a number of years previously that his mother had had another baby, a little girl, but that she had been adopted as she was unable to keep another child. Brian was in fact 5 years older than myself and not being married Vera had felt unable to look after two children. Brian had been brought up mainly by an aunt whilst his mother was working in Portsmouth during the early war years. Brian and I continued to correspond for a couple of years until one day a letter arrived from him asking if we could meet up. We arranged to meet up in Southampton as he was coming over to the mainland from the Isle of Wight and I was coming from Reading so it was a mutually convenient place for our first meeting. Although I had been waiting a very long time for this, I was extremely nervous and excited all at the same time. Was this going to be everything I had dreamed of?

We met near to the Docks under the big clock—we had exchanged photographs when we first started corresponding and I recognised him immediately. Brian was as nervous as I, but we hit it off straightaway and chatted away for a long time. Well, that was then and now after some 25 years of us meeting up I have a wonderful relationship with my brother. From those early days, I went on to meet up with his lovely family, his partner, his two daughters and grandchildren. Both of our families have met and we have shared some happy get-togethers over the years. Both Allan and I have been on a couple of cruises with Brian and his partner and we all get on famously. Although the discovery of my adoption was very over-whelming at the time, on reflection I feel so lucky to have found the letters when I did as it led me to my lovely brother.

My adopted mother Mary Edna died in 1991 never having known what I had discovered. I carried that knowledge with me for nearly a decade never disclosing that I knew. As for my birth mother, well I did eventually meet her, mainly due to the encouragement of my brother, but she had started to develop dementia and although she welcomed me, she never really acknowledged me as her daughter—she was probably unaware of who I really was. It was lovely to meet her though and I referred to her as 'my mum'. Vera died a few years ago in her mid 90s. I was honoured to be asked by my brother to walk with him behind our mother's coffin. No-one will ever really know what that moment meant to me, but I truly felt I had been accepted as his sister.



Brian's family with Brian and I in the middle of photo

FINAL CHAPTER OF HELEN'S STORY

You have read my mum's story of how she discovered she had been adopted at birth and where her research has taken her and the positive end result she found.

I will now pick up where she left off and tell you how close we were to finding out who her biological father was.

About six years ago, when my mum Helen was visiting Brian on the Isle of Wight she met a cousin of theirs called Elfrida (Alfie) who remembered Vera at the time when she was seeing a young soldier called George Bevan. Alfie's husband Eddie Tudor had joined the Royal Fusiliers 2nd Battalion (City of London Regiment) at the beginning of the second world war and this is where he had met George. The four of them used to go out together and Alfie was absolutely convinced that George Bevan was Helen's father, even though Vera had not named the father on her birth certificate.

Knowing my passion for family history research my mum asked if there was any way of trying to trace this George Bevan even though she knew it was a longshot, especially as he was not named on the certificate and that more than 60 years had since passed.

As you will have probably gathered by now, I like a challenge and this was certainly one of them, as I had so very little to go on. All I had was his name and regiment—it was like looking for a needle in a haystack. The only other piece of information that Alfie could give was that her husband Eddie had completed some army training in Scotland and then had gone out with his regiment to North Africa—he was wounded in battle and returned home. George never returned and was presumed dead. My first job was to research the Royal Fusiliers and to find out about their involvement in WW2 and to try and piece together the dates and movements of the regiment to see if they coincided with the time that George had met Vera and when my mum would have been conceived. I put out many requests for help on various forums and discussion pages on family history and military websites. Many people responded which helped me to build up a picture of the times and the details of the Royal Fusiliers.

There are no records to refer to which list all those men and women who joined up during the War, only a list of those who perished. This list is available via the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Website. I trawled through the names and discovered that only two George Bevans had died during WW2. One of these was a George William Bevan who was a Lance Corporal in the Royal Engineers and he had died in 1944 at the age of 30. The second was a George Leslie Bevan who died at the Battle of Cassino in Italy in May 1944 aged just 20 but he had been a Fusilier in the 2nd Battalion RF Regiment. This seemed too much of a coincidence and I had to follow it up. I was fortunate that the records gave George's next of kin—parents George and Olive Bevan of Ewell, Epsom in Surrey.

I spent the next couple of years building up a family tree around these names, by using the birth, marriage and death indexes and census returns. I needed to build up a full picture to see if this George had siblings that I could trace living descendants of. I managed to find out that George had at least six siblings and the names of the children of those siblings that had married. I again put several requests out on the internet and waited to see

what happened next. At the end of 2007, I received an email from a Sonia Hooper who had seen my plea for help and said that she was the wife of David Hooper who had been a first cousin to George Bevan and that she could give me a contact address for one of George's sisters. My heart skipped a beat, as I had not anticipated what I would do at this stage. I replied to her, telling her a great deal more about why I was trying to make contact with the Bevans. I had no proof and did not want to upset anyone, but her advice was that I wrote to them. I drafted a letter over the Christmas period saying that I was doing some research into the Bevan family and if they were interested perhaps they would like to get in touch. I posted the letter in January 2008 and within a week I had received a reply saying that they had passed my letter onto their niece as she was interested in family history. I decided it was now or never, so I wrote a very carefully worded response explaining about my mum and her adoption and who we believed her father could be. I don't know what I expected next, but it certainly wasn't a telephone call several nights later from Brenda Bevan who was the youngest sister of George. The conversation we had was quite surreal—she spoke about George and the last time they had seen him when he left their house in Wales as he was about to go off to War. My letter had stirred many memories which she shared with me. She was intrigued and excited to think that maybe her brother had fathered a child and that something of him had been left behind after he was killed. She agreed to help in any way she could to see if we could find out more. The next step was to obtain George's war records to see if it could tell us more of his whereabouts between 1940-1941. For this I explained to Brenda that I needed next of kin consent to request the records from the War Office to which she was more than happy to oblige. In fact her niece Amanda Bevan who she had referred to as being interested in family history in her first letter to me, turned out to be a Senior Researcher at the National Archives, in Kew, London. I corresponded with Amanda and sent her the forms that had to be signed and a cheque for the records, but she refused payment and said that the family would pay as they wanted to find out the outcome just as much as I. It normally takes up to a year for the records to arrive so we had to be patient. In the meantime both families exchanged photos to see if either of us could see any resemblance to each other. Sadly, two of George's sisters passed away before we heard back from the War Office. In July 2009 George's service records finally arrived and Amanda sent me a copy of them. We were all so disappointed however, to discover that nothing in the records could pinpoint George as being anywhere near the Isle of Wight or indeed Portsmouth at a given time. In fact George had enlisted with the Welch Regiment on 1 June 1942 and did not transfer to the Royal Fusiliers until 1943. My mum was born in June 1941 so it was almost impossible that George could have been her father. This is just an example of where research can take you and the time it can take and yet lead to nothing—it's all part of the process, but this time it was closer to home and was a blow to both my mum and I.

If there is anyone else you think would like a copy, please let me know—you can either drop me a line or send me an email and I can add them to the circulation list. Also, I would welcome any suggestions of items you might like included in future issues.

The next newsletter will be published in December 2010. If you would like me to include something you have written can I please have it by the end of November. Thank you.

I am continually adding to the family tree, so if you have any photographs or information that you would like included I would love to hear from you. You can either post or email them to me. Many thanks.

Acknowledgements and Sources:

Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor village website
Viewfinder on English Heritage website
Kingston Bagpuize House website
IGI on Family Search website
Pat Holliday and Ron Lousley for family photos and documents
Blewbury Village website
www.bbc.reading.gov.uk
Last Will & Testament of Joseph Lousley dated 5th June 1806
"Featherbedds and Flock Bedds—the early history of the Worshipful Company of Upholders in the City of London by J F Houston (2006)
Parish Records
Last Will and Testament of Harriott Lowsley (1880)
Chavenage House Website
The owners of Blewberry Farm Manor House
Helen Holliday for the article on her adoption
Commonwealth War Graves Commission Website
Census 1841–1911
Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths from 1837

More Photos from the Album



Coming in the Next Issue:

- ◆ Return to the Village of Appleford
- ◆ William Caudwell and Sarah Loder and their descendants
- ◆ Family Article
plus lots more.....

More photos of Elizabeth Caudwell (1819-1888) who married John Holliday in East Hagbourne in 1844