

Reminiscences of Old Yateley

BY A

Septuagenarian.

(William Burrows Tice b 16.8.1860, d 3.6.1941)

(UNDATED, ca 1933)

with explanatory footnotes by Richard H Johnston, 2008

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- ¹ Please note that these are reminiscences, recorded about 1933. Some information is now out of date or may be factually incorrect. They do however provide a glimpse into the world of Yateley as it was in the nineteenth century. Footnotes by R H Johnston, 2008.
 - ² This book was attested by contemporaries such as Syndey Loader as having been written by Tice. William Burrows (sometimes spelled Burroughs) Tice was the illegitimate son of Charlotte Tice (b1841), daughter of William and Martha Tice of Yateley. William Burrows Tice b. 1861 (grave in graveyard). He was a man of energy, becoming a baker and grocer, and a significant man in the village. As a boy he worked in Gadd's shop next to St Peter's church which was a grocery and bakery shop. Later he opened a wooden shop in the front garden of Goose Green Cottage in Vicarage Road, where he established a bakery. He later took over Gadd's shop, and also another in Frys Lane, formerly H Tyler's (in a house later known as "Little Holt"). Tice belonged to the Yateley Branch of the Volunteers, and was a reporter for the Hants & Berks Gazette. He was for many years a Lay Reader at the Darby Green Mission (which later became St Barnabas Church, the corrugated iron church at Darby Green. He wrote a short history of the mission.) He was also chaplain to the local Freemason Lodge. Tice was also deeply involved in homespun village entertainments. He was also the secretary of one of the "Yateley Clubs", self-help insurance schemes and social clubs for Yateley working men. He married Emily Vass in 1886, had a son Harold E Tice (1888-1980) who also became a baker. Tice is buried in Yateley churchyard with his wife and son, where a memorial records his birth and death dates.
 - ³ Tice became 70 in 1930, and other internal evidence suggests it was written about 1933, and certainly after 1931.

generation of the family to hold the office, his great-grandfather was appointed by Mr. Caswall in the year 1808 and members of the family without a break have held the office ever since; 125 years a splendid record.

FINIS.

ruthlessly pulled down because it wanted repairing about the year 1835¹²⁷, he snatched it off a hand-barrow as it was being wheeled out of the Church to be burnt, he kept it in hiding for more than 40 years. In 1878 his son Henry who was then verger, unearthed it from its hiding place, much to the delight of Mr. Summer¹²⁸, who immediately took it down himself to the brothers Bunch to see if they could use it. One can see by looking at the Screen how beautifully it has been done, we raise our hats to the dear old verger (and freely forgive him for having his extra gin and water) for saving such a precious relic of the past, also for his great courage.

Until 1869 there was no face to the Church clock, we could only put our clocks and watches right when we heard it strike. I suppose that was why we always rang the hours on Sunday mornings, there was the eight, nine and ten o'clock bells¹²⁹. I often rang the eight o'clock bell to save Mr. Hilton coming across, when as a young man I lived at the Old Village Stores¹³⁰.

One is sorry that the old names of places have got altered. The field where the Red House is built¹³¹ was called Black Hedges in the 16th century. Mouseham Farm was called by that name in 1470, the farmer's name was Peter South, how it came to be called Moor Place one cannot tell. The Hill now called Yateley or Holly Hill was always called Potley Hill from time immemorial.

I feel I cannot conclude without a word of appreciation and congratulation to the Hilton family who have for so many years been so closely connected with the dear old Parish Church as vergers. Mr. John Hilton is the fourth

¹²⁷ During the Incumbancy of Rev Richard Lewin.

¹²⁸ Vicar of Yateley in 1878.

¹²⁹ It is not entirely clear why this was necessary, unless the ringers rang the bells for an early service and 11am service but left the bells up between the services, so preventing the clock from striking.

¹³⁰ Gadd's stores, next to the church

¹³¹ Now the Willowford estate

REMINISCENCES.

I have been asked by several people at different times to write a few of my recollections of the Parish where I was born and lived a long, busy life. I was born just in time to see the end of the old regime and the beginning of the new⁴.

There are great changes in the Parish since I can first remember, but one is glad to see the Old Village or Church End as we used to call it⁵ has not altered much, the quaint old "Dog and Partridge"⁶ has had to make way for a more stately and up-to-date building, but the old village smithy⁷ the and the houses on that side⁸ are much the same as they always were⁹ until you get up to the "White Lion." The residence of Miss Stilwell¹⁰ is where I went to school it

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- ⁴ It is not obvious precisely what Mr Tice was referring to. When he was born, Yateley was primarily a village dependant on agriculture. By the 1930s it had become a place dominated by upper middle class residents, many of them retired military men.
 - ⁵ The name Church End, to describe the group of buildings round the small green in front of the church has been recently resurrected, to avoid confusion with the rest of Yateley Green, to the west.
 - ⁶ The old Dog and Partridge was demolished in 1912
 - ⁷ The Smithy lay behind what is now (2008) the archway leading to Forge Court
 - ⁸ The North side of Reading Road, now (2008) called "from Forge Court to the White Lion".
 - ⁹ During the 1960s some of the houses were demolished and the remaining houses were linked together to form a continuous block of buildings. The most important of these is *Trythes*, just to the left of the entrance to Forge Court, which has a sun fire mark just below the eaves.
 - ¹⁰ Her house was *Trythes*, and Miss Norah Stilwell occupied it from about 1924 (See her manuscript book *Clooty*) until her death in 1948. It was also the post office until it moved across the road to the purpose built black wooden shop (which still exists in 2008) about 1929.

was known as a Dame school and was kept by an old lady named Bunch¹¹, whose husband was the blacksmith¹²; I went there until the new school was built on the Green¹³. Where Mrs. Chapman's gardener's house now stands¹⁴ there stood a delightful old thatched cottage I remember, with green shutters, there was no fence as now, and no garden in front, but was all open and part of the Green. The gate and fence to the cottage was almost close up to the house and all that part which is now enclosed by a brick wall was all open to the road. I have many times played "here we go round the mulberry bush round the walnut tree that now stands on Mrs. Chapman's lawn¹⁵. Between the fence (which was only trellis work) to the old house which then stood there, there was only a gravel path between the fence and the house, when we made too much noise Captain Halhed¹⁶ who lived there, would rap the window and put on his hat, making out that he was coming for us; we used to run across the road and jump the ditch and out into the new road in double quick time, we knew we were safe when across the ditch, There was no fence by the side of

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- ¹¹ Elizabeth Bunch, described in 1861 census as "School Mistress", was born at Newington Surrey, ca1813. She was buried in Yateley churchyard 9 Jan 1867, age 54.
- ¹² Thomas Bunch, smith (buried Yateley churchyard 2 Dec 1871, age 71)
- ¹³ The old Yateley school on the Green is now (2008) the Village Hall. The foundation stone records that the school was built in 1865.
- ¹⁴ The gardener's house stood between The White Lion and Harpton House (which when Tice wrote was occupied by Mrs Chapman). Harpton House and the attached gardener's cottage were demolished in the 1960s: Village Way and the car sale rooms etc. now (2008) stand on their sites. The name Harpton is preserved in Harpton Parade
- ¹⁵ That is, on the lawn of Harpton House. Mrs Susan Mary Chapman (nee Nash), wife of George Augustus Chapman, was the sister of William Harry Nash, father of the painter Paul Nash (1889-1946), one of the most important artists of the first half of the twentieth century and the most evocative landscape painter of his generation. Nash came to stay with her as a child and young man, and attributed his "first love of winter country" to his visits here (Nash. P, *Outline – an autobiography and other writings*, 1949).
- ¹⁶ Captain Henry Halhed (b 13 Aug 1805) was one of the sons of John Halhed Esquire of Yateley Hall. He had been an army Captain in the East India Company Service, who retired in 1839. In the 1881 census he was in the privately operated St Leonard St Lunatic Asylum, West Malling, Kent, and classed as a "lunatic".

dinner time. It was then served in the marquee to which about 125 sat down, including the gentry and others who could afford the time to come, the tickets were 2/6¹²².

The late Mr. J.P. Stilwell¹²³ who took a great interest in the Clubs generally presided. The Green would be turned into a fair ground, and the road from the Dog and Partridge down to the main road would be quite a street with stalls on either side, there were often two sets of round-a-bouts and coconut shies galore.

In the evening the people would come from the neighbouring parishes for dancing on the Green or in the marquee.

One is glad and proud to record that all the restorations of the Church was carried out by Yateley men, chiefly by the talented brothers, the sons of the late Mr. William Bunch, who were working for their uncle, the late Mr. Henry Bunch¹²⁴ who had the contract for the work. The beautiful work of the Screen and pulpit was exclusively the work of Mr. Aaron Bunch, Mr. Moses Bunch and Mr. James Bunch¹²⁵. Mr. Aaron and Mr. Moses, we regret, are no longer with us, but Mr. James Bunch still lives at Mostyn Cottage¹²⁶, he made and fitted the Cross in the centre of the Screen, Mr. Gomm who carved the Angels, carved the figure of the lamb in the centre of the Cross. The old oak carving that is so skilfully worked into the present Screen was that which was saved from being burnt, by the old verger, Mr. Isaac Hilton, when the old Screen was

¹²² 2 shillings and sixpence (12.5p), then a significant sum of money.

¹²³ John Pakenham Stilwell, Esq, of Hilfield, see above.

¹²⁴ Mr Henry Bunch, builder lived at Cricket Hill

¹²⁵ These men were all carpenters.

¹²⁶ In Vicarage Road, Yateley

useful work six years before the Hampshire Friendly Society was established in 1825. The late Mr. Bertram Currie¹¹⁸ was astounded when Mr. Stooks¹¹⁹ told him of the existence of the Old Club and said he thought it was wonderful to think that in 1819 there were men in Yateley who had any idea of looking out for themselves and providing for sickness or any infirmity, he thought their successors were deserving of all praise and encouragement, he handed Mr. Stooks a cheque for £100 to be put to the funds.

The other Society was an off-shoot of the Old Club, and consisted of much younger men and was established in 1865. For many years they held their Festival day on separate dates, the Old Club on Whitsun Wednesday, until it was thought by some of the members it would be nice to hold the festival together. It was finally agreed when Mr. Stooks said in his address at the Club service he thought it would be better. A General Meeting was called of the Club and they invited the Old Club to be present, after a good deal of discussion it was decided that they would keep their festival together, because Whitsun Wednesday had been "Club Day in Yateley for nearly 100 years they decided to have it on that day and it went on from that time until the Clubs were dissolved in 1912.

I was Secretary to both Clubs for exactly 20 years. As the Clubs have been done away with so long, I think I ought to explain what I mean by the "Festival." The members used to meet once a year and dine together in a large marquee that was placed on the Green in front of the Dog and Partridge, they hired a band of music, and at 11 a.m. a procession was formed in front of the Dog and Partridge and headed by the Band and Banners of the two Societies, proceeded to the Vicarage¹²⁰ to escort the Vicar down to the Church to hold a short service for them with an address, we then reformed the procession and took him back, by the time we got back to the Club House¹²¹ it was 1 p.m.,

¹¹⁸ A wealthy banker who lived at Minley Manor

¹¹⁹ Mr Stooks was Vicar of Yateley (1885-1905)

¹²⁰ The Vicarage was then at what is now Glebe House, Vicarage Road.

¹²¹ That is, the Club Room within the Dog and Partridge.

the road until you got to Simla Cottage which was then a bungalow¹⁷ where Dr. Biddle¹⁸, our local doctor, lived.

The suburbs have greatly altered, Mill Lane for instance, there was no house down there at all until you came to Mascalls Farm¹⁹ on your way to the Old Mill, now unhappily done away with²⁰, but which has been immortalized by the late Mr. Benson in his book "The House of Quiet"²¹ which deals so largely with Yateley. When I first remembered the Old Mill the road went down past the Mill House, turning sharp to the right over a small brick bridge that took you over the water that turned the Mill wheel and down into the ford. The way for those who were walking there was a wooden bridge²². The present bridge was built and the road straightened about 40 years ago²³.

The road round the Vicarage corner to that part of the Green which was known as Goose Corner²⁴ there were only two houses, White Mead²⁵ and Chandler's

¹⁷ The site is now occupied by the early C20 two storey brick house, now (2008) called Gayton House

¹⁸ Dr Biddle died 17 May 1879, age 45, and is buried in Yateley Churchyard. He had been Assistant surgeon of the 104th and 8th the Kings Regiment (in India), before becoming Yateley's surgeon for many years.

¹⁹ Mascall's Farm lay on the western side of Mill Lane, not far from the junction with Chandlers Lane

²⁰ Yateley Mill was roughly on the same site as the present (2008) Mill Farm. The Mill was demolished in the late 1880s or 1890s, and replaced by a farm house, which was in turn demolished and replaced about 1990.

²¹ *The House of Quiet: An Autobiography*, Arthur C Benson, 1907. Benson's father was headmaster of Wellington College when A C Benson was a child. The descriptions of Yateley are his romanticised recollections of childhood.

²² A watercolour from about 1880 by Mrs Margaret Mills (d1885), wife of John Mills of Potley Hill, shows this ford and foot bridge.

²³ That is, in the 1890s, after the mill had been demolished.

²⁴ This area is now (2008) known as Vicarage Lane and Chandlers Lane

Farm²⁶ (in my young days Chandler's Farm was very important and was owned by Farmer James Ellis who was born there in 1797, and lived there until 1876 when he retired and went to live at the Hollies²⁷, which he had built on the Green, he died there in 1884 at the age of 87 years. He frequently came to Church in the Summer in his smock frock²⁸ which was White instead of green to distinguish him from his men, he always wore breeches and top-boots) then going on down the road there were no houses at all until you turn the corner going towards Sandhurst, you then came to an old cottage called Mill Cottage, which bears that name to-day²⁹. The old moor at the corner³⁰ with the cattle shed inside the gate is William's Moor and was known by that name in the reign of Queen Elizabeth³¹, as was Chandler's Farm. Coming back up the road toward Eversley after passing The Poplars as it is now called³² but which then was a Farm House with farm buildings of wood and thatch standing in front and down towards the present back entrance. After leaving

²⁵ This house still exists, it is on the east side of Vicarage Lane, close to its junction with Chandlers Lane.

²⁶ Chandlers Farm was, unfortunately, demolished in the 1960s. It was close to the present (2008) entrance to the Sean Devereux playing fields.

²⁷ In Vicarage Road, west of the junction with Chandlers Lane.

²⁸ This smock has survived, and is currently in the possession of Mrs Jean McIlwaine.

²⁹ And continues to do so. This house was greatly increased in size in the 1980s.

³⁰ That is, the corner which is the junction of Chandlers Lane and Mill Lane. Williams Moor was a large field (No 158 on the Yateley Tithe Apportionment) on the NW side of this part of Chandlers lane and Mill Lane. This field was the subject of gravel extraction in the 1970s and the barn referred to has gone.

³¹ This is a reference to the Crondal Customary of 1567, which detailed the lands and their ownerships for every property in Crondal manor, which included the whole of Yateley.

³² The Poplars what a large and prominent house just on the north-west side of Chandlers Lane, next to its junction with Vicarage Road. It was demolished and replaced with some modern houses (probably in the 1960s)

Charles Peace¹¹⁵.

It was proved without a doubt that we had a visit from that notorious burglar, Charles Peace, in 1871. A gentleman calling himself Mr. Ward, took the White Cottage¹¹⁶ on Mouseham Green, pretending he was going to start business as a poultry and pig farmer, he had sheds put up suitable for that purpose, he never lived in the house but had his meals and slept at the White Lion Hotel, which was then kept by Mr. Frank Rogers. He stayed for some time, then suddenly disappeared, rumours got about that a notorious burglar was going about in several different aliases, among which was Ward. At last he was run to earth, when he made the great mistake of shooting a police constable at close range when disturbed at his nefarious business at a place called Banner Cross, which ended his career.

His trial opened at the Old Bailey, and Mr. Rogers, out of curiosity, went up to London and saw him brought into court, and said when he came home, it was certainly the same man, he had the same clothes on as when he saw him last in Yateley. The only article that was found in the cottage was a walking stick, a powerful oak twig which I have in my possession. it came out at the trial that he once took a cottage in the north-east corner of Hampshire; you can't get much further north-east than the White Cottage.

The Clubs¹¹⁷.

We had two permanent Friendly Societies in Yateley, the Yateley Friendly Society or the Old Club as it was usually called was established in the year 1819 and continued its good work until 1912, when it was put out of action by the National Health Insurance Scheme, thus you will see it was doing a

¹¹⁵ The story of Charles Peace, and his connection with Yateley has been more fully researched by the Yateley Society elsewhere.

¹¹⁶ Now (2008) called Moulsham House

¹¹⁷ See *The Yateley Benefit Clubs* by D.G. Harland, 1986 for more details about Yateley's 19th century benefit clubs (<http://yateleylocalhistory.pbwiki.com/YateleyBenefitClubs>)

said that one of the trees is an almost unique species, there being only one more of the same in England, in Kew Gardens, it is the second one from the Chain Pond¹⁰⁶ going towards Eversley, it grows a profusion of red berries annually¹⁰⁷.

The oak tree in front of the White Lion near the school path¹⁰⁸ was planted to commemorate the Coronation of King George V. and Queen Mary¹⁰⁹ by three of the oldest inhabitants of Yateley, viz.: Mrs. Gill¹¹⁰ of the Red House¹¹¹, Mr. John Mills¹¹² and Mr. Henry Bunch¹¹³, all over 90 years of age.

The trees on the Cricket Green near the Pond were planted¹¹⁴ to commemorate the passing of the Parish Councils Act by the first elected P.C., each giving one, Mr. Stilwell, the Chairman, giving two, making nine in all.

¹⁰⁶ The Chain Pond is the pond opposite the White House Gardens development, and was so called because it had a chain fence around it, because it was unusually deep and hence dangerous.

¹⁰⁷ This tree has now probably disappeared. (check)

¹⁰⁸ The "Coronation Oak" stands just to the south of the path between the Barclays bank corner (Tindal Close/ Reading Road) and the traffic crossing on Hall Lane.

¹⁰⁹ 23 June 1911

¹¹⁰ No information available.

¹¹¹ The Red House was an imposing red brick house on Hall Lane, where the Willowford estate now is.

¹¹² John Mills, formerly Deputy Surgeon General, Bombay Army, in East India Service. Born 1 Aug 1820, died 1 Apr 1913, age 92.

¹¹³ Henry Bunch (born 27 Feb 1832 d 27 Feb 1912, age 89)

¹¹⁴ These are Lime trees, planted in 1894

the old house³³ next to the Poplars there was only the old house that stands at the top of Mouseham Lane³⁴ until you got to the Fox Inn at Eversley, now called the Noah's Ark³⁵.

John, the last of the famous Geale family died at The Poplars, I remember him well, he was deaf and dumb³⁶.

Taking the top of the Green there is very little alteration since I can remember only the Old House now occupied by the Misses Kelsey³⁷ which was a Public House known as the Wheat Sheaf Inn with a grocer's shop attached.

Now a few words about Cricket Hill - on the right hand side of the common there were no houses at all³⁸, only the old cottage called Burnt Hall Cottage³⁹,

³³ That is, the old house which is now (2008) called Goose Green Cottage, and which was the house where Tice had his bakery.

³⁴ This was on the western corner of the junction with Moulsham Lane (Tithe Apportionment No 84.) Until the 1980s some remnants of the agricultural outbuildings remained.

³⁵ The road between Yateley and Eversley was realigned in the 1960s, and so bypasses the old houses which are now in Fox Lane Eversley, and which included the former public house referred to.

³⁶ John Geale (born 13 Aug 1788, buried, Yateley churchyard Feb 7 1864 aged 75). The 1851 census records that both he and his elder brother James (baptised 4 Oct 1783) were deaf and dumb.

³⁷ This house is now called Brookfield House, and was occupied at the time Tice was writing by four unmarried sisters, (Georgina, b ca1866, d 1959, age 93; Emily Alice, b ca1870, d 1946 age 76; Louise Amy b ca 1871, d 1951, age 80; and Harriett Eliza, b ca 1872, d 1960, age 88), the daughters of Richard Kelsey, who had been a prominent Yateley farmer in the C19.

³⁸ Tice is here referring only to that part of Cricket Hill that lies south of Handford Lane.

until you came to what is now called the Red Lodge (Timorue)⁴⁰ where stood a delightful old thatched house⁴¹, a real bit of Old Yateley, on the other side there has not been much alteration only that the Cottage Hospital was the Yateley school⁴² and the large red house was a public house⁴³. On the enclosed piece of ground near the Cricketer's Inn⁴⁴, there stood a barn and stable⁴⁵ that was always occupied by the farmer who lived at Hanford⁴⁶, the last farmer I remember to have it was farmer James Searle⁴⁷. Where. Mrs. Brown's house⁴⁸

³⁹ Tithe Apportionment No 268. This house still stands but is greatly extended. It was later called St George's cottage and used for a (mainly) girl's school run by Miss Wilding about 1900. Paul Nash, the painter, see above, records attending the school. [current name?]

⁴⁰ [Current name?]

⁴¹ Tithe Apportionment No 266.

⁴² Tithe Apportionment No 453. The school was built in 1834 on a newly enclosed piece of land. The school proved too distant from the main centre of population and so was moved to Yateley Green in 1865, again resulting in enclosure of land from Yateley Common. After a period in private ownership the building was converted into a hospital in 1899, and continued as such until 1974, during which time it was expanded on several occasions. It was then used for housing the homeless, but was unsuitable for that purpose and the present building constructed in the late 1980s.

⁴³ Tithe Apportionment No 452. This is the now white painted house almost directly opposite to the entrance to Handford Lane. [name] According to George Ives (1894-1970) the pub was called the Prince of Wales.

⁴⁴ Tice is probably referring to the "new" Cricketers (Tithe No 282) which replaced the Old Cricketers (Tithe No 284)

⁴⁵ Tithe Apportionment No 283 (Stable and yard).

⁴⁶ Tithe Apportionment No 272 now (2008) called Handfords. This house was doubled in size by an extension to the west in the early C20. The barn next to the road is marked on the 1844 Tithe Map.

⁴⁷ Joseph Searle had held it at the time of the Tithe Award in 1844.

⁴⁸ [House not yet identified]

old days known as Whitehall Corner)¹⁰⁰ where they would stop to pick up passengers and goods, they changed horses at Blackwater.

The Trees.

When the new road was made through the Green¹⁰¹ the people who lived along the old road thought that it would be closed and they would be able to extend their boundaries to the new road. The gentleman who lived at Barclay House¹⁰² was particularly anxious, he planted a row of trees up near the new road and fenced his piece in, they all formed a little fund and proceeded to put up a fence at the Vicarage corner and made that small road¹⁰³ that goes from the said corner to the Reading Road but Farmer Geale¹⁰⁴ who lived at Mouseham Farm¹⁰⁵ took serious exception to it, he came up with one of his powerful cart-horses with trace harness and promptly pulled it down, he then waited on the gentleman at Barclay House and pulled his down also. He let the trees remain, perhaps they were too tough a job; they are there to-day, and it is

¹⁰⁰ That is, apparently, the junction of Moulsham Lane and Vicarage Road. This would be a strange choice of stopping point, since it is not well located to where Yateley people were living. It is not clear which route this was, as the main coaching routes used what is now the A30. Presumably, with his reference to changing horses at Blackwater, Tice is suggesting a route from Reading to Blackwater. There have been suggestions in another source that there was once a London bound route from the south west which went from Hartley Wintney via what is now Chandlers Lane and into Berkshire, the purpose of which was to avoid the notoriously dangerous Bagshot Heath. (More research needed to make sense of this story recorded here by Tice.)

¹⁰¹ The road originally ran along the northern edge of Yateley Green (along the present Vicarage Road, and further on past the Moulsham Lane junction. The short cut across the Green was made in the early 19th century (about 1820?, check when).

¹⁰² Probably Edward James Mascal, Esquire (d 1832).

¹⁰³ This is now just a path through the trees, with no obvious indication of it having ever been a road.

¹⁰⁴ Probably a John Geale

¹⁰⁵ That is, what is now known as Moor Place (34 Moulsham Lane).

dear, do say it!" Mr. Stooks⁹⁵, who could always see the humorous side of things, took no notice.

Sports.

Cricket in the Parish was always well supported, we could always raise a good eleven. The late Mr. Henry Bunch⁹⁶ was a great supporter and a good player, he used to bowl round-arm bowling. The Paices⁹⁷ were also good. The late Mr. Henry Hilton⁹⁸ was also a most enthusiastic cricketer and played very late in life, he was a most tantalizing underhand bowler, I have seen him win a match when it seemed we had lost, often when the bowlers could not part the batsmen I have seen the captain put Mr. Hilton on, his bowling would be slower and the batsmen could not wait for them, if they did strike the ball it was alright, but if they missed it they were out at once as he was always dead on the wicket. I remember once he got four men out with five balls and won the match.

Coaching Days.

Before the new road was made through the Green⁹⁹, the Coach and Road Waggon used to come by the old road and stop at Mouseham Corner (in those

now stands there stood a double tenement house also with thatch for the roof, but which was unfortunately burnt down.

We must not forget the Old Church. I have seen great alterations there⁴⁹. I well remember the old high-backed square pews with doors that shut us in, they were more like small cattle pens than anything else, and the enormous reading desk which reared its hideous self and excluded our view of the sanctuary, it was not a three-decker like the one at Eversley, it had three book-rests one for the prayer-book, one for the Bible, and one for the sermon, there was also a most elaborate pulpit with an enormous red cushion along the front adorned with an imposing red tassel at each end, it stood on the same side of the Church⁵⁰ as the present pulpit only not so near the north wall, the entrance to it was at the back, somewhere where the stall now stands on the left-hand side of the Chancel⁵¹, the entrance also to the reading desk was at the back, there were three steps up into which put the Vicar⁵² in a very elevated position. Old Isaac Hilton⁵³ the verger had a little box pew right underneath, he did a great deal of the responses and all the Amens, if anyone spoke out a little louder than was allowed the old man would look round, as much as to say now then, is this your job or mine, he was quite as much consequence as the Vicar, he always

⁴⁹ The church was subjected to more than one restoration in the late C19, but the main restoration was in 1878, when the church was closed for many months. A principle objective appears to have been to make the church better suited to "High church" ritual.

⁵⁰ That is, on the north side at the east end of the nave

⁵¹ Following the reconstruction of the church after the 1979 fire, the Chancel became a separate chapel.

⁵² Strictly speaking Rev Richard Lewin was a "Perpetual Curate" rather than a Vicar.

⁵³ Isaac Hilton (born 16 Sep 1802, bur 6 Apr 1872, age 69), was a local shoemaker, and parish clerk. Tice states later that four successive generations of the Hilton family occupied the office of parish clerk, in succession.

⁹⁵ Rev Charles Drummond Stooks was vicar of Yateley from 1885 to 1905. He died in 1909 and is buried in Yateley churchyard

⁹⁶ There were four Henry Bunch's in Yateley. Tice probably intends Mr Henry Bunch, builder, of Cricket Hill, who was responsible for the Church restoration contract, mentioned by him later.

⁹⁷ The Paice family were butchers.

⁹⁸ That is, Henry Hilton, parish clerk, see above.

⁹⁹ See below.

gave out the Hymns, or rather, the Psalms⁵⁴, which we had in those days, and can be found at the end of any old Prayer Book, as we can find the Hymns in some of the modern Prayer Books.

Poor old Isaac was very fond of a glass of hot gin and water, and I have often seen him sitting in his little box with a vinegar rag on his head, there were naughty people in those days who would say unkind things, they used to say the old man made a miscount and had one over the usual. Before the Service began he would walk round and see if all the pew doors were shut, if he found one open he would shut it then come round and take his place in his little box, when he shut his door that was the signal for the Vicar to begin the Service.

The men and women sat separately in those old days. The men always wore their smock frocks, breeches and gaiters and high crown hats to Church, and all sat on the north side facing the pulpit just as now, the women sitting in the centre aisle. The seats on the south side were raised one above the other like as at a theatre.

I said just now there was a place for the Bible in the old reading desk, but I never heard Mr. Lewin read the lessons himself, there were several gentlemen who did it for him, but only a few would go up to the Lectern, the remainder simply standing up in their seats and reading. Mr. de Winton Corry⁵⁵, Mr. Shute⁵⁶, Mr. Stilwell⁵⁷ and Mr. T. Barlow⁵⁸ were among those who walked to the Lectern.

⁵⁴ It would therefore seem that Yateley was late in adopting Hymns in place of the Psalms. The incumbant, Rev Richard Lewin, died in 1874, having begun at Yateley in 1821, following a curtailed career in East India Company service.

⁵⁵ Martin de Winton Corry (died 4 Feb 1885, age 64) lived at Yateley Hall, and was responsible for commissioning architect Norman Shaw to make a two storey extension of the house at the southern end in 1871-2.

⁵⁶ George Byng Hardwicke Shute, Esquire, MA (Oxon) (died 3 June 1892). He lived at Robins Grove, in Firgrove Road, at the west end of Yateley Green.

"The parties came from Cove, and it appears the young man lived at home with his parents and to insure having plenty of food for the wedding, killed the pig. The young man had for his breakfast what is known as a pig's hock, having picked the bone he wrapped it up and put it into his pocket, remarking to his bride elect who was breakfasting with him, "I will put this in my pocket and when it comes to the words "with this ring I thee wed" I shall take it out and say "with this bone I'll break your head," and of course when they got to that they both burst out laughing, this was a great deal too much for the old Vicar⁹³, he closed the book and said, "I think you had better come again another day for me to complete the ceremony. I don't think you understand what a solemn obligation you are entering into," with that he turned round and went into the vestry. Mr. Hilton said it was the hardest job he ever had in his life to get him to return and finish the Service, which he did eventually, but he read the riot act to them very severely afterwards. The Bride went down the Church crying bitterly, and the young man looked very serious, as though he felt he ought to cry too. Mr. Hilton followed them out into the Church Porch and asked them what it was all about, they told him the story as I have told you, he also gave them a bit of good advice and sent them home."

This story concerned two Yateley people⁹⁴:-

"The bride was a very, very nervous person and when she had to repeat the words "I Mary, take thee John, etc.," she could not get the words out, so the young man put his arm round her waist and said very appealingly, "Now my

⁹³ This suggests this happened during the incumbancy of Mr Lewin, and while Henry Hilton was parish clerk. The identity of the couple is unknown - many Cove couples continued to be married at Yateley after the new parish church of St John was built at Cove.

⁹⁴ Their identity is not known.

Mr. Shute was invited to be the first Choir Master, and his eldest daughter, who was afterwards Mrs. Ward⁸⁹, the first Organist, it was a mixed choir. The new organ was placed in the south-east corner of the Church, by the Screen that divides the Church from the Priests' Vestry, and four or five seats in front of the Organ were reserved for the new Choir, we sat there until Mr. Summer came and moved us up into the Chancel⁹⁰.

Our first choir treat was given us on January 2nd, 1872, when we had been in existence 2 years. There was no place where we could have it in those days, the Vicarage being then quite a cottage⁹¹, so the Vicar hired the Club Room at the Dog and Partridge⁹², and there gave us a bounteous meat tea, being at the Hotel the men could of course, have beer or any drink they liked, but we boys and girls had tea. Mr. and Mrs. Lewin came down to see if we had got everything we wanted, the Vicar said Grace for us and hoped we should have a pleasant evening, they then left us to enjoy ourselves. Later on Mrs. Lewin came down and gave us all a Hymn Book with our names and date written in. I have mine now.

Two Stories.

Mr. H. Hilton during his 40 years as Parish Clerk must have been able to record many funny little stories in connection with weddings, etc. Here are two he told me:-

⁸⁹ Miss Henrietta Mary Shute, born about 1855. She married Rev Charles Slagg Ward, widower, of Wootton St Lawrence, Hants on 15 Oct 1890.

⁹⁰ This suggests that the organ was originally located at the east end of the south aisle of the church, next to the screen dividing it from the then recently built vestry, with the choir seats in the south aisle

⁹¹ The Vicarage was at what is now called Glebe House, Vicarage Road.

⁹² The Dog and Partridge Inn belonged to the Parish and at this period was leased out to brewers. It had been the "Church House", and the "Club Room" had long been the principal meeting room in the village, after the church itself.

I must not forget the ladies of both high and low degree, their crinolines were most formidable articles of dress, there was one lady⁵⁹ in particular of rather stout build who wore a most wonderful one; I have seen her try time after time to get into her pew in the ordinary way, but, was unsuccessful, at last she would take hold of it at the side and turn it up like a cart wheel and so get in.

Another lady⁶⁰ who was acknowledged to be a leader of fashion in the village, her bonnets were also most wonderful creations and were the envy and admiration of all ladies, her crinoline also was all that could be desired.

I am going back once more to the old Dog and Partridge⁶¹ - on a window-pane in the room where I frequently took the club⁶² members contributions was written the following:-

*God gave us light
He thought 'twas good
Pitt he's taxed it
Damn his blood.*

it was supposed to have been written by a gentleman with his diamond ring whilst waiting to be served with refreshment he had called to obtain. Pitt who

⁵⁷ John Pakenham Stilwell Esquire, of Hilfield, Yateley. He married Georgina Stevens, daughter and sole heiress of William Stevens of Hilfield, Yateley. Stilwell lived in Yateley after 1872, and died in 1921.

⁵⁸ Probably not Thomas Barlow, wheelwright, who had died 1858, before Tice was born, but his grandson Thomas William Barlow (b 1848, a commercial clerk), son of Aaron Barlow.

⁵⁹ Her identity is not known

⁶⁰ Her identity is not known

⁶¹ That is, the building that was demolished in 1912.

⁶² A reference to the Yateley Clubs, see more on these below

was afterwards Earl of Chatham was Prime Minister in the early twenties of the 19th century⁶³. Money had often been offered to subsequent landlords for the above but was always refused, it was eventually stolen⁶⁴, not a difficult job being in a lead frame which could be easily turned up with a small knife or even with the thumb nail.

There is a very interesting and romantic story in connection with the two angels that are carved in stone at each end of the Chancel Screen⁶⁵, they were carved from a large piece of stone that used to lie in the Chancel under the north wall, no one knew what it was, it had lain there for years, some thought it was the base of a monument or statue that had fallen down, no one could be certain what it was, they were carved by a gentleman who kept the White Hart Hotel, Blackwater⁶⁶, named Gomm⁶⁷, and the story is this:- Mr. H. Hilton⁶⁸, who as the verger, had been in the habit of going to the White Hart hotel to act as an extra waiter during Blackwater fair⁶⁹ and Mr. Gomm had come over to ask him if he would come as usual. Hearing that there was work going on in the Church and that he would find Mr. Hilton there, came in and found him in

⁶³ Tice's knowledge of English history is defective. William Pitt the younger was prime minister from 1783-1801 and 1804-1806. He was responsible for a particularly large increase in window tax in 1787, which is most likely the event being referred to.

⁶⁴ It is not currently known when this theft occurred

⁶⁵ Unfortunately these were destroyed by the church fire in 1979.

⁶⁶ The White Hart Hotel was close to Blackwater station, on the north side of the road. It was demolished in the 1960s, and replaced by a row of shops which bear the White Hart name.

⁶⁷ Henry Jesse Gomm is recorded as proprietor of the White Hart in Directories dated 1875, 1878 and 1880.

⁶⁸ Henry Hilton (baptised Yateley 6 Aug 1837, died 25 Nov 1918), son of Isaac Hilton, was also parish clerk for 47 years, in succession to his father.

⁶⁹ The Blackwater fair was originally a cattle fair held on 8 November, the cattle having been driven from Wales. In the mid nineteenth century, cattle droving was outlawed to prevent the spread of cattle diseases, but the fair continued as a funfair until the 1920s. It was held close to the Hawley roundabout junction of the A30 and the B3272.

put their offerings in, those who were staying for the Communion would go and put their money in, then go back to their seat.

The Choir, etc.

In 1870 the Vicar brought home the second Mrs. Lewin⁸⁵, a lady much younger than himself, who soon began to wake things up a bit, she went round the parish and rounded up the young folk and induced them to come forward and be prepared by the Vicar for Confirmation, a great many came forward and she took them to Heckfield, I remember, where there was to be a Confirmation.

She then turned her eyes to the Church and thought it would be nice to have a small choir. The Vicar brought her over to the School⁸⁶ and asked the Schoolmaster to let us sing something, she then went round putting her ears down to listen, and when she had got something useful she made us sing again. I remember when she got to me, she said, "This little chap has not a strong voice, but it's very sweet what there is." I was one of the lucky ones to be chosen for the choir and I have been in the choir ever since. In the meantime Mr. Shute⁸⁷ had very kindly given a key organ, and that did away with the handle organ and small gallery at the west end of the Church⁸⁸.

⁸⁵ Mrs Ellen Lewin, born at Silchester, Hampshire about 1829, she was about 37 years younger than Rev Lewin. Since Rev Richard Lewin was undoubtedly very eccentric and old fashioned, one wonders what circumstances led her to seek this marriage. Rev Lewin's first wife Sarah had died 2 April 1868, age 65.

⁸⁶ Yateley school, on Yateley Green

⁸⁷ George Shute Esq, the same as previously mentioned.

⁸⁸ Tice appears suggest that the barrel organ and west end gallery were removed and the key operated pipe organ were installed in 1870, since Tice says below that the choir had been in existence for 2 years in January 1872.

I feel I must record this little incident:- The first Sunday of the new pews an old lady⁸⁰ who used to come all the way from Starveacre⁸¹, the colony of houses on the left hand side of the Common near Blackwater, she came in the door and pulled up suddenly and looked all round the Church, then turning to Mr. Hilton⁸², the verger, said quite loudly, "Where have I got to set now Henry?" which was very amusing to us boys who were sitting at the back of the verger's pew where the school children sat in those days. He said, "Come along Mrs. Coles, I will find you a seat." This same old lady was always careful to come in the morning when it was Sacrament Sunday⁸³, because Mr. Lewin used to avail himself of the Rubric, which says, "If any remain of that which was consecrated it shall not be carried out of the Church but the Priest and such other of the Communicants as he shall then call unto him shall reverently eat and drink the same." The said old lady's name was never omitted, I believe the reason was that the Vicar knew what a long way she had to come and would have to retrace her steps before getting any refreshment, he did it out of kindness of heart.

That Sunday⁸⁴ was the only time we had a collection; one of the Churchwardens used to stand at the Church door with a basin for the people to

⁸⁰ Mrs Priscilla Coles (nee Girdler), of Starve Acre, who was buried in Yateley churchyard, 9 Mar 1879, age 91. She was the widow of Thomas Bailey Coles, whom she married at Yateley, 20 Dec 1811, and had seven children baptised at Yateley: Mary (b 22 Sep 1812), Eliza (bapt 6 Nov 1814), George (bapt 25 Jul 1819), William (bapt 9 Sep 1821), James (bapt 8 Feb 1824), Thomas (bapt 17 May 1826), Charles (bapt 23 May 1827). Her husband was buried at Yateley, 2 Jul 1828, aged 40. By 1841 she was in housing provided for the poor at Castle Bottom.

⁸¹ The road is now (2008) called Woodside. This area of land had been allocated to a number of poor people in the parish in the early 19th century, as a means of self-help to lift them out of poverty.

⁸² Henry Hilton.

⁸³ At this period when Rev Ricard Lewin was the incumbant, Holy Communion was not celebrated every Sunday.

⁸⁴ That is, the "Sacrament Sundays" when there was Holy Communion

the Chancel and asked him what that large piece of stone was, he replied he did not know or how it came there. Just as this conversation was going on the Vicar came in and Mr. Gomm repeated the question to him, he also said he did not know what it was, it was in nobody's way and simply laid there. Mr. Gomm suggested that he could make something of it, so the Vicar asked what could you make? Mr. Gomm said I can see two angels in it, so it was arranged that he should take it away and do as he suggested. After a time he returned with his work, he sent for the Vicar to inspect it and when he saw what was done he was very delighted and said, have you found a place for them, Mr. Gomm said, "Yes, sir, with your approval, one at each end of the Chancel Arch," there being no Screen at that time⁷⁰, he pointed out the spot where he thought they should be placed at the entrance to the Chancel, being emblematical of the Holy Communion, so that is where you will find them to-day. They are beautifully carved and are well worth a close inspection, on the background of the one with the Chalice is carved a grape vine, and the other with the Paten, wheat ears and straw.

On all the Sundays in Lent⁷¹ we school-children filed up into the Chancel and stood along by the Altar rails where the Vicar or Curate heard us say the Catechism⁷². On Good Friday we all had a bun; the Vicar had a large basket of buns taken down to the Church and he stood inside the Vestry door⁷³ and gave each one of us a bun as we passed out of the Church through the Vestry, they were substantial, quite as big as a tea plate.

⁷⁰ "there being no screen at that time" implies that these events took place before the 1878 refurbishment, which restored the chancel screen, which had been removed in the 1830s.

⁷¹ That is in the forty days before Easter.

⁷² The 1662 Anglican Prayer book required that candidates for confirmation, that is to become full members of the Church of England, should have learned the catechism, which stated, in question and answer form, the basic theology of the Church.

⁷³ This would have been the vestry at the south east side of the church, as the one at the south-west was built in 1901, and that on the north side of the chancel (the so-called anchorite cell), was rebuilt on an ancient site in 1952

The Chancel was quite bare with the exception of Mr. Lewin's private pew where Mrs. Lewin always sat⁷⁴. If the Vicar was only taking the sermon he would don his black gown and take his seat beside her until sermon time and if the Curate was preaching he would do likewise. Once the Vicar attempted to preach in the surplice, but the people were all up in arms about it and said he was too lazy to go and change, he said to the verger, "They shall not say that again, Hilton," and he preached in the black gown until his death on November 13th, 1874, aged 94 years, having been Vicar for 53 years⁷⁵.

Decorations of the Church.

The Church was only decorated at Christmas when old Isaac⁷⁶ the verger used to stick a sprig of holly in a hole which he made with a gimlet, at each corner of the old square pews.

Re-opening of the Church.

The greatest day in Yateley in connection with the Church, either before or since⁷⁷, was when it was reopened after the great restoration in 1878. The Clergy from all the neighbouring parishes were present, without exception, even the Rev. F. Sotham, the aged Vicar of Cove came over, also the Rev. R.T.P. Wyatt, accompanied by Mr. James his Curate, Dr. Randle, who was afterwards Bishop of Reading, but who was then Rector of Sandhurst, he was accompanied by his two Curates, Mr. Copleston and Mr. Ditchfield (Mr. Ditchfield died at Barkham Rectory in 1931, having been Rector for over 40 years). We had two Bishops, the Bishop of Winchester and the Bishop of Guildford, then being part of the Diocese of Winchester. The Bishop of

⁷⁴ This was common before the Oxford Movement reintroduced a more high church liturgy, and robed choirs. After the Reformation, the Catholic altars were removed, and most services only required the use of the nave.

⁷⁵ See earlier footnote for more details about Rev R Lewin.

⁷⁶ Isaac Hilton, see above.

⁷⁷ Tice presumably means within his lifetime.

Guildford at the time was Mrs. Summer's father, Dr. Utterton. The Rev. Sir William Cope also came over from Bramshill House, and he wore a coloured stole. Oh my goodness! Of course we quite thought it was something to do with Roman Catholicism, we had never seen such a thing in Yateley before.

Mr. Gadd lent his drawing-room⁷⁸ for the Bishops and Clergy to robe in, and the Hall for the Choir. We then formed a procession outside the front door - it was a most imposing sight, the different hoods of the Clergy added colour to the scene - we then moved off towards the Church, and such was the length of the procession that when the leading boys had reached the Church gate, the Vicar⁷⁹, who was acting as director of Ceremonies, halted us, as the two Bishops, who were of course in the rear, had not emerged from the door. When they appeared we again started and entered the Church by the North door, the Choir and Clergy quite filling the Chancel. The Bishop of Guildford took his seat in the Sanctuary and the Bishop of Winchester went straight up into the pulpit. The service consisted of bright Hymns and Psalms, appropriate for the occasion. The Bishop's address was of course very lengthy, congratulating us on the work that had been so carefully done and splendidly carried out by the workmen who were all Yateley men. After the service was over the Vicar introduced the leading workmen to the Bishop, who said he was very gratified to have the opportunity of speaking to them.

⁷⁸ He lived at what is now Chaddisbrook, next to the church

⁷⁹ Rev Henry John Le Couteur Sumner. He was related to Rt Rev Charles Sumner, bishop of Winchester from 1827 to 1869.