

Dear Family,

So this is flaming June! I've just returned from a long weekend in Shenstone, near Lichfield, with friend Maggie and a lot of the time was spent inside watching wildlife antics through the french windows, for it was too cold and windy to stay out for long.

Weather notwithstanding, I must sally forth and do some searching, for I've done precious little over the past few months. Again, I have received interesting information from cousins, friends and fellow-searchers which is adding to our history. Rosemary Dowle in Weston super Mare was in Exeter a few months back and discovered in Westcountry Studies Library a book entitled 'A Statement Relating to Wynards Charity in Exeter' and seeing the name of a John Copleston, photocopied a couple of pages and sent them to me. They were from a charter dated 1439 and while staying with Twizzie in March I obtained the book and copied the whole Charter. When William's surname was changed from Wonard I do not know, but it was spelled Wonard not only in the Charter, but in all other documents I have seen, including his Will. John Copleston was an executor of this Will, so must have known him well. The Charter begins 'Know all men, that we Philip Courtenay, knight, William Boneville, knight and William Filham, late archdeacon of Cornwall, have demised, granted and by this present Charter confirmed to William Wonard all those lands, tenements, rents, services and reversions, with all their appurtenances, which we, with Roger Bolter, late precentor of the Cathedral Church of Exeter, now deceased and John Cobbethorn, dean of the said church, jointly had to us, our heirs and assigns for ever, of the gift, grant, confirmation and release of the said William Wonard and also of the grant, demise, confirmation and release of ...' - there follow a number of names including that of John Copleston. It mentions that William Wonard was of South Petherton in Somerset, which is interesting in that our family has earlier connections with that area. The lands and tenements were in the suburbs of Exeter and in Topsham, Duryard Crediton, East and West Budleigh and 'a certain house called Goddishous without the south gate of the city of Exeter, recently built by the said William Wonard' which was to house twelve infirm poor people. A 'fit chaplain' to celebrate Divine service was to be found and the 12 poor people were to be 'duly supported and maintained'. It then goes on to list all the successors after the 'said William Wonard shall die'. Down the list is 'John Copleston and the heirs male of his body begotten' and after John shall die without an heir, then to John Whitelegh - and so on. It would be interesting to find whether an heir of John did succeed.

An interesting point is that when Devon Family History Society first had premises for their library and archives, they were in Wynards Almshouses - they have now moved to more spacious premises, but I did visit Wynards some time ago, not knowing of our connection!

While browsing at Westcountry Studies I discovered the Cornwall Manorial Rentals and Surveys of 1548 and it seems that apart from Penrose Burdon and other manors of which I knew, the John Copleston of that time held all kinds of bits and pieces in Cornwall and it might amuse you to read the names of some of the places - Canalesy, Tregathlos, Kyllynougeck, Penhyleck, Trenyszyeck, Rosvanyon, Retaleck, Trevyscar mere, Trelowythe, Tredenek, Tremean and Burlas Burges, among others. The foregoing were held jointly with a gentleman named Clopton.

To the present day - David and Ruth have kindly invited me to spend a weekend with them in Luton in July, for they were unable to be there at the mini-gathering a few years back. Reg and Olive are fine except that Reg had an operation recently and is frustrated at not being able to drive for a while! My 1st coz Ron keeps busier than ever in retirement and I meet Anne in town from time to time. Art from California is spending a month or so in China and Rose and Bill have moved from Dagenham to Banbury, from where I've received progress reports of the move and the settling in. Having been a poor correspondent over the past year or so I am not up to date with many of the family; my health deteriorated due to outside influences with which I won't bore you. Suffice it to say that I am still fighting those influences! I had a card from Bob and June Ward of Luton sent from Dunedin, NZ and June (née Copleston) wrote that she had been unable to find any Coplestons on their travels and that perhaps the family hadn't moved as far as New Zealand. I have written over the years of Olga and Jack Coplestone in Christchurch and Hazel Polasckek née Coplestone of the same place, also Warner Saville of the Wellington area who relates. There are a number of others there with whom I've not been in touch. If any of you are going abroad and want to know if there are Cop(p)leston(e)s about, ask me and I'll provide names and addresses - we are all over the place!

It is a long time since I displayed the Copelanstan, erroneously called 'Copplesstone Cross', which stands in the also misnamed village of Copplesstone. Should anyone ask what your name means, you can tell them that it is Anglo Saxon for 'the stone at the head of the land'. It never was a cross, but a menhir or standing stone. It has been there for around 1,200 years and the inscriptions are Celtic. The stone is not indigenous to Devon and probably came from Ireland, but whether it was already carved on arrival is not known.

May I ask those who have not recently subscribed to send a stamped, addressed envelope and a 10p stamp to cover photocopying costs if you want to receive the Newsletter - thank you!

The visit of Agnes from Charleston in March was fun - apart from attending Whitechapel Foundry twice for the pouring of the bell for the maritime chapel being built in Charleston and the breaking of the mold, I took her down to Seaford for the weekend and Michael drove us into Alfriston for a lovely sunny day where the two of them browsed for hours in antique shops. We also showed her the view from High and Over. It was great to see her again and 'chew the fat'. Whitechapel Foundry, by the way, made the famous Liberty Bell and the bells for Big Ben. Grandsons Paul and Mark loved Agnes' accent!

'The World Book of Coplestons' was received by Art and he is not at all impressed. There is nothing of the history of the family and none of the variant spellings are included, which rather shows their ignorance of names in general. Don't be tempted if you are circularised.

I do hope, despite the poor beginnings, that you have a good summer and fall and that things go well with you. Keep in touch and believe me to be
Your affectionate coz,

Muriel.

