



*Dear Family,*

No. 22 means that I have been using this format for eleven years and the larger Newsletter for some six years prior to that - quite a few years! Retirement has never been dull and much of it has been devoted to searching our family and becoming acquainted with Cop(p)leston(e)s in various parts of the world. This year unfortunately I have been able to do very much, since a trapped nerve from February has made walking difficult and visits to places of search almost nil. Thankfully I am sent information by family and fellow searchers from time to time which means I'm not entirely at a standstill.

The first happy piece of news is that Oliver Joseph Copleston was born to Tracy and Paul of Plymstock on May 25th at 1.04 am, weighing in at 7 lbs 10 ozs - congratulations! The descendants of Rev. Coriolanus continue to grow in number.

A letter recently arrived from Mrs. Valerie Pennington of Horwell Barton on behalf of St. Andrew's Church, Colebrooke, telling me of a flower festival to be held over the weekend of July 5th and 6th. There will be a summer concert and Sunday evenson of Praise, the theme being 'All Things Bright and Beautiful'. Mrs. Pennington asks if a donation or flowers can be sent to help the arrangements in the Church. A number of you will remember that on one of our Gatherings we were invited by Mr. and Mrs. Pennington to afternoon tea at Horwell and we were able to sample that good lady's delicious baking. I would love to be there for the occasion, but Michael is coming up from Seaford to celebrate my birthday with me on that weekend. Mrs. Pennington's address is Horwell Barton, Colebrooke, Crediton, Devon EX17 5DH.

Whilst on the subject of St. Andrew's, it has bothered me for many years that the beautiful illumination in the Copleston Chantry or Aisle in the Church contains rather serious misinformation. It states: 'Three generations of the family previously held the same lands under the name of St. Vedast before they took the name Copleston from their property at Coplestone where stands the ancient Copelanstan Cross mentioned in a Saxon charter of 974 AD.'

This is based on a theory put forward by the Windsor Herald of the 1930's who could find no Coplestons prior to 1250 and therefore believed that a change of name may have taken place. I have documentary proof of Richard de Copleston having represented Muriel de Bruere in an Essoin in Lincoln in the year 1200, which means he was born in the 1100's. There is no evidence whatsoever of a family connection with the St. Vedasts and the Arms of the two families are completely different - the St. Vedasts were Norman and it is possible that the Coplestons were in the area before the Normans arrived, although it is certain that they took their name from the Copelanstan (which was not a cross, but a menhir or standing stone). I would be grateful to know that some correction of this historical error had been made for the Church in the near future - perhaps in the next guide to the Church? Was it St. Paul who wrote 'Prove all things - hold fast that which is good'?

I was delighted recently to receive listings of the Coplestons and variants from the 1881 Census Index with all the detailed readings (which 't'was on my list to do, but hadn't been accomplished!), from Mary Pendlebury in Oldham. Mary descends from the famous Azel and Bathsheba family in the 'B' pedigree. She wrote that she would send people details on receipt of s.a.e., which is most kind. The counties covered are Beds., Berks., Cornwall, Devon, Essex, Glos., Hants., Herts., Kent, Lancs., Middx (incl. London), Notts., Somerset, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Warwks., Wilts., Worcs., Yorks., Denbighs., Glam., Pems. Of course, since I have them now I make the same offer, but should any of you Northerners like to be in touch she is Mrs. Mary Pendlebury, 162 Coppice Street, Oldham, Lancashire OL8 4JL.

Several people have been kind enough to send clippings about the garden at Hestercombe in Somerset which had been designed in the mid-18th century by Copleston Warre Bampfylde and is now a 'paradise regained' thanks to Philip White, a conservation officer with the Somerset Wildlife Trust and others. The Bampfylde had held Hestercombe from 1391 and the reason, of course, for the designer's first name is his descent from the marriage of our Gertrude Copleston of Warleigh to Sir John Bampfylde of Poltimore in the 1630's.

Had a most relaxing and enjoyable few days in Birchington last month with Olive and Reg Copleston. I've heard from a number of you and some still await replies which I promise won't be long in coming! On the other hand, I have written to a couple of cozens who've not yet answered, so I'm not alone in being tardy.

Looking at some Inquisitions Post Mortem recently I realised that July 31st will be the 500th anniversary of the death of John Copleston of Exeter, younger brother of Philip who was Sheriff of Devon in 12 Edward IV. His son John aged 30 survived him, as did his mother, Joan nee Sachville. From the younger son Henry descended the Eggesford family, culminating in Anne who married Edward Chichester, later made Viscount Chichester of Carrickfergus. When John of Exeter died he was seised of the Manor of Bickton, the advowson of that Church and the custody of the gaol of Exeter Castle. He also held a messuage and 60 acres in Indecott and 3 mess. and 100 acres in Hertford, held of the King's honour of Gloucester, by knight's service and worth 5 marks. He held, too, a mess. and 40 acres in Ugborough held of Lord Hastings, worth 40s. Younger sons didn't do too badly, especially when they married wealthy heiresses. When one reads of all the manors, lands and positions held by one's ancestors, one wonders where it all went! Sometimes with no male heir, daughters took the land to their husbands, sometimes as in the case of our Christopher (he who murdered his Godson at Tamerton Foliot), much was sold or given away to mistresses. In Christopher's case the lady was Amy Pollard who had three sons by him and there are Chancery Proceedings showing the claims by his legitimate son John and the illegitimate ones after his death. Once put in the Fleet for debt, Christopher was out shortly and sitting on Post Mortems in Devon. He knew a number of useful people, as witnessed by the Free Pardon he received from Elizabeth for his murder!

I have to admit to having made notes of matters to include in this Newsletter and then mislaying them - put it down to approaching 77! One of the things I remember is that some people still ask if there is likely to be another Gathering. My answer, as always, is that I'd be delighted to join in if there is anyone who would like to take on the job of organising, but couldn't do it myself. Talk to some of your younger family members and ask if they wouldn't like to think of a venue for next spring, find accommodation and work out an itinerary. Any family interested in taking part could send me their names and I'll pass them on to whoever feels like taking on the job.

Mike Brown of Plymouth, fellow member of Devon FHS, discovered a new fact about Adam Copleston of the mysterious branch which appeared in Ashburton in the 1400's and stayed several generations. A Boundary Deposition made at the Manor Court of Buckland in the Moor in 1593 shows Adam as having been 'Bayliffe of the Mann of Aishberton XXX years'. More flesh on the bones, but I wish I could find their origins.

Finally, John Coplestone of Seaford, who stems from Edward Copleston of Instow and whose grandfather was Frederick, Managing Editor of the Crewe and Chester Chronicles, becomes 90 on September 13th. Have we any other nonagenarians? I hope you all have a good summer and will forgive me for not having been a good correspondent lately!

*Your Boy, Muriel.*