



*Dear Family,*

Last June I was late in producing the Newsletter - this year I am starting it at the end of a not very fine May! I hope that we all have a good summer to come. In April I spent a weekend in Morley, Leeds, with Christine Mulvaney (née Copleston) and husband Eric and was made so welcome by them and younger son Mark and two lovely cats. After years of corresponding it was good to meet and talk and they took me to a number of places, including Hawarth where we visited the Bronte Parsonage. Did you know that the father of the Bronte sisters was born Patrick Brunty in a one-room cottage in the wilds of Ireland? I didn't and it seems he took the name from his hero who signed 'Nelson & Bronte'. Christine and family send greetings to all cousins.

More visits will be made e'er long to Reg and Olive in Birchington and Betty in Rochester and I do so enjoy seeing my good cousins. Also enjoyed are the letters from those I don't see. A letter from Myra in Penarth recently informed me that a friend who belongs to Radnorshire Society had found a reference to a Copleston in that Society's publication and wondered whether he appeared in our pedigree. It seems a Mary Elizabeth Williams born 1840 had married a William Chester Copleston and that name was of course familiar to me and even more so to Hermione C. in Exmouth, who is William Chester's granddaughter! They married in Rhyader in 1873 and after Mary died William married Alice, daughter of Rev. Francis Barnes, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Plymouth and had one son and two daughters. The son was Frederick Elford, Hermione's father. William's mother was Charlotte, daughter of Col. Chester of Llandwhi Castle, which is the reason for descendants being given the second name of Chester.

Rosemary Dowie sent the sad news of the death of Irene Copleston whom I met while she lived in North London. Irene moved to Norfolk some years ago and died March 17th this year, aged 84 years. Rosemary's mother is in her 97th year.

Hazel Polasckek wrote from New Zealand to say that son Jim has been gathering information about Devon for her from the Internet and one of the things noted was my name against 'The Copleston Independents', Devon Family Historian 38 (1986) and she said she didn't know I'd written a book - - I wish! This was an article I did for the Devon Family History Society's journal and I am pleased that our Nonconformist family gets some publicity. Hazel enclosed a lovely picture of herself with family on her 85th birthday. She was named, I believe, for all the Azaels and Hazaels in the Instow branch (all Coplestones).

Not related, but good and helpful friend, Robert Jago sent some information including one piece I simply must follow up. Inquests in the PRO include 'John Copplestone 26 Dec 1761 Callington. Suicide - hanged himself in hay loft (unsound mind).' Robert also sent a clipping from The Cornish Times of 24.3.'00 about Coke from Casablanca with labels covered in Arabic, but nonetheless genuine Coca Cola. The article was written by Cornish Times reporter Felicity Copplestone - no, I can't place her, but I certainly will.

Kathy and Roy in Hampshire (Roy descends from Thomas the painter, brother of my William the printer) wrote of the loss of Roy's sister Hazel who died on November 24th after suffering cancer and leukaemia. Hazel was a cousin of Irene, their fathers being brothers. Roy has had an operation, but is now fine and fit and Kathy has an emerging cataract, so I'm sure she will be as happy as I when it is removed.

Agnes writes from Charleston that she will be busy as cashier at the tea room she and friends open every summer and I do wish I could go back to sample their goodies, especially those with pecans! Their good works must be greatly appreciated. Happy birthday to Agnes on the 7th.

I have been going over some of the tasks given to our ancestors in the 15th and it seems they were kept pretty busy. In 1422 the Patent Rolls reveal 'Appointment of John Copleston the younger and Walter Colles clerk, to let to farm or to approve all castles, lordships, manors, lands and tenements, chases, warrens and the agistments of all parks, being in the king's hands by reason of the non-age of Thomas, son and heir of Hugh Courtenay, knight, earl of Devon, tenant in chief of Henry V, saving sufficient pasture for the deer in the parks; also to take into the king's hands all wardships, marriages, reliefs, knights' fees, escheats and forfeitures belonging to the king for the same reason.' All of which shows how the king gathered much of his income.

In the next king's reign the Transactions of the Devon Association tell us 'On 30 August 1435 Nicholas Radford and John Copleston were returned as members for the county of Devon. A few days after their election they were appointed "Commissioners of our Lord the King by virtue of Letters Patent" to superintend the collection of one entire 15th and one 10th from the laity in Devon granted by Parliament 14 Henry VI. They were several times employed in this work. In Easter 1438 they "as Knights of the Shire" superintended a Lay Subsidy and in 18 Henry VI (1439-40) an "Alien Subsidy" for Devon when all foreigners were taxed. One of the documents relating to this subsidy is endorsed: "Nobis Johanni Copleston et Nicho Radeford apud Brydyton die jovis in vigiliis Sci Johis Baptiste" 18 Henry VI (23 June 1440) and again "per Johanem Copleston et Nicholaum Radeford Justicios pacis, etc."

One of the matters upon which these gentlemen and two others sat shows in the Patent Rolls: '1448 April 9, Westminster. Pardon to William Gamon alias Gammon of Tavystoke, co Devon 'marchaunt' of the king's suit for the felony and murder whereof he was indicted before John Copleston, Nicholas Radeford, William Hyndeston and John Gyffard, justices of the peace and of oyer and terminer in Devon, by his enemies, to wit, of having on Saturday, the Epiphany last, at Tavystock slain Nicholas Martyn with a dagger, striking him in the breast.' Just like our Christopher, he received a free Pardon - was it through influence or did he pay?! These 'Free Pardons' are still something of a mystery.

I have just had a telephone call from Margaret Taylor in Brisbane and my shoulders are laden with guilt. She was concerned at not hearing from me for some time and I admit to owing letters which should have been sent a long while back. I shall mend my ways. It is interesting that Margaret and Hazel Polasckek's son Jim have exchanged e-mails between Australia and New Zealand and it seems that almost everyone else is doing it, bar me! Art in California long ago called ordinary letters 'snail mail' and in this day and age, he's right, but unless I can ever afford a secretary and all the necessary equipment I'm afraid I won't be joining in!

I wish you all a good summer and, although I don't always deserve it, to hearing from you.

*Your boy, Muriel.*