

Apart from the Bideford Coplestons who went to sea and on whom I will write when more information has been gathered, two have been found in Stepney who were Navy men. John Copleston, who married Frances Mason at Stepney on 21 June 1670, made an Affidavit with two other sailors in 1668 to the effect that on 10 May 1667 when they were on the Norwich fighting the French and Dutch fleet at Nevis, a shot was fired into the closet in the steerage and most of the books and papers of the purser were torn and defaced. John must have died in service because administration of his estate was granted to his relict, Frances "of John Copleston beyond the seas".

Thomas Copelston, mariner of Ratcliffe, Stepney, Middlesex died in HMS "Defiance" in 1694. His place in the family is not yet discovered.

James W. Copleston of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, who was commissioned at 17 yrs 7 mths, became a Gentleman Cadet on 6 Feb 1805 and a 1st Lieutenant on 23 January 1809, was drowned on passage to Gibraltar in November 1812 - if anyone knows of him I should be grateful to hear. He would seem to have been born in the mid-1780's. (Repeat request).

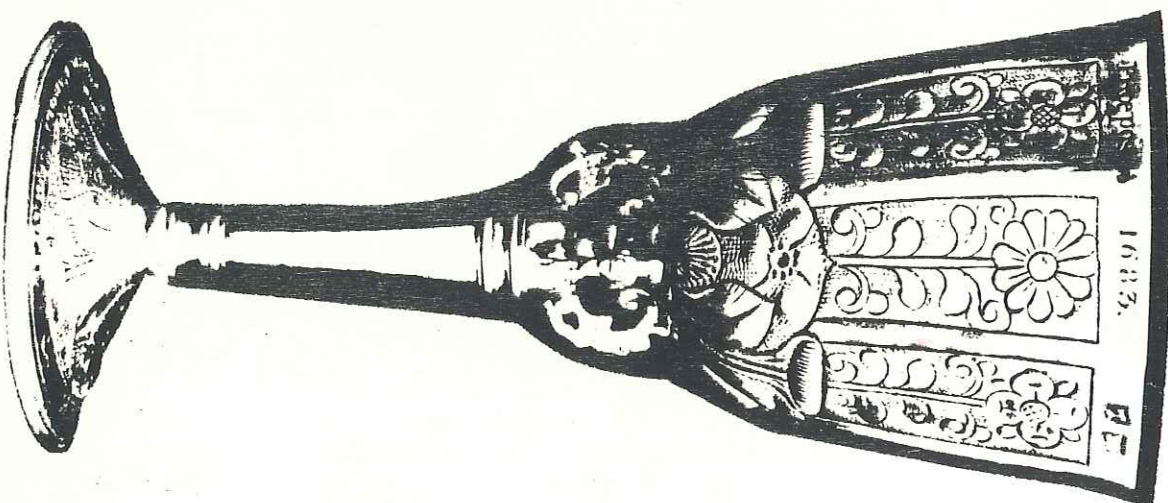
Richard Copleston, who was drowned on The Factor, 5 October 1709, was buried at Bideford. He is also as yet unplaced.

Some time will have to be spent at the Public Record Office at Kew, where maritime records are kept, also emigration information. Facts will, hopefully, be gathered from the Maritime History Group of the Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, although so far correspondence has not produced any results. We know of George Copleston of Bideford who was fined at St. John's his 'non-payment of fish taken on board', and I have been told that the Coplestons were masters in the Newfoundland trade, but so far have obtained no other names. There is also the possibility that a Capt. John Copleston disappeared into the Jamaica interior during the 1585 Roanoke Voyage .....!

THE COPLESTON FAMILY NEWSLETTER

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THE COPLESTON GRACE CUP



JOHANNES COPLESTON COLL: REGAL: PROEPOS 1683  
Ex dono Serenissim Regis Caroli Secundi

So says the inscription around the Grace Cup given to John Copleston, Provost of King's College, Cambridge and Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1683. John would himself have had the engraving of the inscription made. The Cup was made in 1616 and may have been a travelling cup used by Charles and his forbears.

It is appropriate that the front page should give it prominence in July 1981, for Harrod's have replicas of the Cup, which makes a beautiful Royal Wedding souvenir. (Silver plated, the Cups are £85). The original, as you know, is at Goldsmiths' Hall and it is delightful to think of the Cup sitting in households in various parts of the globe and the Copleston name arousing more interest. We made ourselves known recently in Devon and who knows how many more of the family may realise that they are part of an ancient and once renowned (for better or worse!) tribe.

I am now inspired to work even harder to try and find from which of our ancestors John DD's family descended. At present we only have them to John's grandfather, another John and his wife, Margery, both of Crewkerne. The secret lies in Somerset and Dorset and perhaps visits to Taunton and Dorchester are in order, for there may be some scrap of information which I have as yet been unable to find in the various places of search in London.

In 1681 when Charles II and his Queen visited Cambridge University, Dr. Copleston 'made two speeches to their majesties' according to Luttrell's diary and we know that in 1683 as Justice of the Peace he signed a warrant on one of the Rye House Plotters who was later beheaded. His sermons were most loyal to the King and there is no doubt of his leanings, whereas his removed cousin Sir John Copleston had been knighted by Cromwell. This did not, however, prevent his flourishing after the Restoration - they both seem to have led comfortable lives.

### THE FAMILY GATHERING

Despite some setbacks and confusion, I do believe we had a successful and enjoyable weekend! It was literally a crowd of 'kissing cousins'! I saw taking leave of each other when we finally parted outside Warleigh House. I shall certainly never forget the caravan winding from one port of call to the next, with David as leader and Ruth anxiously watching the back and saying 'Slow down, I can't see Reg...ah, there he is, you can go on now'. Rev. Bulley's kindness in waiting to show us around beautiful Chagford Church and taking some of us to see Mrs. Osborn in the Priest House - a lovely lady; the illumination in the Church at Drewsteignton bearing the name of our mysterious 'Master Thomas Copleston'; the wonderful attendance at St. Andrews; Colebrooke and especially the presence of Hermione's Aunt Alice, to whom we owe the illuminated notice in the Copleston Aisle - I was able to tell the Vicar later that his fears of our not being able to hear him well from our seats in the Aisle were unfounded - this will be a special memory for us all to keep.

From thence to lunch at The New Inn, Coleford, and Michael Copleston, his wife Joan and 3 year old Daniel from Silverton, who had been at Church, ate with us. At Coplestone afterwards many pictures were taken of the family surrounding the Copelansthan and we met Mr. Woodman of Coplestone Stores (he is also on the Twinning Committee and told us about St. Cyr du Ronceray); we went from there to Eggesford, where the monuments were admired and then (my own very special high-spot) to Chumleigh, where we visited the old Congregational Church at which Rev. John, father of Rev. Coriolanus, was Pastor in 1719 - also at The Great Meeting House in Bideford where he remained until 1729 - ancestor of a number of us present.

On Monday we were met at Tamerton Foliot by Pip Bebbington, local historian, who took us around the Church imparting his intimate knowledge of



this lovely building to us and then leading us to a pub (perhaps I should say 'inn'?) in the Village where he had kindly warned them we should be descending for lunch. This we had in the garden in the sunshine - as indeed we did in the on the Saturday. Our last visit was to Warleigh House and for description I direct you to the second part of the article by David and Ruth on their visit. Our reception here was right royal, for Mr. Keating showed us into the Great Hall and seated us, producing tea and cakes and making us feel so much at home. Long shall I remember Mick Coplestone gently bouncing upon a miniature 'rampoline'. We were all given buttons which state 'I Support Warleigh House' and indeed, we are concerned for its future and hope that something can be done to help this lovely place go on for ever.

At Chagford we were all pleased to meet Vera Foettcher nee Copleston and her husband, who had seen news of our visit in the local press and journeyed from their home at Broadhempton to be with us, bringing notes of Vera's late Uncle, many times seen in print, "W.H." I have been for some time trying to straighten out this part of my own branch (the twig of Coriolanus, HMSO bookseller) and now have it in place. W.H. had much correspondence in Devon Notes & Queries, corresponded with Hermione's father and contributed to the old booklet on the Church at Tamerton Foliot.

Nine members of the families of Mick and Colin Coplestone were with us, Reg and his brother Harold and their wives, David and Ruth, Syd and Ivy (in whose Exeter Hotel we foregathered each day) and in spirit I'm sure several more; Olga and Jack in New Zealand, for instance, who sent a cable wishing us well - Hermione who joined us on Friday evening and Sunday morning with others of her family; Joan, Michael and Daniel from Silverton - what a treasure Michael passed to me for the family collection! A deed of 1858 signed by John Gay Copleston as one of the Trustees of the Honiton Turnpike Roads (Rector of Offwell and Hermione's gt-Grandfather). Thank you all for your many kindnesses. I feel very fortunate to have found such a great family.

## TWO COPPLESTONS TO COPPLESTONE Part II, by David and Ruth

From Tamerton Foliot, we climbed over the hill to Warleigh House. The magnificence of its setting is incomparable, with lawns sweeping down to the River Tavy. The original house was built in the reign of King Stephen (1135-54) and was the principal residence of Samson Foliot. Warleigh came into the Copleston family in about 1472 and has been altered and added to over the centuries. We were particularly impressed by the grandeur of the Great Hall and of special interest were the early stone arches on the ground floor in the chapel area, each of which span at least 25' in graceful shallow curves - minor marvels of early building technique. At the top of the stone steps leading below the house are examples of very early lath and plaster, brick and timberwork. It seemed that part of the 'dungeons' had been sealed up, but nevertheless the water dripping from the roof and walls emphasised the more sinister aspect of this area.

In the grounds we were shown the early boathouse and enormous Elizabethan dovecote. Inside it revealed an entrancing picture of medieval husbandry. While scores of whirring wings beat their way up and out through the central vent high in the roof, we looked in amazement at the serried rows of nesting holes in the interior brickwork reaching from floor to roof. It was from here that the household was supplied daily with fresh eggs and birds for pigeon pie.

Mr. Goodwins, Vicar of Tamerton Foliot Church, recommended us to call on the local historian, Mr. Pip Bebbington, who kindly made us welcome and we spent an interesting hour listening to local lore before setting off in the gathering dusk for Coleford.

On day 3 we drove north in sunshine towards Eggesford Church which now stands almost solitary in the pretty wooded valley, over the River Taw. On a site almost adjacent had stood Eggesford House, home (cont'd on p.8)



THE REGISTER OF EDMUND LACY, BISHOP OF EXETER (With grateful acknowledgement to The Devon and Cornwall Record Society)

(24 Feb 1451-2. A letter, written at the request of the king's special commissioners, to John Copleston esquire, warning him, as one of the bishop's tenants, to take no part in gatherings against the king, his proclamations or his laws, and urging that those already gathered at Tiverton do return home speedily, for fear of bloodshed.)

LITTERA MISSA PER DOMINUM JOHANNI COPLESTON ARMIGERO PRO NEGOCIIS DOMINI REGIS.

Emanavit hec littera missiva directa Johanni Copleston armigero pro negociis domini Regis, cuius tenor sequitur de verbo in verbum et est talis: Right singuler trusty frende, after hertely gretyngh with all well fare. For as myche as now late the lord Bonvyle the shireff of Devon, sir Philipp Courtenay and sir John of Dynham haveth required me by auctorite of the kynnges commissioun that I sholde do my tenantes of my lordschipp to warne and to charge my saide tenantes that they gadernoth a gens the kynge, nother a gense his cryes late made a gense such gaderynges, and nother ryse noder ryde for no sendyngh as gense the lynnges lawe and a gense the proclamacions that late ben made by auctorite of the kynng, and also they required me in the kynngis by half and in salvacion of shedyng of manys blode and eschewyngh of heryng of manys sawlys, that I schold exhorte theym that ben att Tyverton my gostely children and adertyse theym that ben gadered there to retorne home to theyre owne, or els hyt ys lyke to grete mischeff sewe therof that god for fende. Wherefor I may yow as my singuler truste ys over yow and require yow as I am required that ye woldde warne or do to be warned my said tenantes att Criditon and other placys as hyt ys bowe saide, and so to exhorte and warne my saide frendys that ben gadered att Tyverton other do that they may so be warned and exhorted in hast after yowre gode discrecion, to the effecte a bowe saide

in voidyngh of the grete inconvenientes and myschevis that ben lyke to falle thereof, in hast, as hyt ys saide, that god of his grete mercy defende. The which have yow ever in his gracious keepyngh. Y. written att owere maner of Clyst the xxliij day of FEVERER. (F. Bishop of Exeter)

At first glance, this may seem gobbledygook, but on a slow reading, all is clear!

This letter was sent the year after Cade's rebellion and four years before the generally accepted date of the start of the Wars of the Roses, 1455.

Lord Bonville was a staunch Lancastrian, while the Earl of Devon, Thomas Courtenay, was a supporter of the Duke of York. Later, when the Earl changed sides and fought for the King at St. Albans, the Bonvilles became Yorkists. Lord Bonville was executed by order of Edward, Prince of Wales after the second battle of St. Albans. The Coplestons seem to have been pretty quiet during this time and Phillip Copleston's raid on Spreyton occurred about 12 years later.

Another item in Lacy's Register concerns an enquiry into the patronage of Ramsaysh. I spent many a long moment trying to figure out where this might be. The only way to discover, I find, is to say the word aloud - firstly I said 'Raws Ash', then 'Raw Sash' and then realised it must be 'Rose Ash'! This enquiry was in 1438-9 and apparently Stephen Gyfford and John Copleston were patrons and took turns in nominating and presenting rectors. The full chapter, including the rectors of Nymet Regis, Nymet Georgii, Thebrygge, Newshaue and others met in Wolton parish church to hold the enquiry. 'John Copleston presented last', so it was the turn of Stephen Gyfford donzell to present next: 'a priest aged forty and beneficed elsewhere; there is nothing against him or his presentation'.



(cont'd from p.5)

8.

of John Copleston who married Anne Stewkley. It passed, by marriage of Anne Copleston to Edward Chichester, in 1606 to this family and Edward was later created Viscount. The two memorials in the Church are dedicated to John Copleston and his wife Dorothy, dau of Sir George Beeston of Beeston Castle, Chester. The later and more magnificent memorial was erected by Arthur Chichester, Earl of Donegal in memory of the first two of he three wives.

After lunch we made our way to Alverdiscott, where only a few isolated houses remain and a little church, which was locked. Hoping to find where Christopher C. of Alverdiscott lived we started asking for the "mansion house called Kingdon" in his Will of 1637, but only located a rundown cottage farmhouse at Lower Kingdon, perhaps one of the bartons belonging to the estate.

Disappointed, we retraced our steps to Coplestone Cross and on the spur of the moment stopped at Coplestone House and rang the bell. Mr. and Mrs. Pennington kindly asked us inside and told us what they knew of the history of the house. They showed us a sketch of an early thatched building with outlines of stonework showing a large arched window originating perhaps from the Chapel first licensed in 1384. In the falling dusk outside we were shown the same outlines visible in the stonework.

We drove back to Coleford for our dinner beside the blazing log fire in our 13th Inn. In just three short days we had looked back on six centuries of history and travelled nine hundred miles to find our roots; a journey that was very well worth while and which will be long remembered.

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David and Ruth suggest that I do an article on John Copleston and Dorothy Beeston - I have no idea how John met Dorothy and will turn the tables, since they live on the edge of Chester and ask them to enquire in Chester Library for books on the Beestons which might provide a clue. I'm a great buck-passer!

9.

THANKS - to Mr. and Mrs. Pennington for greeting us so kindly at Coplestone House and giving us information about the House, the position of the original house, the land and the Chapel;  
- to Mary Kitchen of Road Farm for coming to meet the family at Exeter and for bringing Simon Horatio;

- to Syd Coplestone for sending me the news cutting about Woodland House being up for sale (no, we can't afford it!);

- to Hermione Copleston for sending the picture of the gatehouse of Shute;

- to Dora Kneebone in Suffolk, who sent me the booklet from Sutton at Hon - another Church where Edward Llandaff was Vicar, in 1820-27;

- to Ann Chiswell (some of you saw her in the Gordon Honeycomb programmes) for sending the clipping about 'One Hundred Years of Southway', written by the staff and pupils of Southway School. I sent for a copy, which has our Arms, the Visitation and comments about Warleigh;

- and to Col. Iain Swinnerton, who kindly wrote down the words from the inscription in Chester Cathedral, which I neglected to do when there!

I haven't heard from anyone with directory entries (page 9, April Newsletter) and do hope some of you will find time to look.

A kind letter from the gentleman at Coplestone Farm in Lesnewth (April, p.8) brought no information, despite his enquiries, so we must look elsewhere. The Coplestone Farm near Halberton is believed to have a connection with King's College, but what it is we have yet to discover.

Mr. Pip Bebbington has sent information on the royal arms in churches which he received from the British Library and when I have been to the PRO at Kew I will write more on this.



HECENT SEARCH RESULTS

We knew that Rev. Coriolanus married his second wife, Sarah Bowler, at Chertsey in 1756, but still do not know whether she was sister of the first wife, Hannah. Allegations for Marriage Licences issued by the Commissary Court of Surrey reveal: Rev. Coriolanus Copleston of Chertsey, abode 3 yrs., dissenting minister, widower, 37 and Sarah Bowler of Chertsey, abode 3 yrs., 26 at Chertsey. Henry Chapman of Chertsey, butcher, 2nd s. Both sign. Corio must therefore have been preaching in Chertsey and had still not conformed - it is reasonable to suppose that Sarah had been staying with Corio and Hannah. Armed with this extra information, a trip to Surrey CHO seems worthwhile.

In my delving into Somerset and Dorset for clues to the origins of the Ofwell family, I found Parish Register entries in Thornecombe, Dorset for: Bapts. Elizabeth Copleston, dau George, 20 March 1606 and Elizabeth Copleston, dau Matt., 27 Feb 1632. I do not know of George or Matthew, but will scan the Visitations. Thornecombe is not far from Crewkerne.

The Lay Subsidy Roll, Devon, 1524 for Crediton Hundred, Parish of Colebrooke, I discovered the following: "Copleston, Sir John, Goods £1,000, amount paid £33.6.8d". Wonder why they 'Sir'd' him?

Exminster Registers 1562-1837 show "1815-16, Christopher Copleston for Barshal Oak" in the list of Churchwardens for Exminster. Where is Barshal Oak?

A most interesting discovery is that St. James, Duke's Place (Aldgate) was a Church which did not bother about such things as Licences and Banns - Sir John's second marriage to Rebecca Brice, wid. in 1680 and his son Desborough's marriage to Jane Price in 1681 both took place there. Is the Rebecca of the Will in the January Newsletter daughter of either of these marriages? More ferreting seems to be in order - back to the Guildhall Library!



Michael and Colin Coplestone, sons of Michael and Colin Coplestone of Leytonstone and Walthamstow respectively, at the grave of John Coplestone, gt-Grandfather of Syd Coplestone of Birmingham. In this Churchyard at Ide are resting a number of Syd's family and of the family of John Coplestone at Seaford. They descended from Edward of Instow, brother of Ralph Copleston. Here you have all (almost) of the variations in spelling, yet all are from one branch of the family. Peter Coplestone of Walthamstow and his cousins Michael and Colin may yet be proved into the same branch, since they use the 'e', but we are stuck at William Joseph, married to Harriet E. Palmer at Shoreditch St. Leonards in 1825 and look for his birth c1800. Newcomer Alan, of Ensbury Park, Bournemouth may fit into the Instow branch, also, for his great-uncle was Hazel (variation of Azael) and his gt-gt-grandfather was Samuel, both popular names in this branch. We all welcome Alan to the family - he found us, instead of being rounded up by your kinswoman, Muriel!