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THE COBLESTON FAMILY NEWSLETTER

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ST. ANDREW, COLEBROOKE

Having heard from Mrs. Olive Stevens that St. Andrew's, which has ancient connections with the family, including the Cobleston Chantry, has problems, I asked her to let me have the facts for publication :

'Colebrooke Church is faced with the task of raising some £25,000 for essential repairs to the roof. If these repairs are not carried out this beautiful old church will eventually become a ruin, so every effort is being made to save it. It is hoped that there might be grants forthcoming from various sources and these have been applied for, but it is unlikely that the Parish will receive more than half the necessary amount in grants. The Parochial Church Council is considering forming a Friends of St. Andrew's, Colebrooke Association in order to have the support of a wider circle outside this small, scattered Parish. Details of this organisation will be given in subsequent Newsletters, but in the meantime if anyone feels like sending a contribution towards the Fabric Fund it should go to Mr. Harold Pennington, Horwell Barton, Coleford, Crediton, Devon. The offertory box in the Church was recently broken open and it is no longer safe for contributions.'

This has an all too familiar ring, these days. There are many churches with the same problems, but since this one is very special to the Con(=)leston(e) family I do hope that contributions, large or small, will be forthcoming.

Further news from Olive will be in the January issue of the Newsletter.

WILLIAM JOSEPH COLESTONE

Immediately after the printing of the July Newsletter I found that the William who married Ann Bond in Shobrooke in 1811 was the William Joseph who married Harriet Elizabeth Palmer at St. Leonard, Shoreditch in 1825, Ann having died in Clerkenwell/Pentonville in 1822. This discovery meant that at long last Michael, Colin and their brothers and sisters, also cousin Peter were in the family descending from the marriage of John Colestone and Grace Hurford at St. Lawrence, Exeter in 1755.

This discovery was rapidly followed by a series of coincidences connected with items in the July Newsletter. Firstly, the letter from Warner mentioned on n.33 regarding New Zealand descendants led to Henry, brother of Wm. Joseph, who married Mary Ann Jarman at Bickleigh in 1820 and had a son, Henry, who had Keyberry Mill at Woolborough, but later went to Tasmania. Some of his family remained there and others moved to N.Z., present descendants living at Taranaki and New Plymouth. Henry jr. had a brother Walter who went to Bristol. Of these, more later.

On n.31 in Father Coleston's early memories he tells of the bakers who delivered at Trull and I gave Herbert as son of William and Ann (Bond). Mistake! Herbert was son of Wm's brother John Colestone and his wife, Sarah Bond. Herbert seems to have taken over Keyberry Mill when Henry, his nephew, went to Tasmania, but later moved to London and then back to Torquay, where he and his wife Ann took charge of the bakery of their son Henry Herbert, after he died in 1882 (see Wills on n.34). Hot on the heels of the finding of Herbert's final move to Taunton with his family came a letter from friend Eileen Stage, who keeps the Coastguard Index for which so many of us are grateful. She had been searching at Taunton at the R.O. and found a picture of her forbear's shop

in High Street, Taunton, in 1898. She also noticed a picture of No. 49 High Street which she photocopied and sent to me. It is of 'Conlestone's Steam Bakery' and Herbert stands outside the shop, while sons Wm. Joseph (yes, another one!) and Fred have the horse and cart and the handcart. You may imagine my delight and my rushing to the phone to thank Eileen for her thoughtfulness.

Charlotte, whose Will extract is also on n.34, is a daughter of John and Sarah (Bond). She and Herbert had a brother John who married Elizabeth Frances in Exeter and moved to London and present descendants live south of the River. There was also a sister, Eliza, who married draper Wm. H.F. Tuckwell at St. Pancras Old Church in 1851. William Joseph was a linen draper and when the last son of his 2nd marriage, Christopher Richard, was born in Crinlegate in 1837 he was a silk salesman. Mick, Colin, Peter, etc. descend from Chris. Richard.

Warner and I feel certain that the John who married Grace Hurford is the 3rd son of Christopher and Joan of Merton, born 1722, but although I made pedigrees I am afraid I find this not conclusively proved, so must warn the descendants of John and Grace not to have illuminated pedigrees made just yet! They are definitely of the Instow branch, but further work needs to be done on them.

The other William Joseph who was a republican and had a son Harry Walter who followed in his footsteps (n.29) has not yet been placed, but he must be in the same family. Wm. Joseph was born 1836 and could have been a son of Wm. Joseph and Harriet Palmer, but I have found no baptism, although the Census states he was born in Clanton, London. Harry W. had a sister, Hetty Betty Louisa (marr. Slade). The GRO birth index says Etty Elizabeth; marriage index says Hettie E.; Harry's Will gives 'Hetty Bessie Louisa Slade everything of which I die possessed' - you can't win! His brothers were named Chas. Henry Lunn and Original Nelson.

THE CORNWALL FAMILY

It is unfortunate that as a 'One-Namer' I cannot take the time to follow up female lines, since the pedigree depends on male descent and there is so much yet to discover about the family, both early and late. There are exceptions, however, such as our cousin Nancy Lewis Glarner in the U.S., who descends from Elizabeth Conlestone of the Woodland family who married Thomas Carter.

Three other exceptions must be made in the case of the daughters of Richard Conlestone, carenter born St. Winnow 1815, son of Wm. C. and Grace Roberts Enlett. Richard married Ann Mudge who was born in Cornwood, nr. Ivybridge, Devon in 1813. He seems to have been, literally, a journeyman, for Matilda was born Plympton St. Mary in 1844; Mary Agnes in Handhous in 1846 and Betsy Ann in Torquay in 1849.

Until August these were just names on the branch I had typed out some time previously, started upon information sent by Moira Tangey, Secretary of Cornwall FHS. Then I received from Moira a letter she had received from Dr. Harold H. Shepard of Arlington, Virginia, stating that his wife's grandmother was Mary Agnes, daughter of Richard and Ann and that she had married Louis Guerineau of Paris, who was working as a botanist at the Crystal Palace in London.

Well, I couldn't resist spending some time on this, now could I? I sent the branch as far as I knew it to Dr. Shepard and received most interesting information from him. Louis Florent Augustin Guerineau was the only child of Jean and Julie Guerineau and was born at Illiers on May 5, 1837. Since Louis and Mary Agnes went to New York on separate vessels, the Doctor thought they might have married in that City, but I have found their marriage in Brighton, E. Sussex in the June quarter of 1866. Perhaps Louis was being consulted on the gardens around Prinny's Pavilion!

Dr. Sheard says: 'Agnes came over alone on a sailing vessel. She was delayed by a storm which drove them off course. According to Agnes, she had a stateroom too small for her hoop skirt to hang inside: when outside it sailed away in the wind. She was not sorry for she did not like it and was forced by her sister to bring it.'

Louis was horticulturist and botanist with Harvard Botanical Garden, then in peach production in Arkansas, but the children had typhoid and he moved back to Cambridge, Mass.

Mrs. Sheard descends through their daughter Julie Marie Virginia, who married Aime Joseph Geiger in Cambridge, and was their first child.

The Sheards have Betsey's mirror in their front hall, for all three girls and their husbands went to the U.S. Their parents, Richard and Ann, must have moved to Lewisham, for I found the marriages of Matilda Elizabeth Hannah there in 1865 and that of Betsy Ann in 1866. Dr. Sheard says that Matilda's son Fredk. was Commissioner of Parks in Portland, Maine and that Betsy Ann married Arthur Hales and they had four sons in Mass. Addresses in Louis' notebook included those of cousins in Fowey - John (Jonathan Enlett C.) and Eliza, also Joseph (Joseph Trewin Collins C.) and Kate (Catherine J. Richards).

Also mentioned are a cousin John and wife Ada who had 'three sons, one a minister'. Jonathan Enlett & Eliza had a son, Frank Trewin, who was a Methodist Minister and father of the present Trewin and Frank Henry, but I've no mention of an Ada.

I shall spend a little time trying to discover why Mary Agnes and Louis married in Brighton and look at Crystal Palace records also, for the French botanist commands interest and adds a little glamour to the family history! Another query received is on a Miss Conlestone who married a Mr. Wevell in 1840-1850 - any offers?

CHULMLEIGH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

A year ago, in the October issue, was a front page picture of the Church and the news that it would celebrate its 350th Anniversary in July this year. Rev. Elsie Chamberlain, then Minister, had said that a booklet would be published to commemorate the occasion and asked for help with research.

I sent a page of particulars on Rev. John Conlestone, Minister there in 1719-20 and asked that he be put in his proper place in the List of Ministers, since the board at the Church stated that John Conlestone was Minister in 1776 and this had been repeated in the previous booklet published in 1933.

A copy of the printed sermon preached by John in 1720 had already been given to the Church, on the front page of which is printed 'John Conlestone (they did not spell him correctly, either!), Minister at Chulmleigh'. It is dated 1720.

In the event, I received a copy of the booklet and found to my dismay that the List of Ministers still stated John Conlestone to be Minister in 1776.

John was dead before that year - had he lived he would have been 89 years old and hardly likely to be appointed at that age. Rev. Chamberlain said that she couldn't see how he would fit in during 1719-20, yet the List of Ministers has no-one between Walter Furze, 1715-1718 and Richard Darracott 1721-1727 - this, together with the date on the sermon seems to me to be irrefutable evidence of the facts.

John was also co-pastor of The Great Meeting House in Bideford from 1718 to 1729, after which he left Devon and preached in a number of churches from Somerset to Northampton and, to my knowledge, never returned to Devon.

Perhaps because John is my 5-gts Grandfather I feel particularly upset that it will be another 50 years before he will, hopefully, be placed correctly in the List of Ministers in a further commemoration booklet. I have learned the importance of proving everything I find on the family and have researched John and his son, Rev. Coriolanus, exhaustively.

It is sometimes very difficult to sweep away the legends and replace them with facts; because someone maintained a name and a date on a board, it must be true! Whoever did this did not research the man, but made a guess which was 56 years out. The spelling of the name is a common error - Edward, Bishop of Llandaff, is very often shown as 'Conleston' or 'Conlestone', yet the Offwell family have always retained the original spelling.

The leaflet in St. Andrew's, Colebrooke, spells the name 'Conlestone', but the Rolls written at the time of the early family consistently use 'Conleston'. Due probably to a printer's error, the Gorges family mentioned in the leaflet are given as 'Georges'. It is stated that Anne Bonville was granddaughter of John Gorges of Tamerton - she was his gt-granddaughter and was granddaughter and heir of John's daughter, Leva.

The Conleston Chantry or Aisle; it has recently been discovered, was not founded by Philip and Walter, but by Walter 'ffor the fynding of a cryste to praye for his soule, the sowles of Elizabethē his wyfe, his parentes, and theire children. And excecallye for the soule of Edmunde Stafforde some-tyme busshonn of Exetor ...'

The research into original documents is chipping away bits of legend and giving facts - I hope I never find one which disproves the story of the Conlestons having been 'White Snurs'! This is one legend I long to have proven.

SEARCHIES

In the wonderful collection of Naval records at the Public Record Office at Kew one could stray from one's objective to follow the many fascinating stories revealed in the various documents. I had found some time ago in 'Burials on Ireland Island' (off Bermuda) for the year 1842: '8th January, William Comblestone, Seaman, HMS Illustrious. By whom interred: A. Fielding, Chanlain, Illustrious.'

Wanting to know more of William I ordered the relevant Captain's Log Book. January 8th mentioned the work being done on the Illustrious, victuals taken on board and a dozen lashes to some poor seaman for insolence, but nothing of William. Going through the following entries I came to January 13th, a Thursday, where mention of William seemed to have been inserted as an afterthought between the lines - it seems the Captain had not written in the incident at the time and made a wrong guess at the date! The entry reads: "Thursday 13th January 1842. Westerly winds. Weather B.C. Moored off Ireland. A.M. Departed this life William Combleston Boatswⁿ Mate. Crossed lower yards. Employed clearing Holds &c. P.M. Sent the deceased William Comblestone to Hospital. Employed as before noon. Sunset up boats. Midn^t received fresh Beef 451 lbs. Vegetables 270 lbs."

Closer examination revealed that the remarks on William had been pencilled in and inked over, so we may take it, I think, that William was not buried before he died! Two other seamen on the ship died, William Talbot on 31st January and Thomas Trimble on 5th February. Perhaps fever was the cause of death, but this is not shown.

If anyone would like to see this log, the ref. is ADM 51/1124. In ADM 6 is a wide collection of material including a Register of Convicts in hulk Cumberland with gaolers' reports 1830-33, which I am gradually reading - no Cons yet!

STUCK!

The success with William Joseph has not extended as yet to the problem of the family of Stephen in Liverpool. The Thomas who married Elizabeth Mitchell in Stoke Damerel in 1775 was a baker and I still hope to find his birth in the Merton area around 1755. I've not been able to find a Thomas Mitchell Comblestone (their son) in Naval records, although T.M.'s son, George Horatio, gave his father as 'Naval Officer' on the certificate of his second marriage. Whether or not, I still feel T.M. may be the Thomas who had the White Horse Inn at Islington in 1811. I had found him at the Half Moon Inn in Devonport in 1798 and the Record Office at Plymouth have kindly added the information that he had the Alexander & Roxanna in Higher Street, Plymouth in 1802. The following year this was held by 'Mrs. Comblestone' who evidently provided 'militia billets' there. If anyone is able to visit the Record Office, I have references for these two entries which I would like to have examined.

Stephen is an extremely patient sufferer who has done some searching for himself, so knows how very frustrating it can be. If anyone can help with searching Thomas the baker, George Horatio's first marriage to Maria Barker (probably in Islington area) and his birth in Middx in 1806/7, we shall be most grateful.

That there is a fairly close relationship to the William Joseph family I am quite certain. I look for other children of John C. and Grace Hurford, married Exeter 1755. Azael who married Bathsheba Palmer is the only son found and he was b. 1758, so there may be an earlier son - Thomas?? Azael was father of Wm. Joseph and I am using instinct mixed with wishful thinking! Why are some of you so easy to find back and others so difficult? I guess because some Coms were terrible wanderers.

SNIPPETS AND CORRESPONDENCE

A surprise visit on July 22nd from Kenneth Conleston of Morley, Perth, W. Australia. He is of the family of Samuel who was with the 37th Regt. in India and married there 1866/7. Pedigrees and/or branches have been sent to several members of this family, but no reactions yet received!

Willis thoughtfully sent a copy of the admirable booklet "Tracing Your Welsh Ancestry", published by the Wales Tourist Board - a most useful aid.

From Robin Holmes, fellow searcher, came photoconies from Sidmouth & District newspapers of August 1889 showing cricket scores between Sidmouth and Conleston's XI. 'J.H.H. Conleston b. Buckland; E.L. Conleston run out; W.E. Conleston b. Mordant,' etc. (Yes, Hermione, I will send you copies!)

More Cornwall Census and marriage information has been received from June and Dick Ross in Palm Springs, including a christening from St. Michael, Penkivel of John Henry Conlestone, son of John Henry & Jessie, 25 Feb 1917. Father's occupation, baker (soldier). Familiar to anyone? My thanks to the indefatigable June and Dick, who are no nearer to finding June's elusive grandfather, Josiah Christopher Trevithick.

Since my wonderful holiday with good friends Sheila and Richard and wee Craig and Nicola in Ullanool in early September I have been maitning in the flat and being generally domestic (not before time) and consequently am behind with correspondence, for which I apologise. Also, as you will have seen, the 'n' typeface fell off its key on my typewriter and my efforts to stick it on with Araldite have not been quite successful - I promise to remedy this before the next issue! Cluny-Cat has been ill and needing my attention, but is now fit and well and eating like a horse - you can't keep a good Cat down, can you?