

# **AROUND KEYNSHAM & SALTFORD PAST AND PRESENT**



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Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society  
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AROUND  
KEYNSHAM & SALT FORD  
PAST & PRESENT

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Journal Edited & Produced by Brian Vowles.

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Cover illustration;

Colliers Row on Bath Hill East - featured in the story of a parcel of land

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## NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN

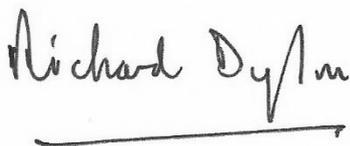
Every year is marked by the anniversary of some past events of significance, but 2018 is of particular note in this respect.

In terms of historical import the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of what we now call the First World War is by far the most significant. From a British perspective it resulted in the greatest number of deaths of any conflict in history. Very few communities were untouched and today every town and almost every village has its memorial to those who gave their lives in combat or support. The war led to enormous changes in the social, political and economic life of the country. Although the campaign for women's suffrage had started about fifty years earlier and was moving towards success when the war intervened, the four-year conflict and the work done by several million women in roles hitherto the preserve of men effectively demolished opposition and the first stage in achieving equal voting rights became effective in 1918. In 2014 the Society produced a special two-part journal to record local aspects of World War 1 so we have not revisited the subject this year.

2018 has seen various local events to mark this extension of the franchise but, probably because it is within living memory, there have been more activities to remember the Great Flood of 1968, which had such a dramatic impact on Keynsham and nearby communities. The Society has been heavily involved with these, particularly in bringing to fruition the construction of a Flood Memorial in Keynsham Park, using the County Bridge Stone as a focal point. This idea was conceived about fifteen years ago, but the approaching 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary prompted action, as it was really the last opportunity to realise it while memories of the event survive.

The great support given by Keynsham Town Council and many individuals and businesses has raised not only the funds necessary, but also awareness of the event among younger generations and the many newcomers to the community. Part of the fundraising was the production of a brochure containing details, accounts and photographs of the Flood and its consequences and the publication has proved to be a popular reminder of event. Activities such as these all serve to raise the profile of both local history and the Society in the community.

In this volume we bring together articles on a selection of topics of varying historical importance but each forming part of the jigsaw of events and activities that go to make local history. The Monmouth rebellion was of national significance, the 1968 flood was a local disaster. We describe two contrasting public facilities: the building of Saltford Community Hall, which is at the heart of community life half a century later and the short-lived public conveniences in the centre of Keynsham, which would soon have been forgotten forever without the diligent research of our editor. Accounts of a pub brawl and the Co-operative Society's part in Keynsham's retail scene contrast with our archivist's account of the history of a piece of land, based on records discovered in an attic in Plymouth. The variety makes it all the more enjoyable!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Dyson". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a horizontal line that starts under the first letter and ends with an arrowhead pointing to the right.

Richard Dyson, Chairman

## **The Great Flood of 1968**

*This year marks the 50th anniversary of an event which was one of the most dramatic in Keynsham's history. To mark the occasion we reprint an account of the storm and the rain that fell during the night and early hours of the 10/11th July 1968 - as recorded after the event by Mrs Connie Smith, a member of the W.R.V.S, (Connie was the Honorary Archivist of the Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society from 1966-1976).*

In the garden of a small house among the debris left by the flooding of Wednesday night and Thursday morning stands an improvised flag staff. At its head flaps a Union Jack. It was erected by one of the people made homeless when his dwelling was flooded by the storm and represents a very personal gesture of defiance and optimism. I have seen and helped the people who became victims of the storm and were forced to flee leaving home and security behind.

The violent thunderstorm and torrential rain passed away. It transferred our gentle-flowing Chew River into an uncontrollable torrent which wreaked a swathe of havoc all along the Chew. At the height of the tempest the waters were breaking and crushing everything in the way. People tell of two huge waves.

Our Memorial Park, newly landscaped not so very long ago, lies ruined. Three of our bridges were damaged, two beyond repair, and two hundred houses have been flooded. Fourteen families are homeless and three travellers swept away in the dark of the tempest to a horrible death.

Living on the far side of the town on the higher slopes of the valley I was unaware of the disaster. I heard only the howl of the storm as I watched the lashing of rain on my window and the puddles grow into little lakes. I was viewing my sodden lawn when the wireless shattered my little haven of calm and bliss. A news bulletin announced a possible cut in water supplies and a threat of water pollution. Then the announcer reported an emergency in Pensford, a village some six or seven miles away. Thus, the severity of the storm and its aftermath dawned. As a W.R.V.S. member I could expect a message of 'standby', but I didn't await the summons. I abandoned housework and pedalled down to the town. As I free-wheeled down the hill into the valley, I stopped and gaped. Like other people nearby I was horrified. The park was flooded. Bath Hill Bridge near the Fox & Hounds pub was damaged. There were huge boulders where none had been before. Debris lay everywhere. Four motor vehicles were visible in a wrecked state, partially submerged in the rushing and angry dirty brown waters.

I pushed my cycle over the bridge. It was already closed to mechanically driven vehicles. Soon after I passed by, a great hole appeared in the roadway as the surface and structure collapsed. I watched and then continued on my way to the Town Hall. Here among the people assembled at this vantage point, there was much talking, gazing, and wondering at what had happened. But there was also an underflow of activity and quiet movement as others responded to the needs on hand, and plans of action were formulated.

The recently disbanded Civil Defence Corps, re-organised as the Bathavon & Keynsham Voluntary Civil Aid Service, came to the fore. A relief centre for the homeless was set up at Broadlands Secondary Modern School. Another volunteer group of the same organisation had already gone to Pensford to assist there. The Round Tablers were in action, as was the W.R.V.S. A rest centre was set up at Queens Road Methodist Church to take people from the Chew Magna area, as it was feared, they would have to be evacuated from their homes. Events proved, however, that that was unnecessary.

Salvage operations in the wrecked homes in the valley got under way. The Ladies Circle and Keynsham Red Cross distributed piles of wet and muddy clothes, house linen and curtains for laundering by willing hands. "Can the W.R.V.S. supply five hot meals to two families still marooned in their upstairs rooms" came the call. I was detailed on this delivery which I remember entailed walking along a high wall and then climbing a ladder!

Every active person it seemed was there to help and every distress plan was attended to. Young people became traffic wardens and acted as messengers. With the telephones out of action and bridges damaged, communications had to be contrived out of simple means. My cycle was commandeered. Electricity and water supplies were threatened, but not cut off. Mr Brewer, the mobile shop man at the bottom of Dapps Hill got round to his customers as best he could. He apologised to each and said he would not be making his usual round as his store was flooded and the stock ruined.

The butcher on Bath Hill cleared the debris from his wrecked shop and emptied out the deep freeze. It became a battered piece of equipment in the storm, in which it shifted, despite the fact it had taken four hefty men to place it in its original position.

The Police railed off Bath Hill Bridge where the gaping hole in the middle was gradually widening. They opened a section along the new bypass which spans the valley by the high viaduct so that pedestrians could gain access to both sides of the town. Holiday traffic, unaware of the situation and about to drive through the town, was halted and diverted.

Many small acts of kindness were anonymously, and spontaneously, given. For instance, a housewife collected thermos flasks from her friends and neighbours. These she filled with hot drinks and wheeled them around in a push chair for anyone in need of refreshment. She later took yet another pile of muddy clothing for the wash home in the push chair. The homeless were given comfort, the W.R.V.S. served tea and the clearing operations continued.”

Excerpts from Mrs Smith's diary

*Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July: A cloudy day, but, thank goodness, no more rain. A fresh hazard has now arisen due to water pollution caused by a broken sewer in the valley. Temporary housing for the homeless in previously condemned council owned property is being cleaned and made re-habitable. An emergency sitting of Keynsham Urban District Council is taking place. I spend my day sorting clothing, bedding and life essentials which had been donated to provide the where-with-all for the homeless. It has*

*been a long session of salvaging, cleaning, sterilising and disinfecting for affected residents. Each one of us is tired but the emergency is nearly won.*

*Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July: The Army has arrived! A detachment of Engineers arrived early to build a bailey-type bridge across the River Chew so as to restore communications on each side of the valley. We excitedly watched the military helicopter land, using the town's new car park as a heliport. The air has been filled with noise all day and now the base for the bridge has been marked and drilled. I helped to cut mountains of corned beef and pickle sandwiches for the hungry men. The soldiers are so cheerful and full of banter - "Just one for me Miss, I am on a diet" said one with a wink. And so the jokes passed to and fro.*



The temporary Bailey bridge at Bath Hill built by the Royal Engineers on 14th July 1968 (Photo from the Russell Leitch collection)

“Our town is recovering fast and we shall soon be back to normal. The ravaged part of the Park will green over again, but the memory will linger, and the dead will be quietly mourned.”

## **A History of Saltford Community Hall - 1949 to 2017.**

By Hilary Smedley

A Public Meeting was held in July 1949 to discuss the need for a village Hall for meetings, dances, whist drives and other activities. As a result the Community Association was formed, and the first Council comprised elected members equal to the number of nominated representatives from the following ten organisations:- British Legion, St Mary's Church, Saltford Evangelical Church, Cricket Club, Football Club, Golf Club, Keynsham Urban District Council, Men's Club, Boy Scouts, and Women's' Institute.

Between 1950/51, fund raising Activities were organised, and plans were prepared by Mr Whalley, the KUDC architect, for a hall with a capacity of 100-200 people. By 1953, with the building fund at £1,500 and building of homes progressing more than expected, fresh plans were drawn up by Mr. Paul Pope the new Honorary Architect, which was far sighted and comprehensive allowing additions as required by demand and financial ability. These plans were approved by the Ministry of Education in April 1954, and a grant of £1,500 towards the estimated cost of £4,500 for the construction of the main hall, foyer and cloakrooms was made to the Association. Building by voluntary labour was commenced immediately, and the foundation stone was laid by Lord Hylton, Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, on 11th September 1954. The first problem to daunt the amateur workers was that the majority of the site was found to have a solid rock foundation, and needless to say the tough going coupled with the inevitably slow progress, led many of the weaker 'spirit' to drift away. Also some key members left the district, leaving a small but faithful group to continue the struggle.

However in 1955 on 26th March, the call for volunteers who were craftsmen went out, and in May the delivery of 20 tons of precast concrete framework to the site at Norman Road Playing field was greeted with delight.



The erection of the framework was the only part to be done professionally, while to raise money the villagers were encouraged to write their name on a brick and donate a shilling. The Flower Show raised a profit of £17 10 10d, and was one of many - including the Carnival which was organised annually. Building progress was slow but in 1958 when the toilets and cloakrooms were nearing completion and the walls of the main Hall were a few bricks from the ground, cynicism was running high amongst the arm-chair critics!

*'Never to be finished'* and *'White elephant'* were expressions frequently heard, but the volunteers plodded on.

After 10 years of labour and decision making, reward came on 13th March 1960 when the Foyer was opened for use by the village. The whole tempo of activity now quickened and with an energetic spurt, coupled with the employment of professional specialists for roofing, heating and flooring, the Main Hall was officially opened on Friday 13th October 1961 by Lt. Col. the Rt. Hon. Lord Hylton, in the presence of the Bishop of Taunton, County officials, Councillor L. F. Ellis, Chairman of Keynsham Urban District Council, and of course members of the Association including the Honorary Architect

Mr Paul Kennerell Pope. The final cost of Phase 1 was £8,600 and the Ministry of Education increased their grant to £2,500, with £560 allocated for furniture and equipment. However, there was not enough available money to pay for the additional cost, so an application for a loan of £2,000 was made to Somerset County Council. This was approved at the favourable rate of 3% per annum provided the loan was repaid within 5 years! The rate after that time would be increased to 6%.

It was now time to book the regular user organisations, leaving space for private bookings. The village church, St. Mary's, organised the Harvest Supper and guests filled the hall on 28th October sitting at long tables placed from the stage to the door. These were decorated with food and flowers. I was privileged to be there and join in this happy occasion and every one rejoiced that so much had been accomplished to such a high standard. There was also a live broadcast of the BBC's Any Questions, and the Annual Horticultural Show in September was arranged.

A monthly News Sheet was printed by volunteers announcing the events planned and a list of names to contact. It also asked for volunteers to set up teams for kitchen management, printing of tickets and the delivering of a free news sheet to every house in the village. These were just a few of the initiatives set in motion by the enthusiastic group encouraged and driven by Gordon Reed. He had prolific ideas and was liked by all. There was also Sidney Jordan, E Broughton, their wives, and many others who gave hours of work over the years.

To embellish the hall, Alan Durman a professional artist painted a mural of Saltford on the wall above the entrance doors. It was 25 feet high and around the Maypole he depicted

a group of local people holding the ribbons. Against a background of the winding River Avon and Kelston Tump, he painted the weir, the Church, Manor House, the War Memorial and his own dog Randolph. The local villagers are Harry Stiles, Stan Lavington, John Brice, Roger Evans, Joy Brignall (wife of the optician Don Brignall), the footballer Gordon Mitchell and Mrs Durman to name some of them.



The Saltford Hall Mural

Between 1961 and 1964 this building was in constant use, and as it became obvious that the existing loan would be repaid on time, thoughts turned to Phase 2. Thus a smaller room adjacent to the Foyer was designed together with a kitchen of good dimensions with room for suitable equipment, a print room to house the multilith and a storeroom. Sadly at

this time, the architect Paul Pope died, and his partner Mr. John Vivian took over his work. This phase was built professionally by E.C. Thomas of Keynsham and opened by Mr. Paul Dean MP on 12th March 1965. The smaller function room was named the Avon Room. The total cost was £5,414, and as a grant of 50% was available from the Department of Education and Science, it was necessary only to loan £2,500 from Somerset County Council on the same terms as previously. Councillor Roger Carter, Chairman of Keynsham Urban Council unveiled a plaque in the Foyer commemorating the event. He said that the achievements were a memorial to the initiative, ingenuity, hard work, devotion and dedication of so many people.

It soon became apparent that a car park was necessary, as the long suffering residents were swamped by the vast numbers of visitors' cars. It was not possible for the Council to build this due to financial constraints, so a compromise was reached whereby Keynsham Urban Council provided the materials and skilled help, while local residents provided the labour. Equipment was loaned from farmers and builders so that tractors and trailers were able to remove 300 cubic yards of top soil. Altogether 107 people including tea-ladies volunteered their services with people on morning, afternoon and evening sessions laying ballast, concrete, boning rods and fixing fence posts and drains. What an exercise in voluntary self-help and friendship it was!

In 1969, the final building of the Scenery tower above the stage began, and the 3 rooms above the Foyer and kitchen. Due to the credit squeeze, the grant from the Department of Education and Science was reduced to £7,279 leaving the remainder to be found by the Association. A regular newspaper and magazine collection took place monthly, and then sold to

raise an income for the Extension fund. The new rooms were officially opened in 1969 by the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset Col. Cecil Mitford-Slade who named them 'Somerset' and 'Kelston' while a much needed office was also provided. Total cost was £14,000 and Somerset County gave a grant of £4000. Emergency lighting and fire exits were installed. As some of the original members retired, new ones took over namely Maurice Hill, Brian Bigwood, Ken Sidebotham and Gordon Reed as Chairman.



In 1982/3 again the need for more accommodation was necessary, and so a detached building with its own kitchen and toilets was erected north of the kitchen. Wansdyke District Council gave a generous grant of £18,750 towards a total cost of £30,000, and this building was opened on 13 October 1984 by the Chairman of Wansdyke District Council, Councillor Neville Dove. This year 2018 a major refurbishment took place costing over £110,000 to enhance the facilities.

The Hall with the Tennis club and Sports Club are still a hub of activity providing first class accommodation for the village and the surrounding area. It was conceived in 1949, built and run by peoples' enthusiasm, hard work and generosity, and is a great reminder of the spirit of this wonderful village.

## **The Lost Loos of Keynsham**

By Brian Vowles.

Some older residents of Keynsham will remember the underground public toilets that once stood at the top of Bath Hill at the junction of Temple Street and the High Street in front of the Lamb and Lark Hotel but may be unaware of the long and convoluted paths leading to their construction.

As a matter of civic pride in 1901 (as in the French novel *Clochemerle*), the town decided it needed a public urinal and on Tuesday 3 September 1901, at a meeting of the Keynsham Rural District Council, a resolution was passed that the council should seek powers from Local Government Board to erect public conveniences at Keynsham and Brislington and it was also decided that respective parish councils should be consulted as to sites.

At another meeting held on Tuesday 5 November 1901 the Clerk (Mr F.E.Whittuck) read a letter from the Keynsham Parish Council with reference to providing a public convenience in the town. Mr F. Dorey, commenting on the letter, remarked that it was not likely that the Parish Council would agree unanimously on any site. Mr A. Snell admitted that to him the site near the weighbridge appeared to be a good one, and why not place it there? It was suggested that the owner of the Lamb & Lark be approached but the idea was dropped. After other remarks the Council decided to refer the matter back to the Parish Council, asking for definite indication from them as to a suitable site. However at a meeting on Tuesday 1 July 1902 the Clerk read out a letter from the Parish Council stating that they were of the opinion that a public

convenience was not required in Keynsham and the project was shelved.

The subject resurfaced again in 1922 and a number of proposals were put forward.

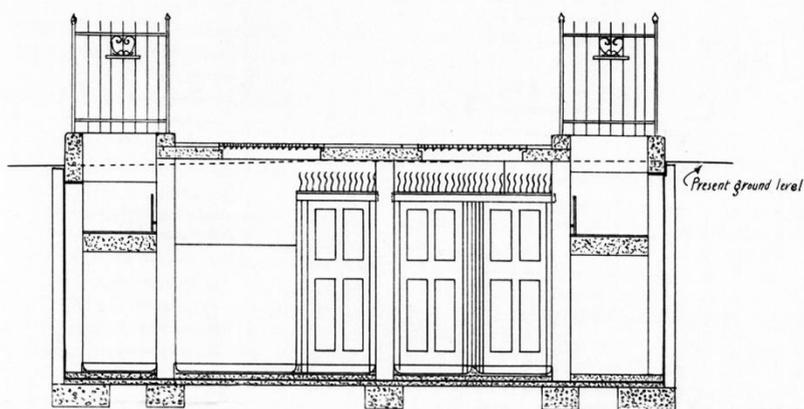


The public weighbridge that once stood at the junction of Bath Hill, Temple Street and the High Street and where the toilets were to be erected

Various other sites were suggested and finally one was agreed upon at the junction of Temple Street, Bath Hill and the High Street and it was to be built underground on the site of the old weighbridge (the old weighbridge was later sold intact to Keeling's Lime works in June 1930).

This decision was hotly contested and at the Parish Council meeting in March 1922 a petition was handed in by Mr

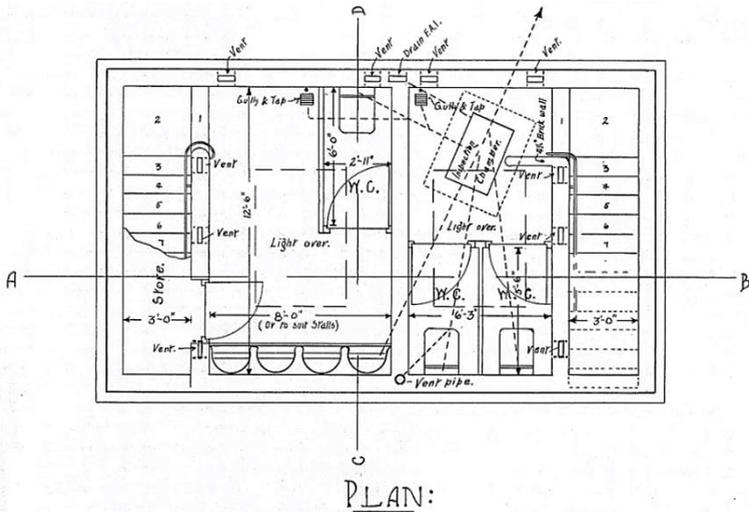
A Rawlings and Mr Thomas Exon (shop keepers opposite on Bath Hill) who presented the objections from at least 23 ratepayers concerned that these public conveniences would become a personal inconvenience to them and warning of the dangers that would be caused by traffic. Perhaps influenced by these objections the decision was deferred once more and at a Parish meeting that took place on Tuesday 13 June 1922, a report from a committee recommended that the public convenience be sited on the east side of the Bath Hill Bridge.



SECTION A.B.

But then at its February meeting in 1923 the council instructed the surveyor Mr Bevan to prepare plans, specifications and estimates for both an underground convenience on the weighbridge site and a standard one on the Chew Bridge site. The wheels of local government turn slowly and things seem to lapse once more although a question arose concerning the conveniences during an R.D.C. meeting on 13 May 1929 but the Chairman answered that the matter was being dealt with by the Parochial Committee.

On 23 October 1931 the Finance Committee recommended that the provision of a public convenience should be yet again deferred for twelve months. The waters were further muddied when on Tuesday 1 December 1931 a sub-committee recommended the consideration of a site in Charlton Road for the erection of the convenience and that the opinion of the Town Planning Committee should be obtained on the weighbridge site before proceeding with the venture.



Finally the decision to erect the conveniences was passed and in May 1932 tenders were invited for their construction either under or above ground. A special meeting was called on Friday 22 July 1932 when the clerk of the R.D.C read out a letter from the Keynsham Parish Council asking for a special meeting of the Keynsham Parochial Committee so that the erection of the public convenience could start before the holiday season. He pointed out that if a loan had to be raised, the sanction of the Ministry of Health would be necessary and this would take some time.

So during the record heat wave that had caused numerous deaths, on Tuesday 16 August 1932, the R.D.C. recommended that application should be made to the Ministry of Health for the necessary order to pass on the special expenses in connection with the public conveniences to the Parish of Keynsham. A tender for £744 submitted by Messrs. Ayres and Sons of Kingswood for an underground version was accepted on 5 October 1932 but the Parish Council meeting on Monday 10 October lamented although this was the second lowest tender, an additional cost of £89 had to be met by the parish due to the Ministry of Health's delay in authorising the erection as a charge on the parish.

At an additional meeting of the town council on 7th February 1933 it was decided that the convenience should be kept open permanently and with its completion imminent, on 8th March Mr A.H.Parsons was appointed as caretaker at a weekly wage of 12s 6d. So it was not until 1933, thirty one years after the idea was originally mooted, were the toilets completed to the relief of the inhabitants of the town.

Whether there was a ceremonial baptism by members of the council is not recorded!

But, despite all the lengthy protracted discussions, the toilets didn't survive for very long and they were closed in the 1950's and the site covered over. As far as I know, they are still there buried under the new one-way traffic scheme but unfortunately, as yet, I have not managed to find a single photo of the entrance to the subterranean conveniences.

Note - The designs for the toilet block are reproduced with the kind permission of the Somerset Heritage Centre.

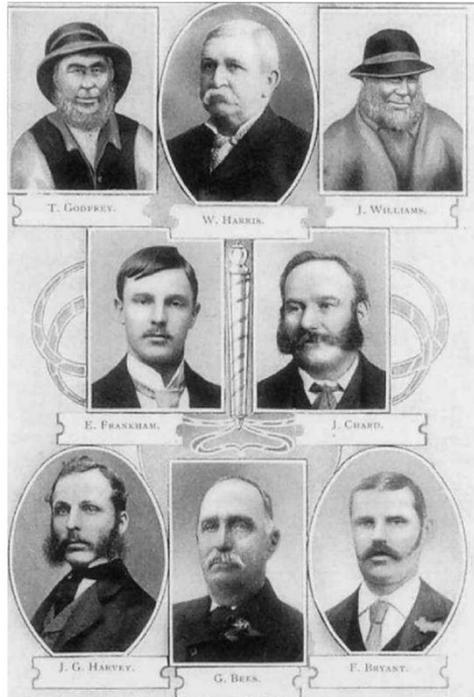
## The Keynsham Co-op by Sue Tatford

For many years the 'Co-op' dominated the High Street of Keynsham.

The Keynsham Co-operative Society started in 1894 and was a classic example of a movement set up to benefit its members in a small village. However, it, like many others, was not really big enough to survive on its own.

On September 13<sup>th</sup> 1894 Messrs W Harris, J Williams, F Dovey and J G Harvey met with enthusiastic

members of the Bedminster Co-operative (set up in 1882) in the back parlour of the Crown and discussed the possibilities of such a venture for Keynsham. As they accompanied the Bedminster men to the railway station, they met Messrs T Williams and T R Tucker. While they were waiting for the train it was decided that there was no time like the present and each of the 6 men gave 1s to T R Tucker who promised to act as treasurer. And so Keynsham Co-operative Society came into existence.



The Founder Members of the  
Keynsham Co-operative Society



Saddler Louis Phelps' shop on Cheapside.(now the Civic Centre)

A week later about 40 people attended a public meeting held in the Old Free School. They listened to the experiences of the men from Bedminster. As a result of this, it was agreed to form a Co-operative Society in the village and about 20 names were given as prospective members. Committee Members and Officers were then duly elected. Mr W Harris was elected President, Mr J G Harvey became Secretary and Mr W Pitt the Treasurer. Other committee

members were Messrs T Williams, Z W Hall, J Williams, E Neat, T Godfrey, T Newman, A Tipney, G Bees, J Chard, W Allen F Bryant T Bourton and Mrs J L Packer. On October 3<sup>rd</sup> members held another meeting so that the rules of the Society, which used the model rules of the Co-operative Union as a basis, could be passed. Mr Bullock from the Bedminster Co-operative was at the meeting.

From then on, the Committee met weekly, premises were taken and the stores opened for business on November

23<sup>rd</sup> 1894. A tea party was held with representatives from Bedminster, Bristol and District and Gloucester Societies present and inspiring speeches were made to encourage the new Society. The premises that were rented were in the right-hand room of the house on Bath Hill West occupied by Louis Phelps who was a saddler and harness maker. Although on the main road it was away from the shopping part of the village. Moreover, except for the goods occasionally displayed in the window, there was nothing to distinguish it from the neighbouring properties.

It was very much an amateur business. The Keynsham Co-operators catered for themselves, and only for themselves, in their own way. They started with 40 members and a quarterly turnover of £133. In 3 years they had increased their membership to 62 and their sales to £242. They were described as “hand to mouth dealers” with an “occasional flutter in potatoes”.

The business was closely supervised by the committee who met every week in the room beside their little store. A vital management role was played by J G Harvey, the Secretary who was assisted by his family with sound, practical advice from his wife, and the dispensing of goods by his daughter. The Harveys were well known and trusted locally for their business distributing newspapers and magazines and other forms of information. Without the work done by the Harvey family it would have been difficult for the Society to carry on.

Another staunch Co-operator was Bill Harris. For a large part of the time he was President. He was a dairyman who supplied milk at a discount to the Society and he recommended that his customers who were not already

members should join the Society and share in the profits. He also fetched goods for sale from Bristol so as to keep the costs to the Society down. The staunch supporters looked after the Society as if it was their child. They were learning and experimenting all the time. Some ideas were successful but others were not. They tried curing their own bacon but this proved a disaster as unsold cuts quickly accumulated and during hot weather “went off” and had to be disposed of by burying it in the back garden. It was then decided to order bacon weekly from Trowbridge Co-operative as they were experienced curers.



The Bristol Co-operative Society's early premises opposite the church at No. 10 High Street

Another unfortunate move was made by a grocer who joined the Committee. He persuaded the shop to sell a 4d box of currants for 5d. Unfortunately, the first customer for the 5d currants was, in fact, the grocer's own wife, who knew what the price should be. This was the first and last attempt at sharp practice.

Virtually from the beginning special arrangements were made with a butcher and a baker with good local reputations, to supply the Society with meat and bread, at prices that would give the Society a sufficient percentage to cover dividends. In

order to trade through the Society, members had to purchase tokens beforehand from the Store. These were given to the sellers in lieu of cash and the Society settled accounts according to the tokens brought to them. Generally speaking, trade was sufficient with few ups and downs and there was only one quarter when they made a loss and that was because a young woman stole £14 from the till.

However, it could not last. Keynsham was surrounded by larger and more prosperous Co-ops at Bedminster, East Twerton and Radstock. Following the extension of tramways, when shopping in Bristol and Bath became easier, Keynsham Co-op found it difficult to continue. In 1896 the idea of an amalgamation with Bedminster Co-operative was put forward. The Committee voted 8 for and 3 against the idea. When it was put to the members only 2 were against. The Bedminster Society was then approached and asked if they would take over Keynsham as a Branch. The Bedminster Society put off making a decision for 6 months but eventually refused and Keynsham had to struggle on its own for another 8 years.

In 1904 Miss Ethel Harvey, who had been managing the shop, moved to a Co-op in Oxfordshire. The difficulty of finding a suitable replacement and the need for a more enterprising policy, forced the Committee to once again approach Bedminster, this time with a satisfactory result. The members of both Keynsham and Bedminster Societies passed the necessary resolutions and by half way through 1905 the Keynsham Co-operative Society had ceased to exist on its own and became part of the Bedminster Society. The Western Daily Press published on Tuesday 27 June 1905 announced... *"The Keynsham and District Co-operative Society having amalgamated with the Bedminster Society, more commodious*

*premises have been secured, and the opening ceremony was performed on Saturday afternoon by Mr J. Mark, the president of the society after which a tea was provided in a large marquee in West View Road when about 200 sat down. A public meeting followed, Mr Marks presiding. Addresses were delivered by the chairman, Alderman John Curle, Mr A Bullock of Bristol and others. Selections of music were rendered by Godfrey's Naval Band, from Bristol who also supplied the dance music."*

Both Societies were then swallowed up by the new Bristol Co-operative Society and by 1911 the members had taken over a shop at No.10 High Street, opposite the church, under its name. The idea of every customer being entitled to a dividend (a 'divvie') on their purchases appealed to many poorly paid working class people and that became a way of saving a sum for Christmas and the like. As a result the popularity of the Bristol Co-op increased and soon the need for



By 1915 the Bristol Co-operative Society's popularity had increased and as a result moved to the other side of the High Street between a public house, the Forester's Arms and a barber's shop run by Mr Kohler.

a larger outlet led to a move to larger premises. By 1915 the Co-op had expanded and moved across the road into 25 High Street, the grocery store run by a Mr Herbert, and it later extended over Mr Kohl's barbers shop next door sometime after 1935. This became the Co-op's main grocery store.

There the provisions were weighed out with loose tea and sugar being poured into blue paper bags and money clipped into wooden cylinders to be whisked away on overhead wires before the change made the return trip from the cashier's cubicle.



Between the wars the Co-op expanded its premises to include the barbers shop and by the 1960s adopted this sleek shopfront complete with awning..

Soon, in competition with the small independent shop keepers in the town, the Co-op added other premises in the High Street to its operations.

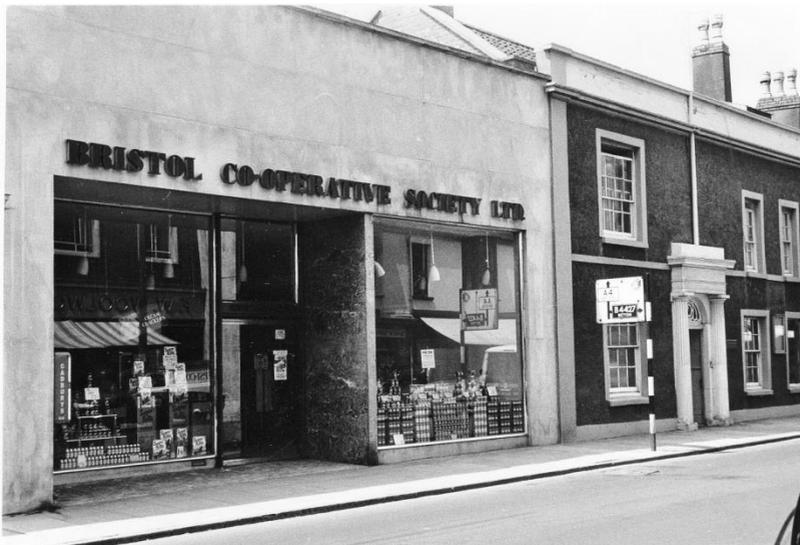


Catering for all demands, there was a drapery store, a greengrocery, a shoe shop, and a furniture show room. The Co-op was now in its prime but the writing was on the wall as during the 1960s the idea of ‘supermarkets’ where all purchases could be made under one roof spread from America and, as people became more affluent, the ‘divvie’ mattered less.

Above - The Bristol Co-operative Society’s Drapery Department .  
Below - On the left the Co-op outfitters and on the right Stokes’ old seed shop became the hardware store next to the Victoria Methodist Church.



One by one the Co-op closed its individual outlets and its main shop and moved to premises back across the road next to the Conservative Club.



Above – The new premises next to the Conservative Club. Below - the new Co-op Freezer Centre



Following changes in marketing styles the Co-op became the Co-op Freezer Centre and when that began to falter a new Co-op supermarket was created just off the roundabout at the end of the Keynsham By-pass. But that did not produce the hoped-for success and after a number of years it closed and Waitrose redeveloped the site.



The Freezer Centre reincarnated as a funeral parlour and now the only business run by the Co-op in Keynsham

Eventually the Bristol Co-operative Society joined the national Co-operative Wholesale Services and the CWS became the 'Co-operative Group' but after a number of scandals and financial crises in recent years it is now a shadow of its former self.

Note. Some of the information used in this article was provided by "A Study in Democracy Being An Account of the Rise and Progress of Industrial Co-operation in Bristol by Edward Jackson. Chapter XXVI, The Keynsham Co-operative Society Limited. p.349-357."

## Monmouth at Keynsham

by Brian Vowles

During the summer of 1985 events were held throughout the county of Somerset to mark the tercentenary of the ill-fated rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth against King James II who was growing increasingly unpopular because it was feared he would return the state religion back to Catholicism and its persecutions. The high point of this campaign was to be reached at Keynsham.



James Scott Duke of  
Monmouth

Landing at Lyme Regis on 11 June 1685, Monmouth marched without opposition to Taunton his numbers swelling all the way. Intending to take Bristol, which at that time was the second largest city in England after London and from where much support was expected, he and his 8000 strong army of cloth workers, yeoman farmers and merchants armed with scythes and pitchforks marched through Somerset until they arrived at Pensford where they spent the night of 24/25 June. Rather than attack the city on what he believed to be the more strongly defended side he decided to approach it from the East via Keynsham.

Having got wind of his intentions King James II had written in haste to the Duke of Beaufort...

*Whitehall*

*June 21st 1685*

*My Lord Duke of Beaufort, the Preservation of the City of Bristol from the Rebels being a matter of Great Importance, I have directed the Duke of Somerset to join with you with his Militia in the defence of that place, and being informed there is a Bridge at a place called Keinesham half way between Bath and Bristol. I would have you by all means to endeavour to break the same immediately upon the receipt which is in a great measure delay, if not hinder their passage that way.*

*Signed James R*

At Pensford news was brought that, in line with the king's wishes, the bridge over the Avon had been broken down to prevent Monmouth crossing into Gloucestershire. A Captain Tyler (or Tyley) was sent at the head of a troop of horse during the night to occupy Keynsham and seize its bridge. Upon arriving at the town Captain Tyler and his men engaged a troop of the Gloucestershire Militia who were there and drove them off leaving behind two horses and a prisoner but the destruction of the bridge cannot have been done very thoroughly as by daybreak the structure had been repaired.

That morning Monmouth set off for Keynsham and by 10am his whole army had filed across the Avon onto the Sydenham Fields on the Gloucestershire side where it is said that there well-wishers gave them cheeses and they were noted to have brought their wagons pulled by oxen.

The attack on Bristol was to be made that night but due to the continuous rain and the fact that they were now only a short distance from the city, Monmouth hesitated and withdrew

his men from the open exposed meadows to quarter them for the night back in the town whilst he installed himself and his retinue in Abbey House, the mansion belonging to Sir Thomas Bridges (in what is now the Keynsham Memorial Park). Royalist prisoners who had been taken were lodged in the stables of the mansion and there they were visited by John Hicks, Keynsham's non-conformist minister.

No sooner had the army settled down for the night when they suffered two independent Royalist attacks. Colonel Theophilous Oglethorpe with about 100 men in a scouting patrol attacked from the south and Colonel Parker, having swum the river, rode along the south bank of the river with about 150 of Faversham's troopers. An account of the clash is contained in "The Western Martyrology or the Bloody Assizes" by John Tutchin\* printed in 1705.



The attack by the Royalist  
cavalry

*“Being here lodged in the town, we were on a sudden alarmed with the noise of the approach of the enemy being in no small confusion on this unsuspected news. The Duke sent one up the tower (of the Church) to see whether he could discover them marching. As soon as he came up, he saw them at the very entrance into the town, fighting with our men. Here we had a small skirmish, our men being in the fields adjoining to the town, refreshing themselves; but it lasted not long; for, before he could bring word, they were fled, being not above 60 horsemen.*”

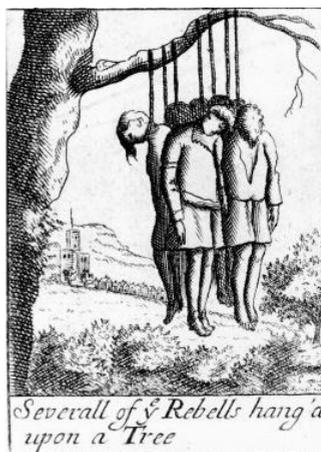
*They did us mischief, killing and wounding above 20 men; whereas we killed none of theirs, only took four prisoners and their horses, and wounded my Lord Newburg, that it was thought mortal.*

*They came thither, thinking it had been their own forces; and had not our undisciplined fellows been a little too eager, and suffered' em to come a little farther on, they would have entered the town, and we must have had every man of them. Their infantry was following, but, on their return, came not forward. These forces being so near, and Bristol being so well manned also, the Duke was loth to pass the bridge for Bristol."*

Although this foray was repulsed it was with the loss of at least fourteen men including a Captain Bland. Four prisoners were taken and they stated after interrogation that a four thousand-strong King's army was close at hand. News of the approach of this well-armed and disciplined force caused Monmouth to reconsider his plans to carry on to take Bristol - although two of his officers, Wade and Roe urged him to stick to his original intentions. Some disagreement then surfaced amongst Monmouth's other advisers who suggested that instead, Wiltshire could be raised to his cause and a thrust towards Chippenham which was on the road to their ultimate goal, London seemed to be a wiser alternative. Several historians have speculated that if Monmouth had marched as quickly as possible for Bristol at this point, when it was only protected by the Gloucestershire militia, he would probably have been able to take the city and the final outcome of the rebellion might have been very different. Once Bristol had been taken, more recruits would have been attracted to the Rebellion and a later march on London would have been possible.

But by now morale was beginning to suffer. The initial enthusiasm for the crusade was wavering. The continuous rain, the disintegration of their footwear following their long march from Taunton, a lack of supplies and the results of their skirmish with the King's cavalry sapped the resolve of many of the rebels. That night in pouring rain the dispirited men trudged away from the town of Keynsham. This was to be the high water mark of their insurrection and all hopes of overthrowing James II were gone forever. After being denied access to Bath they headed back towards their heartland. First to Norton St Philip where another attack by the King's cavalry was repulsed and then on to Frome, Shepton Mallet and finally Weston Zoyland where the "Pitchfork Army" was annihilated at the Battle of Sedgemoor.

It has been estimated that 1700 of this peasants' crusade were killed in the battle and 61 summarily butchered on capture. 331 were executed following trials held by the sadistic Judge Jeffreys and 849 sold by the queen to be transported as white slaves to the new sugar plantations of the West Indies where most died of overwork and tropical diseases. Subsequently 11 men were hung at Keynsham as a warning to its inhabitants (although it is unlikely that they were originally from the town). They were named as George Baddy, Richard Bowden, Charles Chappell, John Evans, Edward Halswell, Lewis Harris, Henry Lawrence, John Phildrey, Andrew Rowsell, Howell Thomas and John Winter. The non-conformist minister John Hicks who had visited the Monmouth camp was tried at Wells alongside the



500 other men who were also tried and sentenced in one day and he was executed at Glastonbury. Following the tragedy the county of Somerset had to wait for another four years before its inhabitants could rejoice with the deposition of James and the advent of William and Mary in 1689.

\*John Tutchin the author of “The Western Martyrology or Bloody Assizes” was a young man at the time of the rebellion. Descended from a long line of non-conformist ministers he later married John Hick’s daughter Elizabeth in 1686. He was indicted under the name of Thomas Pitts but seems to have been acquitted of treason for want of evidence but was then brought before Jeffreys under his proper name. The judge was furious at his inability to sentence him to death so with relish he sentenced him to “*Imprisonment*



John Tutchin, born about  
1663 and died in 1705  
aged 44

*for seven years and once a year be whipped through all the market towns of Dorsetshire*”. He would have certainly been flogged to death but Providence intervened by striking him down with smallpox a day or so before the first penalty was to be inflicted and ultimately his sentence was revoked.

Afterwards, when Jeffreys was in the Tower, Tutchin visited him; Jeffreys pleaded, with that familiar excuse, that he was ‘*only obeying orders*’ and Tutchin, who had gone to revile, came away somewhat mollified at the spectacle of the fallen tyrant.

**A Brawl at the Angel.** By Brian Vowles

In the vaults of the Somerset Heritage Office at Taunton lies a document Q/SR/115/109, a Quarter Sessions roll for 1670-1672 which gives an interesting account of an affray at an inn known as the sign of the Angel at Keynsham in 1671 (this may be the Angel that previously stood on the site of the present day Victoria Methodist Chapel on the corner of Charlton Road). An inquiry into the matter was conducted by the local major landowner Sir Thomas Bridges in his capacity as J.P. In the past, during Quarter Sessions, which were held in various parts of the Shire in rotation, the two or more J.P.'s taking part had immense power, for apart from sentencing for crimes, they could also order rates for the repair of bridges, roads, prisons etc., licence traders and fix wages.

Sir Thomas Bridges was one of several Keynsham Justices of the Peace. He was born in 1615 and he married Anne Rodney at Pilton on October 15, 1640. He was an ardent cavalier who aided in the King's defence in Somerset, where he raised a foot regiment and served as the Royalist Governor of Bath. In 1644 he acted as the High Sheriff of Somerset. He survived being on the losing side in the Civil War but regained his status following the restoration of Charles II. He owned Abbey House in what is now Keynsham Memorial Park and played a notable part in the affairs of Keynsham including building the Alms-houses on Bristol Road in about 1685 to provide accommodation for six widows and he endowed a school for the town in 1705. He died on February 20, 1707.

On January 4 1671 he conducted this examination of witnesses and recorded, in the language of the time, the evidence, given by Richard Salmon of Marksbury and John

Lydiard, Bonesetter, concerning the brawl between Richard Salmon and Robert Moody, Richard Pope, Joseph Read and Thomas Hardwitch of Keynsham, during which Richard Salmon's leg was broken.

*“The examination of Richard Salmon of Marksbury in this county taken upon oath ye 4<sup>th</sup> day of January 1671 before Sir Thomas Bridges, Kt gent Justice of the Peace for ye sayd county.*

*Who sayth that upon Tuesday being ye 2<sup>nd</sup> day of this instant this informant came into ye house of Thomas Hardwitch knowne by ye sign of the Angel in Keynsham in this county and stayed in the sayd house about ye space of one hower and spent three groats in money \*\*\*\*\*(?), in that company of Robert Moody, Richard Pope, Joseph Read and ye said Thomas Hardwitch. The aforesaid Robert Moody called this informant Rogue; and this informant did throw some beer that was in ye glass at him, upon that the sayd Thomas Hardwitch called out Knock him downe – Knocke him downe, and the sayd Richard Pope tooke up a flagon in his hand and struck this informant therewith and broke his head and afterward the sayd Robert Moody, Richard Pope, Joseph Read and Thomas Hardwitch fell upon the informant and threw him downe and broke one of his leggs. Informant as he is wholly disabled from his labour and not able stir out of his howse without help.*

*X ye mark of Richard Salmon.”*

Then follows the testimony of John Lydiard the ‘bone setter’. *“The information of John Lydiard, Bone setter taken the day and year above written.*

*Who sayth that upon this day being ye 2<sup>nd</sup> day of this instant, Richard Salmon spoke to this informant to come and looke upon his legg who did accordingly and find that one bone was putt out of his legg and the thigh bone either broken or \*\*\*\*\* (?) much bruised and ye said Richard Salmon in great danger and not able to help himself.*

*Thos Bridges*

*X the mark of John Lydiard.”*

*This was followed by a defence of Joseph Read by Mary Adlington. “The information of Mary Adlington ye servant of Thomas Hardwitch of Keynsham in this county spinster taken upon oath ye 6<sup>th</sup> day of January 1671 before Sir Thomas Bridges Knight one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace for ye sayd county.*

*Who sayth that upon this day ye 2<sup>nd</sup> day of this instant when ye affray was between Richard Salmon of Marksbury and others in ye howse of the sayd Thomas Hardwitch. Joseph Read of Keynsham aforesaid was in ye sayd howse in another room and came into the roome where the sayd Richard Salmon was: and through away those that was upon him and tooke him up out of the ground and satt him upon a bench at ye end of the table and did not strike him att all: But tooke his part.*

*Thos Bridges*

*X the mark of Mary Adlington”*

*The last witness was Thomas Hoale. “The information of Thomas Hoale of Keynsham in the said county taken upon the day and year foresaid.*

*Who sayth that upon Tuesday being ye 2<sup>nd</sup> day of this instant the informant being in ye howse of Thomas Hardwitch in Keynsham aforesaid saw the aforesaid Richard Pope take a*

*fflagon in his hand and strike the aforesaid Richard Salmon therewith upon his head and broke his head.*

*Thos Bridges*

*X the mark of Thomas Hoale.”*

As to the outcome of the event we may never know but this document does provide a window into the workings of the law in those days.

Some references to the characters involved can be found in the Keynsham Parish Registers.

### Baptisms

22 July 1655 - Son Jonathan born to John & Anne Lidiat

12 December 1662 - Daughter Lydia born to Thomas & Mary Hardwich

13 January 1663/4 - Daughter Susan born to Richard & Sarah Pope

2 February 1664/5 - Son Thomas born to Thomas & Mary Hardwich

1666 - Son John born to Joseph Reede

15 December 1667 - Daughter Mary born to Richard & Sarah Pope

5 December 1669 - Son Richard born to Richard Pope

15 July 1670 - Daughter Lucie born to Thomas & Mary Hardwich

5 May 1673 - Son Thomas born to Thomas Heale(?)

20 \*\*\*\* 1673 - Son John born to Thomas Hardwich

18 September 1674 - Son Thomas born to Joseph & Sarah Reede

7 July 1678 - Son John born to Thomas Heale(?)

23 July 1680/1 Son John born to Thomas Heale(?)

### Burials

2 June 1661 - Son & heir of Thomas Bridges

14 February 1667/8 - Mary daughter of Richard Pope

1672 - Richard son of Richard Pope

22 February 1674/5 - John son of Thomas Hardwich

22 June 1677 Mary wife of Thomas Hardwich

(There is a burial at St Andrews Church, Burnham on Sea on 26 July 1685 of a Thomas Hardwich so he may have moved on following the death of his wife)

### Marriages

2 April 1638 - John Lydiat married Anne Panter.

Sir Thomas Bridges was aged 90 years and a widower when he passed on in 1707. His wife had died two years previously on April 4, 1705 and they were both buried in Keynsham Churchyard.



The schoolhouse erected by Sir Thomas Bridges in 1705 opposite the church at the beginning of Station Road now part of the Old Vicarage Green complex.

## The Story of a Parcel of Land

By Sue Tatford



Colliers Row on Bath Hill East

This rank of houses is often referred to as “Colliers Row” but this is rather misleading as they have no connection with the mining industry at all. The site on which they were built has a long history and what follows is the partial story of the plot of land situated on Bath Hill East, Keynsham which was originally part of an estate held by Edith, Wife of Edward the Confessor in the time before William the Conqueror.

In the hundred years or so following the Norman Conquest the estate was consolidated into a feudal manor attached to the powerful Honour of Gloucester.

Circa 1170 William Fitzrobert 2nd Earl of Gloucester founded the Abbey of Keynsham, and endowed it with the Manor and Hundred which it held until the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century. Afterwards King Henry VIII granted it to his last Queen, Katherine Parr, as part of his marriage portion.

In 1548, after her death, the Manor reverted to the Crown and in 1550 the Manor and Hundred were bestowed upon St. John St Loe for a term of 60 years. St Loe subsequently seems to have got into trouble on account of being a Protestant, with the result that the Abbey part of the lease was taken away and purchased by Thomas Bridges Esquire. The St Loe family retained the Manor for the rest of the term of the lease.

In 1608 the manor was again in the sole possession of the King, James I. The Spanish and Irish Wars had been very expensive and meant that James I had to sell much land in consequence and in 1613 Keynsham Manor was sold to Anne Whitmore, of near Claverley, Shropshire and the first reference to this particular piece of land is dated 6th March 1613 when it was sold. This was a business speculation and she may never have visited the place as she died two years later, but the manor was surveyed and mapped for her estate manager. Anne's son William then inherited and he in turn left the Manor to his eldest son Thomas.

There were several tiers of land ownership and occupation at this time. In English common law, the Crown could grant ownership of an estate of land to a land owner who could then lease all or part of the estate to a leaseholder. These leaseholds were for 99 years or until the death of the survivor

of three named lives. These leaseholders could have been absentees who bought their leases solely as an investment. The third tier was made up of the tenants who paid rent to the leaseholder. This system began to change in the late 1700s to early 1800s.

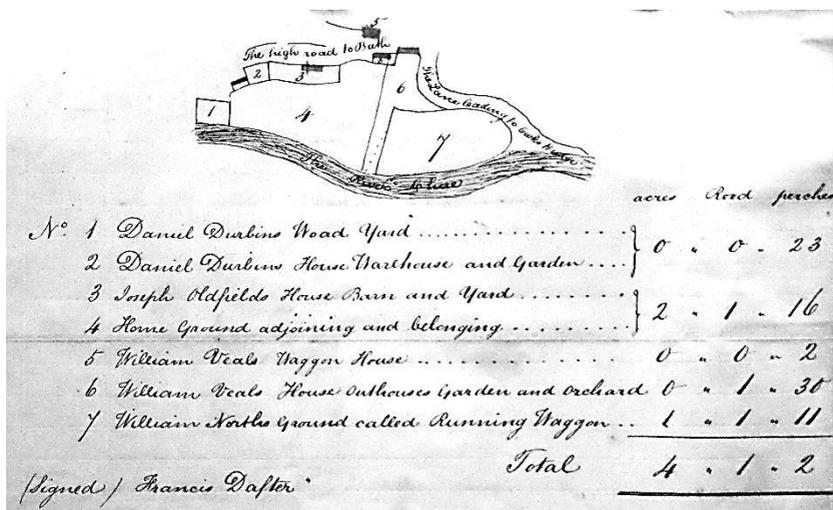
In 1718 William Whitmore rented this plot of land to Henry Oldis, yeoman, of Keynsham, for 99 years so long as he, or his wife Christian or their eight-year old twins, Jane and Mary lived. Jane died in 1727/8, Henry died in 1759 and Christian died in 1764. Mary, however, had married Daniel Durbin on 15 November 1730. They occupied the area marked on the map as “Woad Yard” (Keynsham was once known for its production of woad which was an annual plant (*Isatis tinctoria*) in the mustard family, formerly cultivated for its leaves that yield a blue dye widely used before the introduction of indigo).

In 1738 Daniel Durbin signed another ninety nine year lease, once the previous one had been revised, paying two shillings per annum in rent. He died about 1770. His widow, Mary, married widower Thomas Mills from Woolley by licence on 23 June 1773. Although she lived in Woolley until her death, she was buried in Keynsham on 19 June 1785.

The Whitmores held an important position in society in the middle of the 18th century that involved an expensive life style. This resulted in Keynsham Manor being used as the security against the sum of £10,000 to William Cheywynd of Stafford which was dated 24 and 25 July 1756. *“Indentures of Lease and Release made between Sir Thomas Whitmore of Appleby Co Salop of the Most Hon Order of the Bath and*

William Chetwynd Esq of Stafford being a Mortgage of said premises for securing £10,000 and interest.”

After 10 years it was returned to Sir Thomas Whitmore, who sold off parts of the manor.



Details of area dated 1767

The following year Sir Thomas Whitmore sold the remains of the manor and Hundred of Keynsham, together with the lordship, to Arthur Greenwollers, a Gentleman of the City of London who wasted little time in selling off parts of the manor; some of which, including the lordship rights, was sold to Edward Lyne for £5161 within the year.

In 1769 Arthur Greenwollers sold the plot of land in the picture above to Thomas Webb by for the sum of £122. It was then described as..

“a Tenement Garden Woad Yard and premises occupied by Daniel Durbin bounded on the north-east side by the High

*road leading from Bristol to Bath, on the south-west side by a close of ground occupied by Joseph Oldfield, on the north-west side by the River Chew, near to a bridge called Chew Bridge and on the south-east side by the farm premises of Joseph Oldfield Also all that ruined tenement called Hill House with the ground adjoining containing 2 acres one rood and 16 perches Now in the possession of Joseph Oldfield, bounded on the north-east partly by the High road and partly by the premises last described, on the south side by an orchard in the possession of William Veale, and on the west side by the River Chew. Also the cottage house garden and orchard now in the possession of William Veale, and bounded on the east side partly by the High road and partly by the Lane leading from Cooks Bridge to the High road, on the west side partly by a close of ground in the possession of William North, and partly by the River Chew, on the north side by the close of ground of Joseph Oldfield and on the south side by the close of ground of William North called Running Waggon, together with the cart or Waggon house opposite the premises and adjoining the wall of a close of ground of His Graces the Duke of Chandos called Garsons that stands on the waste ground in the High road Also all that Close of Ground called Running Waggon now in the possession of William North, bounded on the east side by part of the premises last described, on the west side by the River Chew, on the north side by an orchard belonging to the premises last described, and on the south side by the lane leading from Cooks Bridge.”*

In 1771 Thomas Webb bought more land from Arthur Greenwollers for £75. The description of this plot of land is as follows...

*“the tenement garden and orchard called Griggs, with the Close of Ground adjoining commonly called The Lime Kiln*

*ground containing 3 acres. It was bounded on the east side by the High road leading from Keynsham to Burnett and on the west side by the River Chew and then in the possession of William North. Also all that little orchard commonly called Rookhill Orchard containing ½ an acre bounded on the east side by the High road leading from Keynsham to Burnett, on the west side by an orchard and premises of William Oldfield, on the north side by a little lane parting this from the Lime Kiln Ground and on the south side by an orchard and premises belonging to Rookhill Farm and then in the possession of Anthony Faukes. Ann Sheppard occupied Griggs, Betty North and William North the Younger occupied the Lime Kiln Ground, Benjamin Veale occupied the Rookhill Orchard”.*

Thomas Webb (born approximately 1722) married Mary Racker by licence in Bath Abbey on 30 August 1750 and the following children were christened in Keynsham on the following dates: -

2 Feb 1751/2	Molley Racker Webb
28 Feb 1753	Thomas Webb
7 Sep 1755	Rachel Webb
27 Jun 1757	Betty Webb
18 Feb 1759	John Racker Webb
3 Feb 1762	Hester Webb
7 Dec 1763	William Webb

Betty Webb married William Hitchman by licence at Keynsham Parish Church on 25 December 1775 with Thomas Webb and John Hitchman as witnesses. Hester Webb married William Morrish, a widower, by licence on 25 July 1782 with Thomas Webb and James Wise Junior as witnesses. In the Bath

Chronicle dated 5 June 1783 Thomas Webb is referred to as “*a Maltster with a connection to the Queen Charlton Colliery.*”

In 1783 his son William Webb was living in the parish of St Elizabeth in the County of Cornwall on the Island of Jamaica as an ‘overseer’ on the sugar and rum producing estate called ‘Appleton’ belonging to Ezekiel and Caleb Dickinson, the sons of Vickris Dickinson who owned the manor of Queen Charlton at this time. There William filed the accounts for the Appleton Estate (including the number of slaves it owned) until 1791. It seems that the Dickinsons had land granted to Vickris's grandfather, Captain Francis Dickinson who was given 6000 acres in Jamaica for his gallant conduct when the island was taken from the Spaniards in 1655. Twenty years later in 1675, Captain Francis certainly had land in the parish of St Elizabeth, Jamaica. This estate, consisting of farms, sugar plantations and refineries was inherited by Vickris' father, Caleb, and passed onto his sons Ezekiel, Caleb II and Vickris. In 1754 Ezekiel and Caleb are recorded as being landowners of 7055 acres but then the brothers divided the estates in 1777 with Vickris running his share alone and Ezekiel and Caleb II running theirs jointly, still being the Appleton Estate. So it would seem likely that William Webb went to Jamaica as a result of his father Thomas's association with Vickris Dickinson.

By 1817 John Racker Webb was also in St Elizabeth, Jamaica where he was recorded as being an assistant judge and magistrate. There he owned two plantations, one called ‘Keynsham’ and the other ‘Shirehampton’ and he remained in Jamaica until his death in 1830 aged 70 at the Jamaican Keynsham.

On 1st April 1790 Thomas Webb borrowed £300 from Henry Brown of St Annes, Brislington with the property as security against the loan. The description of the property is as follows: -

*“All that now erected dwelling house commonly called Yew Tree House with a Wagon House Brew House and other outhouses lately built by Thomas Webb on land he purchased from Arthur Greenwollers and formerly belonged to Mr Oldfield and were then in the possession of Richard Dowdell as tenant of said Thomas Webb. Also the Barn formerly called Hill House with a Woad Yard nearly adjoining the last mentioned premises then in the possession of Thomas Webb. Also the Lime Kiln Ground containing 3 acres bounded on the east side by the High road leading from Keynsham to Burnett and on the west by the River Chew then occupied by Richard Dowdell as tenant to Thomas Webb and also purchased from Arthur Greenwollers and formerly belonged to a Mr. North. And also, 4 cottages lately built by Thomas Webb on part of the Lime Kiln Ground with a garden in the occupation of William Hitchman, Job Cantle, Thomas Batt and William Ollis as Tenants of Thomas Webb.”*

The interest rate for this loan was £4.10s. 0d. for every £100 every year. Thomas Webb was also required to insure the property for £200 with the Bath Fire Office, policy number 4923 bearing the date of 26 April 1790.

On 11 October 1792 Thomas Webb borrowed a further £100 from Henry Brown with the same security. By 19 March 1794 Thomas Webb owed Henry Brown £300 plus £100 plus £50 interest. However, he then borrowed a further £50.

In his will dated 17 March 1794 Thomas Webb left his son William Webb his two freehold Cottages with the Garden adjoining occupied by of Job Cattle and Samuel Rumsey as tenants. These were next to the cottage left to his daughter Betty Hitchman, and her husband William who lived there. William Webb and Benjamin Millward, Gent, were appointed joint Executors of this Will. Thomas Webb died in 1795 and was buried in Keynsham on 23 February 1795.

At this time William was still in Jamaica. He had drawn up a Power of Attorney appointing Benjamin Millward and William Morrish as his Executors. This Power of Attorney was made at Black River, Jamaica on 12 January 1796 and was witnessed by Thomas Thatcher and Richard Honeywell, both Master Mariners. This document was brought back to England by Thomas Thatcher, who was master of the ship Elizabeth belonging to the port of Bristol, and he made a sworn statement in Chancery on 14 April 1796. This Power of Attorney appointed Benjamin Millward and William Morrish, both of the parish of Keynsham, Gentlemen to settle the Estate of Thomas Webb, to sell the properties as they thought proper and to settle all the accounts including any debts and borrowings.

But at the time of his death Thomas Webb still owed Henry Brown £401.16s.1½ d and The Estates and Effects were insufficient to discharge the debt. As a result, in 1796 the Executors, Benjamin Millward and William Morrish sold the premises described in April 1790 being part of a close of ground bought from Arthur Greenwollers, the other part having been long since disposed of to a Mr Job Charlton and the four cottages on the Close called Lime Kiln Ground then described as just two cottages or tenements one in the occupation of Job Cattle and William Boulton and the other Thomas Ward and

Samuel Ramsey. It was bought by William Coleman ‘Gentleman’ of Highclere (of Downton Abbey fame) in Hampshire, John Coleman of Melksham in Wiltshire, shopkeeper and another ‘Gentleman’, Giles Lucas also of Highclere. Benjamin Millward and William Morrish agreed with William Coleman for the sale to him of all the properties for the price or sum of £500. It was agreed that the remaining debt of £401. 16s. 1½d due to Henry Brown should be paid and the remaining £98. 3s. 10½d paid to Benjamin Millward and William Morrish.

On 1 July 1797 part of the larger estate was split off. There is an Indenture of Feoffment of three parts with livery of seisin thereon endowed made between William Morrish, Solomon Leonard of St Philip and Jacob in the County of Gloucestershire Maltster, a trustee for William Morrish and William Coleman. In English law, feoffment was the total relinquishment and transfer of all rights of ownership of an estate in land from one individual to another. The term livery of seisin means transfer of possession. The property is described as...

*“all that piece and parcel of Ground adjoining the Court Yard and Barton of William Coleman containing 43 feet on the south side, 19 feet on the west side, 33 feet on the north side and 30 feet on the east side which he William Coleman had lately enclosed and thereon was a pool of water. Also two pieces of Ground adjoining the same premises and whereon William Coleman had erected and built two stair cases belonging to two cottages or dwelling houses and being in the Court Yard or Barton of William Coleman then in the tenure or occupation of William Craymer and James Hudson as tenants”.*

William Coleman died in 1799 leaving no issue or will so the premises went to John Coleman his only brother and heir at law. John Coleman died in 1818 and he left his wife Elizabeth Coleman “*all his household goods, household furniture, watch chain and seals, clothes, linen, plate and china and also all his wine, ale, beer and other liquors stores and provisions in or about his dwelling house and premises owned at the time of his death*”. He also left his friends James Wood of Keynsham, Butcher, Robert Shaul, Cordwainer and Edward Selfe, Salesman both of Melksham his property at Keynsham and all his other real estate. They were to let the properties at the best yearly rents they could obtain and pay these rents and profits after deducting all necessary repairs to his wife Elizabeth Coleman during her lifetime, and after her death to Hester Morrish wife of William Morrish Maltster for her lifetime independent of her present or future husband absolutely free from his power or control. After the death of Hester Morrish all the rents and profits were to go to Maria Hutchings, daughter of William Morrish and Hester Morrish, and wife of Samuel Hutchings of Bristol, tape weaver, again independent of any husband.

At this time George Sladdon Esq was lessee of Yew Tree house and William Morrish occupied the woad yard, barn and adjoining premises. There were also two tenements or dwelling houses yard gardens and premises formerly occupied by William Cremor and James Hudson and the pasture land called Lime Kiln Ground occupied by George Sladdon as lessee and the two tenements or dwelling houses formerly occupied by Amos Taviner and Samuel Rumsey. After the death of Maria Hutchings, the close of land and two tenements would be shared between any children of Maria Hutchings by Samuel Hutchings. If there were none or they had all died, then

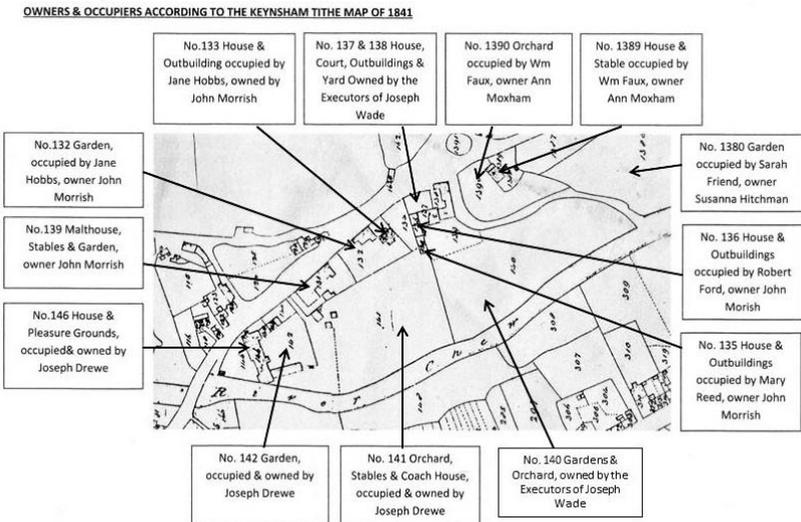
the property defaulted to John Morrish. He stipulated that after the deaths of both Elizabeth Coleman and Hester Morrish the Title Deeds of the premises were to be delivered to John Morrish. He also gave James Wood, Robert Shaul and Edward Selfe the sum of £100 being part of the sum of £160 owed to him by William Morrish. He appointed James Wood, Robert Shaul and Edward Selfe as Executors of his Will

The next date relating to the property is in 1836. However, at this point the will of John Racker Webb gives an insight into some characters already mentioned. John Racker Webb had died in 1830 aged 70 in Keynsham, Jamaica and in the will he releases William Morrish from the debt of £300 and William's son and John Racker Webb's nephew, John Morrish the debt of £500. The £500 had been secured by a mortgage on certain Keynsham properties. To his niece Hester Morrish, the youngest daughter of William Morrish, he left an annuity of £20 a year for her lifetime.

In July 1836 John Morrish arranged a Mortgage of £450 with George Goff of the parish of Wraxhall who was a schoolmaster. The property concerned was the house, garden, coach house, outlet and premises occupied by George Sladdon Esq as lessee called Yew Tree House, the woad yard, barn and premises occupied by William Morrish, and two houses, yard, gardens and premises occupied by William Cremor (Craymer?) and James Hudson. It stated that Elizabeth Coleman and Hester Morrish had both died and that John Morrish was building a Malt House on the premises above described as a Woad Yard and Barn. The condition of the mortgage was that if John Morrish did not pay him on the 23 January 1837 the sum of £450 together with the interest paid at the rate of £5 for every £100 for a year then the agreement would be void. He had to

insure the premises against fire for £300 and finish the construction of the malt house and buildings.

The 1841 Tithe map reveals that plot 131, a malt house, stable and garden, was owned and occupied by John Morrish. He also owned plots 132 to 136. Jane Hobbs occupied a garden Plot 132 and a house and outbuilding Plot 133. Plot 134 was a garden occupied by Mary Reed and Robert Ford who also occupied the houses and outbuildings on Plots 135 and 136. Plots 141 to 146 were owned By Joseph Drewe. He occupied Plot 146 described as house, outbuildings and pleasure grounds, also Plot 141 described as orchard, stable and coach house, and Plot 142, a garden. This is believed to have been Flanders House. Plots 143 and 145 were houses occupied by Amy Robbins and Thomas Cox who also shared a garden Plot 144.



1841 and 1842 were not good years for the Morrish family. On the 28 May 1841 John Morrish signed an Indenture of Mortgage to borrow a further £300 from William Ambrose Shaw Esquire of the City of Bath. The premises had to be insured against loss by fire to the sum of £800.

On June 15 1841 John Morrish the younger (son of John Morrish of Keynsham) of the City of Bristol is declared bankrupt. He is described as a bottled liquor and porter merchant.

On the 29 and 30 June 1841 there was an Indenture of Lease and Release made between George Goff of the first part, John Morrish (senior), William Ambrose Shaw and Joseph Drew of the City of Bath, Gentleman. It stated that John Morrish had proposed to William Ambrose Shaw that he should pay off the sum of £470 owing to George Goff and to take a transfer of security and had also requested that William Ambrose Shaw make a further advance to him, John Morrish, of £30 making with the sum of £300 secured by the mortgage, the sum of £800. William Ambrose Shaw consented to such a proposal on condition that the properties should be granted to Joseph Drew in trust for sale in order to secure the sum of £800. This meant that George Goff received £470 from William Ambrose Shaw and relinquished any interest in the properties.

John Morrish was still in debt to the tune of £800 with an interest rate of 5%. Repayments were due twice yearly on 30 June and 30 December. So long as the payments were met John Morrish could remain in occupation of the property. If the payment of the £800 plus interest was not made Joseph Drewe could give John Morrish six calendar months' notice in writing

that he would proceed to a sale of the properties unless everything was paid at the end of the six months. After the sale, either by auction or private contract, was made then William Ambrose Shaw and Joseph Drewe would get their money back with interest. If there was any surplus it would be paid to John Morrish. However, in September 1841 John Morrish of Keynsham, Maltster, Dealer and Chapman was listed as Bankrupt in the London Gazette. In 1824 John had been elected a Deacon of Keynsham Baptist Church but was removed as such in 1841 as he had used £100 that he held in trust for a poor widow and her children for his own use and was stigmatised as a bankrupt.

On 11 November 1841, the following advert appeared in the Bath Chronicle...

*“To be sold by Auction by Mr Wall at the Lamb and Lark Keynsham on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1841 at 5 o’clock by order of the Assignees of John Morrish a bankrupt. The Equity of Redemption of and in the following Freehold Property All that substantial and New Built Malt House and stable and the garden belonging thereto late in the occupation of said bankrupt and also a Dwelling House and garden in the occupation of Miss Hobbs and 2 Cottages and gardens in the occupation of Thomas Reed and Robert Ford. The above Premises are situated at Keynsham adjoining the Turnpike road leading from Bristol to Bath”.*

The London Gazette in 1842 has the following entry under the Court for Relief of Insolvent Debtors. At the Court House of the City of Bristol on the 14 day of July 1842 at 10 o’clock in the Forenoon exactly. *“William Morrish, formerly of Keynsham Somerset near Bristol, Tallow Chandler, in co-partnership with Henry Morrish of Keynsham, as Brewers and*

*Cider Dealers, and lately lodging in Tyley's Street, St Philips, Bristol, Collector of Rents.*" Both William and Henry were sons of John Morrish of Keynsham but it would appear that the whole family had money problems. The property was again put up for sale by Joseph Drewe and advertised as for sale by auction on July 28 1842.

It was at this auction that William Gregory bought Lot 3 for the sum of £315. He paid a deposit of £33 to Uriah Lewis, the auctioneer, documented by a memorandum dated 18 August 1845. The remaining £282 was paid in February 1846, documented by an indenture made 4 February 1846 between Joseph Drewe of Bath Gentleman William Ambrose Shaw late of Bath but now Wickham Lodge, Camden Hill, Kensington, Esquire, William Gregory Innkeeper and Edward Roberts of Keynsham Gentleman. Then, unfortunately William Gregory died, aged 57, and was buried at Keynsham on 18 April 1846. Sarah Gregory, his wife, was his sole executor of his last will and testament dated about 7 April 1846, and by 1849 Sarah Gregory and Howell Wellington Jelfs were Trustees of the estate. They sold the malt house and lofts, stable and other buildings with the garden enclosed with a wall next to the turnpike road from Bristol to Bath to George Sheppard for the sum of £345 (this is now the New Inn).

A Declaration by George Sheppard and Harriet Collier dated 12 October 1865 related to the demolition of the malt house and stables on Bath Hill and the building of 10 cottages in 1849. They state that they pulled down the buildings and then erected ten cottages now known as "Colliers Row" or Bath Hill Cottages. Their first tenants were George Packer, Christopher Andrews, John Derrick, Robert Shortman, William Ford, Henry Cooper, Charles Lewis, Martha Broadrubb, Joseph

# KEYNSHAM, SOMERSET.

*Midway between Bath and Bristol.*

TO BE SOLD BY

# AUCTION,

BY

**Mr. U. LEWIS,**  
On **MONDAY, JULY 28,**

1845, AT THE

**LAMB INN, KEYNSHAM,**

At Five o'Clock in the Afternoon.

(Subject to such Conditions as will be then produced.) THE UNDERMENTIONED

# FREEHOLD PREMISES,

IN LOTS; VIZ.:

**Lot 1.** All those **TWO FREEHOLD COTTAGES**, with Gardens, Outhouse, and Offices, belonging to the same, now tenanted by **ROBERT FORD** and **THOMAS REED**, as Tenants from Year to Year.

**Lot 2.** All that **FREEHOLD DWELLING-HOUSE**, with large Walled Garden behind the same, stocked with Fruit Trees, adapted for a respectable Residence; consisting of 2 good-sized Front Parlours, 6 Bedrooms, Kitchen, Back Kitchen, excellent underground Cellar, and other requisite Offices; most desirably situated on **DRAGON'S HILL**, and possessing extensive Views of the surrounding Country; now tenanted by Miss **EMILY ANDREW**, as Tenant from Year to Year.

**Lot 3.** All that **substantial, well-arranged FREEHOLD MALTHOUSE**, recently built, at an outlay of £700, with spacious Lofts of the best materials; also, the Walled Garden, Stable, and Yard adjoining; having a never-failing Well of good Water and Pump on the Premises, adjoining the Turnpike Road, against which it has a frontage of 140 feet. The House is capable of wetting 20 quarters of Barley, and may be easily adapted for the convenience of a less Trade.

**Lot 4.** All that **FREEHOLD ENCLOSED GARDEN-GROUND**, adjoining the Road leading from Keynsham to Burnett, most advantageously situated for Building, having a frontage of 195 feet in length against the same Road and about 80 feet in width, occupied by **ROBERT FORD** and **THOMAS REED**, as Yearly Tenants.

All the above Premises are situate in the Parish of **KEYNSHAM**, about five minutes' walk from the Railway Station, and adjoining the Bath and Bristol Turnpike Road.—N.B. The Purchasers may have two-thirds of the Purchase-Money on Mortgage at an Interest of Four per Cent., if required.

The Tenants will show the several Lots; and any further Particulars, and the Conditions of Sale, may be obtained of the Auctioneer, **New-Bond-Street Place**; or of **Mr. DREWE**, Solicitor, No. 10, **Laura Place, Bath.** [WOOD BROTHERS, TYPE. BATH.]

Auction poster from 1842

Withers and John Carpenter. On 6 December 1865 George Sheppard was granted a mortgage by the Trustees of the Perpetual Benefit Building Society for the sum of £300 and he managed to repay the whole mortgage by 5 August 1870. Sometime later the cottages were sold as individual properties.



Above - The New Inn in 1910. Below - The Parcel of Land in 1883

