

A BRIEF HISTORY OF KILMINGTON



Major General G.M. Elliot CB, CBE, DSO, MC, DL.

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by

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FOREWORD

There has been a request for a BRIEF history of this village and the surrounding countryside.

This is a very amateurish effort to meet this request. It makes no claims to infallibility - in fact I am sure that it contains many errors - but it tries to give the PROBABLE TRUTH after sifting the conflicting evidence of many experts. For brevity does not admit of any other alternative.

Appendices, which need not be read, explain some unusual words and give other details.

This effort originated in a request from Kilmington Women's Institute to all its members to find out everything they could about the history of this village. My wife enlisted my help. I did my best and then got so interested that I went on with it.

Since then I have been given a great deal of help from this Institute, Mr Charles Snell, Mr Harry Hurford and many others for which I am very grateful.

Also I gratefully acknowledge the great help I have received from various histories, particularly those by H.G. Wells, Thorn, Lockyer and Smith, and the seven volumes of the Pelican History of England.

As I am no author I have often taken a sentence complete from one of these

G.M.E.

I am very grateful to many friends in Kilmington who have made it possible to reproduce this short history of our village which my husband was still working on shortly before he died in 1969.

I am glad that it is now being published for the interest of those who live in Kilmington. He enjoyed doing the research, and the booklet is being published just as he wrote it. The illustrations are reproduced from old prints lent by friends in the village.

Margaret Elliot

Breach
Kilmington

November 1981

In 1994 the booklet was reprinted for the Parish Council to mark the Centenary of Parish Councils.

In 2012 this edition, with a new layout, was prepared by one of the current owners of Breach (BJL) and the printing costs funded by Kilmington Table Tennis Club.

We are grateful to Les Berry and Liz Berry (elizbee2002@yahoo.com) who provided the cover photograph and the original versions of many of the illustrations.

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I THE DAYS OF LONG AGO

The first time that man probably walked over this country- side was 50,000 years ago.

This seems a long time but I was shattered to learn that Earth's History goes back 3,000 Million years and therefore that this 50,000 years is only equivalent to the last hour of an average lifetime of 70 years.

50,000 years ago the British Isles and Iceland were solidly joined to the Continent in one vast mass, and great 'land bridges' existed across the Mediterranean at Gibraltar and Sicily.

If you can believe it, the great Polar Ice Cap of those days reached down to smother everything North of a rough line from Bristol to London and then on to Warsaw, while the Alps had their own fantastic separate ice cap which smothered all their valleys to a depth of 3,000 feet!

So the man who sparsely inhabited Southern England then must have been very tough. He was. In fact he was Neanderthal Man, the ogre of old stories.

True Man in those days was thickly populating the fertile valleys of the Nile, the Jordan, the Tigris and the Euphrates in the Middle East and a few adventurous spirits were beginning to filter across the Gibraltar Land Bridge.

The first traces of him in Southern England show that he arrived there about 20,000 years ago. In Devon these traces have only been found in four places - in caves near Plymouth, Brixham and Torquay AND in the river gravels near Axminster. So it seems probable that true man walked over our fields in the bitter cold 20,000 years ago.

The Records of the Rocks are now silent until about 7,000 years ago. From them it seems very probably that by then the seas had gradually risen 3 - 400 feet as the Ice Cap receded. We became an Island and the land barrier at Gibraltar was broken, flooding the Mediterranean fairly rapidly. Some experts connect this with the Bible story of Noah's Ark.

Although this village did not exist in those far off days (when one historian estimates that there were only' about two dozen inhabitants in the whole of Devon) something which we all use frequently was here about 6,000 years ago. It fascinates me.

For those were the days of the Bronze Age in the Middle East and the essential ingredients of bronze are copper and TIN. The latter was then being produced in very high quality in Cornwall and was being exported to the Middle East. It came out of Cornwall along the Great Western Road which, in this parish, used the line marked on our maps now as Roman Road. For the Romans, in their time later on, took it over and improved it. It came through the woods over the spur of Shute Hill and then past Hill Crest, Gowrie House, the Garage, our War Memorial, the Old Inn, Gammons Hill Farm and the Old Butter Factory. Despite its high sounding name it was, of course, no modern arterial road with huge lorries travelling on it,

but merely a track hacked out of the primeval forest and used by teams of pack ponies. These were probably unshod, carrying small rough bells and accompanied by a few drovers - much the same as their counterpart which I used to meet in the hills in India not so long ago. To get the 'feel' of it go to Hill Crest and walk out on the Roman Road until you can see nothing but trees all round you. Then stand quietly and try to imagine the scuffle of hooves, the gentle noises of the little bells on varying notes and the occasional cry from a drover.

As the Ice Cap receded the rainfall had greatly increased and this encouraged forest growth except in the chalk areas which could not support it, and which incidentally end about the Devon/Dorset border quite close to this village. The forest was of oak and alder with dense, tangled undergrowth and was still thicker in the damp valleys. So much so that the people of Devon then largely lived and travelled on the ridges about 500 feet up to avoid it. (Shute Hill is just over 500 feet high).

The records are again silent until about 2,500 B.C. when fresh waves of immigrants began to come over by sea. Most of them preferred the chalk but some came to Devon to swell the local tribe of the Dumnonii. Their capital was at the great causewayed camp at Hembury, 3 miles NE of Honiton. Celtic immigrants then continued to arrive in waves through the centuries and the neighbouring tribe of the Durotriges in Dorset became very powerful and warlike. In the first or second centuries B.C. the Dumnonii built their great frontier forts against them including Membury, Musbury, Lambert's and Stockland Castles and also Hawkesdown and Dumpdon. These were all built for 'sling warfare' (see Appendix A) which was then prevalent.



Gammons Hill

II THE ROMAN OCCUPATION

This lasted about 400 years - from AD 43 to 410.

Few traces of it remain in Devon except for -

Two great Roman Roads.

Two Roman Settlements - at Topsham and Plymouth.

Two Roman Villas (see Appendix A) - near Seaton and Lyme Regis.

During those 400 years -

A network of first-class roads was established.

Many cities and towns, including Exeter, were born.

The foundations of our civilisation were laid.

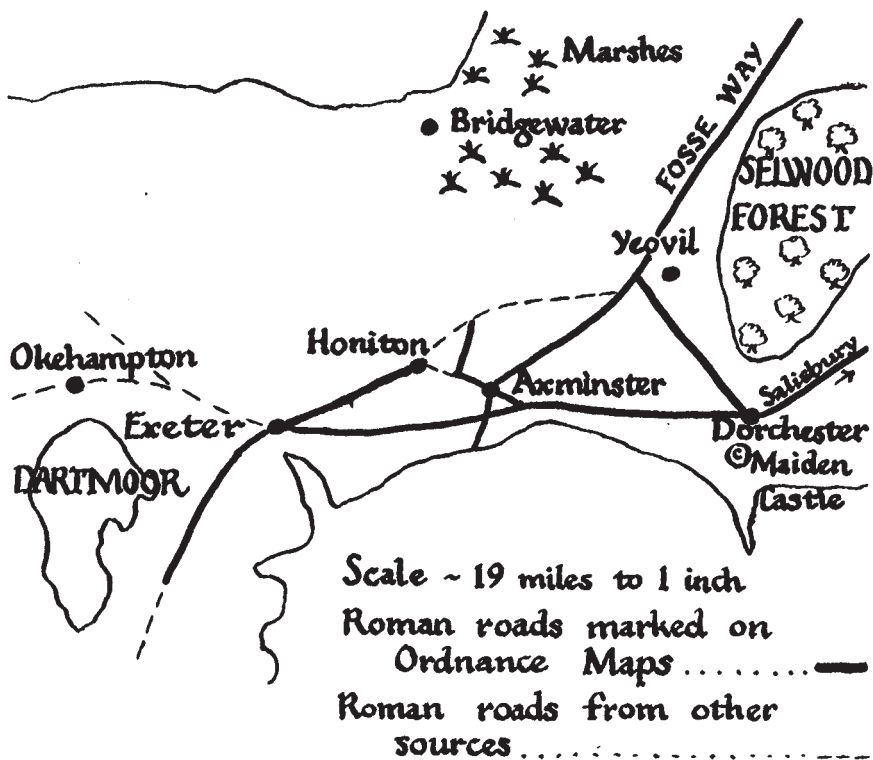
Education of youth was started.

And, most important of all, Christianity was brought to our country. Only in a small way in those 400 years, but it arrived to form the basis of all subsequent beneficial reforms.

The lay-out of the Roman Roads had considerable effect on this countryside. They had to avoid the great Selwood Forest of those days which lay, across all our modern rail and road communications to London, except one. So the great Roman Road from London to the West came down from Salisbury to Dorchester and thence along A35 through Bridport to Exeter. The other great one, the Fosse Way, started at Axmouth (an important port in those days) and passed through Axminster, Ilchester and Bath to join the great Roman Road to the North at Lincoln. A branch Roman Road switched off at Charmouth through Axminster and this village and thence to Honiton and up over Stockland Hill.

Axminster thus became a very important point very early as two Roman Roads crossed there and one crossed the River Axe nearby. Colyford, near the crossing over the River Axe of the Roman Road along the old line of A35, also assumed importance in those early days.

If you are interested in the wonderful pre-historic fort of Maiden Castle near Dorchester the existence in those days of Selwood Forest explains its great importance. For it guarded the gap between that forest and the sea on the main route to the South-West.



III THE DARK AGES

When the Romans withdrew, the Dark Ages began in Britain. Local chieftains seized power, held it for a while and then fell. Finally one of them called in the Saxons as mercenaries. They helped him and then turned on him and seized power themselves. Once this foothold was established Saxons swarmed into this country as settlers. Petty kingdoms arose divided from each other by the great forests and marshes which then existed. The South West under their legendary King Arthur resisted the Saxons for a hundred years but, in the end, was also overrun and settled by them.

These Saxon settlers brought the heavy plough and the axe which they used with a will to start clearing the valleys of forest and scrub. So they helped us a great deal.

Then the Danish Great Army landed on our East coast and before very long East Anglia, Yorkshire, Lancashire and the Northern Midlands were conquered and came under Danelaw. But they met their match in King Alfred who twice defeated them heavily and saved the South West.

As time went by other Danish Forces landed in several other places and struck inland. Several places were organised as combined centres of resistance and places of refuge and were called 'burhs'. (see Appendix A).

One of these Danish Forces landed at Axmouth in AD 937 and was completely routed by King Athelstan in a great battle in the valley of the Axe near Musbury. This is proved by two documents in the British Museum, one of which quotes the Danish casualties as -

“ V kings, VIIJ Erles, a busshope and IX score thousand men as a boke old written doth testyfy”.

And tradition (see Appendix A) holds strongly that a yew tree was planted then in our churchyard to mark the spot at which large number of those slain in this battle were buried. A stone laid flat in the grass now marks this spot in our churchyard. To find it enter by the South gate and, where the path swings left to the Church porch, turn right and take about 7 paces towards a grave marked by a large stone cross.

In these Dark Ages there was one great shaft of light, the conversion of the whole of this country to Christianity. This had, of course, started during the Roman occupation but the converts were few in number and relapses into paganism were common.

Then in AD 400 St Patrick was born in a Christian family in the South West just before the Romans left. When he was 16 an Irish raiding party took him off a captive to Ireland. Six years later he escaped to Gaul but returned to Ireland after he had had a vision calling him back there to work for Christ. He spent the rest of his life there working devotedly and founding the Celtic Christian Church and spreading it back into the South West where he was born.

In AD 563, long after he was dead, one of his great disciples, St Columba, sailed from Northern Ireland to Iona to spread it into Scotland.

Thirty-four years later St Augustine landed in Kent with orders from the Pope to bring all England into the fold. He accomplished much in Kent and East Anglia but the real progress came from Iona which founded Lindisfarne, or Holy Island as it is also called, and then spread rapidly Southwards.

IV THE BIRTH OF THE VILLAGE

It is very probably that our village has been in existence for just over a thousand years.

My reasons for this statement are:

The earliest written record is in Domesday Book (1087) (See Appendix A). In it this village is shown as the Manor of Chinemetona in ‘Hundred of Axminster’ (see below).

When the Normans came they allowed any old, well-established Hundreds which had proved themselves to be a practicable, working concern to continue as such.

That Axminster Hundred was a practicable, working concern is proved by the amazing fact that it continued to be the basis of local government in this area until about 1842 (over 750 years)!

So it seems very probable that Axminster Hundred and this village existed well before 1087.

At the other end of the scale it seems that it did not exist before 755 which is the earliest date I have found for the existence of Axminster. And the latter had such an important site that it seems that it must have been founded before we were.

But, perhaps, not so very long before because a Roman Road passes through this village and we were out of the valley and so clear of the densest scrub growth. And some clearance must have been effected here before the Roman Road was made along the line of the famous old "Great Western Road" which carried the Cornish tin on pack horses.

The next relevant fact which I have found recorded is that many villages were founded between the years 900 and 950 A.D.

And the next is the tradition about the Yew Tree in 937.

The probable truth seems to be, therefore, that this village came into existence somewhere about A.D. 925.



V THE 'HUNDRED' OF AXMINSTER

King Alfred had established the Shires of England which, in this part of the country at any rate, were much the same as they are today, but with some extraordinary exceptions. These Shires were divided into Hundreds. They were called that because they were supposed to contain a hundred 'hides' of land.

This term hide was derived from the old word 'hiwid' meaning a household or family; and the definition of it was:

the amount of land required by one free family and its dependents or as much as can be tilled by one plough in a year.

As both of these are such delightfully vague definitions the size of Hundreds varied considerably.

The Hundred of Axminster included the present-day parishes of Axminster, Axmouth, Combyne Rousdon, Uplyme, Musbury, KILMINGTON, Membury, Yarcombe, Upottery, Luppitt, Combe Raleigh, Honiton and Thorncombe.

The last was a Devon 'island' in Dorset.

Chardstock and Hawkchurch were in Dorset.

And Stockland and Dalwood were a Dorset 'island' in Devon.

It was a queer, sickle shaped area very different from the compact neighbouring Hundred of Colyton.

It is difficult to believe that Stockland and Dalwood belonged to Dorset for centuries but two solid proofs of this still remain.

If you go to Stockland you will find a bridge with a Dorset County notice still on it telling you that you will be transported for life if you damage it!

And, if you walk up the Roman Road in this village through what were lovely woods not long ago you will find, on the right of the road just where the woods end, a huge rounded stone. This is an old County Boundary Stone and marks the spot where the parishes of Kilmington, Shute and Dalwood meet.

VI EARLY DAYS IN THE VILLAGE

In its early days this village was a manor in the Hundred of Axminster. It was owned by Earl Lewin (see Appendix A). The Manor House was on the present site of Coryton Farm. No traces of it remain because, like all the others, it was made of timber.

The manor was divided up into three main parts:

the 'demesne' set aside for the Lord and managed by his bailiff,

land divided up among the 'churls' (freemen) in return for rent or services,

common land which was allotted in strips, rather than in blocks, so that each man had his share of both good and bad land.

There was a Manor Court to settle its affairs presided over by the Lord's Steward and attended by a 'reeve' chosen by the tenants to look after their interests. Once a month there was a Hundred Court (or Moot, see Appendix A) at Axminster to settle local affairs and try minor infringements of the law. This was convenient for our people but quite a walk from Honiton or Upton. More serious offences went before the Shire Court presided over by the Shire Reeve -the Sheriff of today.

Below the churls came the slaves - the old inhabitants of the area. For the Anglo-Saxon word for a Briton came to be used to denote a slave.

The basis of coinage was Offa's Silver Penny. The price of a sheep was 4d or 5d. So that the penny must have been worth about a pound note in 1966.

Punishment was brutal. The loss of a limb was a lenient sentence. Hanging and forfeiture of property was usual for theft, arson or treachery to one's Lord. The ordeal was still used as a direct appeal to God to tell them the truth. An accused was thrown into holy water. If he floated he was guilty. So it was up to him to sink once or twice to the bottom to save his life!

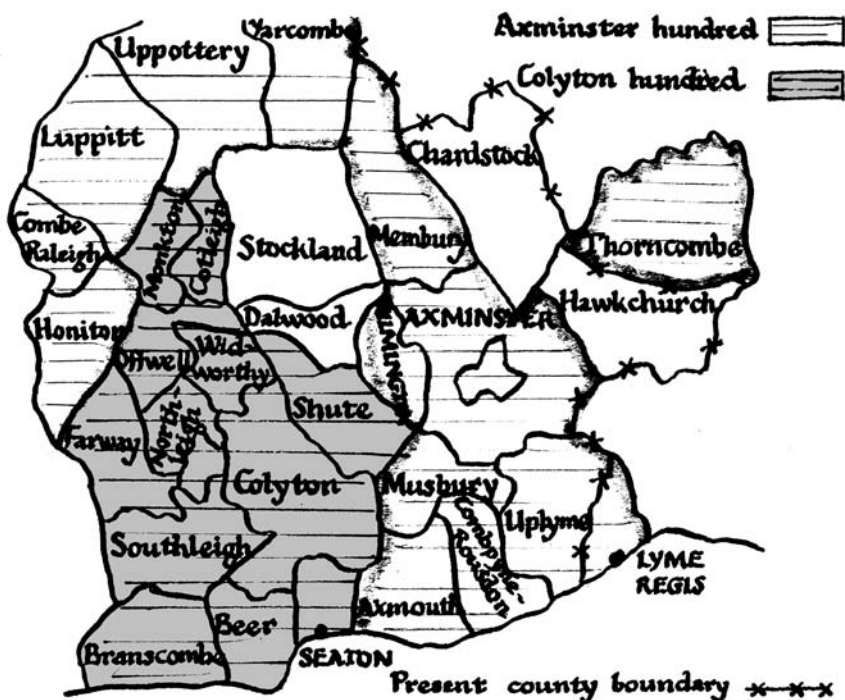
Men lived their lives under the protecting hand of the Church. They took its oaths in Court and traded under its watchful eye and the Church put the law into writing, used its influence to mitigate the lot of the slaves, and was the sole means for the spread of education.

The plough was drawn by 8 oxen. Few Churls had as many so they helped each other. Corn was ground by the 'hand quern' (two circular stones the top one of which was revolved by hand) or in water mills of which there were eleven in the Axe nearby.

Bee-keeping was important as honey was the sole means of sweetening and also the main ingredient of 'mead' (see Appendix A). Salt was vital for seasoning and also for preserving meat and fish. That was no problem here as there were salt pans at Seaton.

Bull baiting and cock fighting were the main outdoor amusements for men.

The women, over and above their terrific job in the home both now and then, were the best needlewomen in Europe at that time. For not long afterwards they were chosen to make the famous Bayeux Tapestry, 230 feet long, about 2 foot high and embroidered in blue, green, red and yellow.



VII ITS NAME

Through the centuries our village has had several names, most of which resembled the others in some way. They were -

- In 1087 CHINEMETONA
- In 1219 & 1231 KILMETON
- In 1271 KELMINTON
- In 1296 KILMENTON JUXTA AXMINISTERE
- In 1346 KULMYNGTON
- In 1605 KILMENTON or KILMAENTON (by Pole the Antiquary)
- In 1809 KILMINGTON. On the first 1" to 1 mile Ordnance Map and on all subsequent Editions.
- In 1840 CULMITON was the name used by its inhabitants according to Pulman in his "Book of the Axe".

From the "Concise Oxford Dictionary of Place Names" which is based on an impressive list of ancient documents, it seems very probably that -tun or -ton means a fence, enclosure, homestead, village or town.

Chine means ridge or spine.
-ing or -yng means followers of.
Ku or Kiln meant kitchen or burning place.
men or maen meant stone.
Keld often appears in places to denote a well or spring.
We certainly have a famous one in Kate's Well.

The following are the ideas of some experts:

- "The place of the stone built Church" (Ku — maen — ton)
- "The place of the slain men" (Ku — men — ton). From Risdeon based on the Yew Tree Grave in AD 937 and from Pole the Anquary.
- "The place of the common meadow". We certainly had a large Common for centuries. (See Map).
- "The place of the followers of Culm" (Concise Oxford Dictionary of Place Names).

The probable truth seems to be that the last meaning given above is the correct one.

VIII 1066 AND ALL THAT!

My schoolboy impressions of the Normans were very different from those which I have gathered recently by reading several historians.

I see them now in probably their true light as a set of French adventurers who came here for what they could grab, who turned every English freeman into a slave, who bled us white in men and money to help them fight their enemies and relations in France, who took over huge tracts of our land as private hunting forests punishing poachers with the utmost savagery, and who spent most of their time abroad.

As an example Richard Coeur de Lion, the hero of many schoolboys some time ago and who reigned for 10 years of which just 6 months were spent in this country, once said that he would sell London if he could find a bidder, and made us ransom him — at a cost equivalent to two million pounds today - because he had been stupidly rude to the Emperor Henry VI at Acre.

Modern historians have described him as; "A Frenchman in speech and blood whose interest in England was limited to its soldiers and its taxes" and; "A bad son, a bad husband and a bad king but a gallant and splendid soldier".

And so it was that, when the Normans came, the people of our village touched the depths of misery. They lost at once their precious status as freemen. They lost the Lordship of their manor and several of the best properties to Frenchmen. And they lost the precious right to take game from Shute Deer Forest which, in those days, was huge and extended into the woods on the slopes of Shute Hill.

Even Magna Carta meant nothing to them then. For all the rights granted on that historic occasion were confined to FREE men and, in those days and for many, many years, only the French were free in this country of ours.



IX THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES (1087 – 1299)

This is a quick skip through a couple of centuries mentioning only events of interest in this countryside and an occasional historic date to relate them to national events.

- 1087 Mathew de Toriton Lord of our Manor.
- 1168 Forde Abbey founded.
- 1190 Ball's Dairy (near Coryton Park) given to Walter de Ball.
- 1201 Monks from Forde Abbey founded Dunkswell Abbey.
- 1210 Axminster stall holders received their market charter from King John.
And still jealously guard those rights today.
- 1215 Magna Carta.
- 1238 Honiton became a 'borough'.
- 1246 Newenham Abbey founded. Historians say that it was of outstanding grace and beauty. If you look into the valley a little to the right of Axminster you will see Abbey Farm with its modern long, low, white 'Shippen'. This farm now stands on the old Abbey site.
- 1256 Fordhayes mentioned in a document.
- 1265 Colyford became a 'borough' with a Mayor although it only had 15 houses!
- 1266 Sir Nicholas de Bonvill bequeathed Studhayes to Newenham Abbey. And Robert Weston, Lord of our Manor, issued this document -
"And as for the Abbot of Newenham he hath nothing to do in the said lordshypp out of the highe ways no further than to his land at Studhayes. The

said Abbot shall stand within the Court Yeate of Studhayes and take his right ear in his lyfte hand and put his right arm next to his bodye under his left arm and so cast his reape hooke from him and so far he shall common and no further.” (That must have cramped his style a bit, but the right of ‘common’ measure by sickle throw was a matter of great antiquity).

This document went on to say -

“And as for a house with half an aker of ground (the Old Parish House in the grounds of Spring Cottage) I have given to the paryshe of Kilmington to sell ale upon to the mayntenance of the chapell .“

- 1272 Hills Farm, Dulcis and Newer mentioned.
- 1276 The Abbot of Forde Abbey excommunicated his bishop, who promptly returned the compliment! This must be an all time record. At any rate Edward I had to intervene and made the Abbot do a penance.
- 1284 Lyme Regis became a Free Borough.
- 1288 The earliest written record I have found of the existence of our Church. But I have also found another written record to the effect that, at this time, all over England the rising prosperity was shown by the crop of new parish churches which replaced the heavy, ill-lit buildings of Norman times.

X THE LATE MIDDLE AGES (1300 — 1557)

This is another quick skip through the centuries on much the same lines as the previous one.

- 1300 An interesting old document describes the general conditions in England at this time as follows -

“The forests were shrinking and there was now far more land in cultivation. There were new towns too. Most of our exports were the traditional ones encouraged by the Romans - iron, tin, lead and, above all, WOOL. About 8 million fleeces left each year.

The manufacture of cloth was increasing. It could not compete with Europe but its quality was unsurpassed.

It was becoming possible to use a rudimentary form of Cheque! And to go on trading missions without carrying a load of money.

Lords were now writing down elaborate customs of the manor which outlined the services due from tenants.

- 1304 The Cobb was built at Lyme Regis. Ralph de Shapwick, Lord of our Manor at odds with the Abbot of Newenham over an unjust assize of bread and ale and the right of a ‘cucking stool’ at Kilminster. A cucking stool or COKYNSTOLE was very much like the well known stocks. Offenders were fastened on a large stool which was put either in a public place or outside their own front door. Passers by then hurled abuse or other things at them.
- 1330 Vealhays mentioned.
- 1349 The BLACK DEATH. In Newenham Abbey 23 out of the 26 monks and 88 Abbey servants died. These heavy casualties were caused by the devoted work of the monks among victims of the plague.
- 1362 English at last became the official language in Parliament and the Law Courts. (After 300 years of French!)
- 1400 Weycroft Manor was built.
- 1460 The Bonvilles of Shute Manor (at Shute Barton) changed sides in the Wars of the Roses and, as a result, all males of the family were either killed or executed.
- 1509 Axmouth now hopelessly blocked as a port by river silt.
- 1534 The Reformation
- 1537 Hillside Close very probably existed with monks from Newenham Abbey as its inhabitants. For the old lead pump over its courtyard well had this date on it and ecclesiastical carvings have been found there.
- 1539 Newenham Abbey utterly destroyed in Henry VIII’s monastery blitz. But Forde Abbey escaped untouched.
- 1553 Shute Manor had its second great tragedy. For Lady Jane Grey, at the age of 17, was married, Queen of England and executed all within 9 days!
- 1555 Clifthorne and Gammons Hill Farms mentioned - the latter as belonging to Crittofer Gammon. Also Ballshayes, Cory ton, Duishayes, Hills, Loughwood, Lynhayes (believed to have been near Summerleaze Farm), Studhayes, Uphay, Vealhays.
- An old record states that Kilminster then had a manor, 2 houses, 41 places and 8 coots (or cottages). A house was then defined as an important dwelling excluding the manor. Also a Parish House and a Church House.
- 1578 The main source of income for the Parish was then Church Ale!

XI ELIZABETHAN DAYS (1555 -1605)

By great good fortune we still have our Churchwarden's Accounts for this period. These tell us a great deal about life in this village in those days.

From them it is obvious that:

The parish was then run by the Church, helped by the constable.
(See Appendix A)

We then had a Church House, a Priest's House and a Parish House. The latter for "the brewing of ale for the maintenance of the Church".

The sale of ale was our sole source of income until 1581! Then a 'ratement' was introduced. This was based on an assessment of the proportion of any expenses which each home should bear. This started in 1581 and, in 1588, the sale of ale came back as an additional source of income.

The Churchwardens ran the village on behalf of the Church. These were sometimes ladies.

The Dare family, who have supplied our People's Warden for the last 46 years, also supplied Churchwardens then at times.

Some interesting items from these Churchwarden's Accounts are given below. The spelling was at times fantastic. e.g. "A Rat singed and grated for the relief of the pore". But I will not attempt to repeat any more here.

The prices given should be related to the facts that a sheep then cost 6/4d, a labourer's wage then was 6d per day and a carpenter's 10d. From that it seems probable that a penny then was equivalent to a shilling today (1966).

EXTRACTS FROM THE ACCOUNTS

Credits:

Sale of ale varying between 23/- and 67/2 a year.

Ratements varying between 25/- and 51/- per year.

For crabs (apples) from the common 3d.

Boughs of the elms in the green 6d.

Debits:

1559 For mending the old chest in the Church (It is still there).

1561 2 men to ride to the Bishop. Upkeep of wall of Axminster Churchyard,,
(An ever recurring item as we were then a Chapel of Ease to Axminster our dead had to be buried there and we had to keep up 84 ft of the churchyard wall in compensation)

1562 For an excommunication in the Parish

- 1563 For the Parish to set forth soldiers. For delivering a bill at Exeter of the number of householders in the Parish. For the making of the beacon at Shute. To Sir Colman (Curate) for making an obligation between parish and brewer.
- 1564 Mending the great vat for brewing.
- 1567 The purchase of a foteball iiiid.
- 1568 For Shute Beacon (again). For meat and fire for the poor woman born in a barrow. For watch and ward of prisoner, carrying him to Exeter, his entry into prison and a quart of cider!
- 1570 For mending the Parish House.
- 1572 For brewer's fees 2/-. Now a constantly recurring item.
- 1576 For the bullock that was rated to the Queen!
- 1577 To the ringers when they did ring for the Queen. To the Constable for training the soldiers. For mending and cleaning the parish harnis (armour). This recurs in 1587 and 1591.
- 1579 A book of prayer for the Earthquake. Mending the parish kettle.
- 1581 To John Rougge (3/6d) and John Seller (3/4d) for being excommunicated.
- 1585 For prisoners and the poor at Honiton.
- 1588 To the ringers for a special ringing of the bells for the defeat of the Armada. For trimming the Parish House whereat the priest lyeth.
- 1589 To pay fine levied on the parish for not possessing a Bible.
- 1590 To buy a new Bible (£1:8s:4d). Paid for by a special brew of ale.
- 1594 To money paid to the Constable for soldiers who went to France.
- 1598 To poor man who had his house burnt 6d.
Gaol money 2/3d, 9d.
To maimed soldiers 2/2d and 13d.
Hospital money 6½d.
- 1600 To Mr Price, Constable of the Hundred of Axminster for gaol and maimed soldiers 10/-.
- 1603 Poor man's house burned 18d. Cokyngstole 16d.
- 1605 First mention of pew rents, power of individuals to erect own pews and Peter's Pence. (See Appendix A)

Other events during these years were:

The construction of secret hiding places in houses for R.C. Priests.
The first appearance of the term "esq" in 1588.

In the kitchen - 1 kettle, 1 bord, 2 window leves.



H. Smed's And Valley Series.

XII THE CIVIL WAR AND MONMOUTH'S REBELLION

The only time the Civil War really affected us was in 1644 when Prince Maurice took up residence in Axminster for his attack on Lyme Regis held for Parliament. The Earl of Essex, with a large Parliamentary Force, advanced from Dorchester on Axminster to find that the Royalists had taken refuge in the Church. Failing to dislodge them the attackers turned on the townsfolk, setting fire to their homes and reducing much of the town to ruins. Having raised the siege of Lyme Regis, Essex advanced through this village and Honiton to Exeter. He was later compelled to surrender at Lostwithiel and King Charles then advanced in his turn through Exeter to Chard. Later on both Stedcombe Manor and Colcombe Castle were burnt to the ground in sporadic fighting in this area.

In 1685 the Duke of Monmouth landed on the Cobb at Lyme Regis and many people from this countryside flocked to his banner.

General Monk then concentrated local militia forces at Axminster to oppose him. But he knew that most of his army was composed of Devon and Dorset men who favoured Monmouth's cause. So he withdrew northwards to Somerset well away from their homes before giving battle and defeating Monmouth at Sedgemoor. It is anyone's guess how many Kilmington folk were in that campaign on one side or the other.

This rebellion was followed by the infamous Jeffreys' Bloody Assizes. In history these are mostly connected with Dorchester. But 78 inhabitants of this countryside were indicted and 12 inhabitants of Lyme Regis were hanged on the Cobb.

The owner of Coaxden Hall - near Weycroft Manor - had a lucky escape. Jeffreys was after his blood because he had entertained Monmouth for a night on his way to Sedgemoor. So he took refuge in the Green Dragon at Axminster where the landlord's daughter successfully hid him in a bed until the danger was over. He then married her and took her back to Coaxden Hall.

Other events in those days were;

About 1611 the Baptist congregation of Kilmington, which included some Huguenots, was so persecuted in this village that they removed to Loughwood and remained there until 1822. It is some compensation to know that the two congregations have held each other in mutual respect and friendship for many years now.

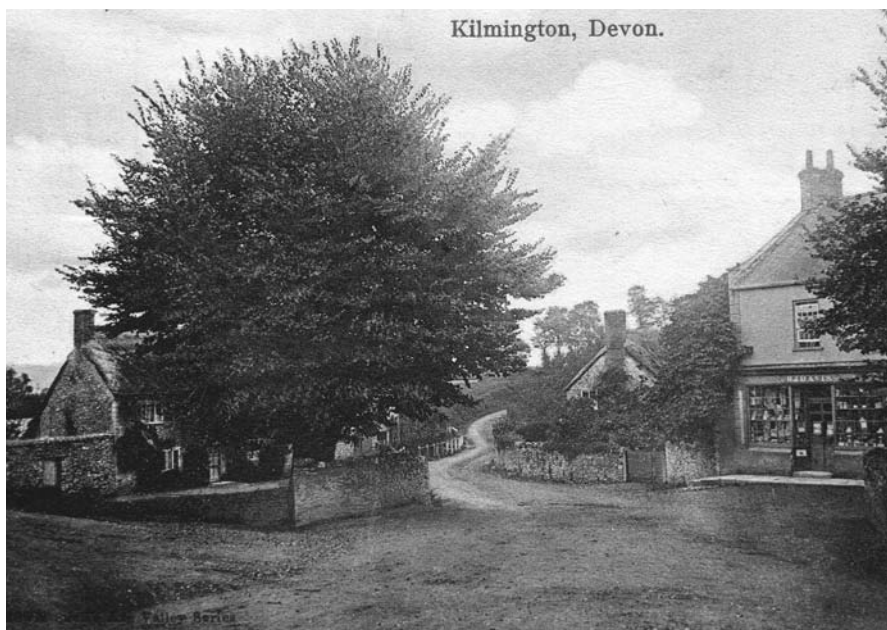
Ruggs Farm was mentioned in 1612 and Summerleaze Farm in 1633.

The great Duke of Marlborough was born at Ashe House, Musbury in 1650.

In 1662 Non-Conformist clergy were deprived of their livings.

Stedcombe Manor was rebuilt in 1695.

The first mansion at Coryton Park was built in 1697 by Wm Tucker of Westwater.



XIII COACHING DAYS

- 1739 John Wesley founded the Methodist Church.
- 1752 Marsh Farm was mentioned.
- 1753 Our gaols were so filthy that, at the Black Assizes at Norwich, a judge and 50 other people in court died from typhoid caught from the prisoners.

And our roads were so appallingly bad that Turnpike Trusts were established to levy tolls on travellers and use the money to maintain the roads. In this area they took over the following roads;

Axminster to Honiton (up the old Roman Road through this village).

Axminster to Axmouth. A35 along the coast.

And the road from Kilminster Cross to Colyton and thence to Hangman's Stone.

Our turnpike house was at the bottom of Gammons Hill at the entrance to Summerleaze Farm and is still marked by its one remaining stone wall.

These Turnpike Trusts actually achieved very little. All they did was to put gravel in the ruts and trust to the occasional cart, which had very wide wheel rims, to roll it in.

For most of our countryside the only transport was still the packhorse. One typical load recorded was 2¼ cwts of coal.

- 1755 Mr Whitty founded the Axminster Carpet Factory which was then near the Church.

- 1756 The mansion at Coryton Park was pulled down and rebuilt. This was also the year of the Black Hole of Calcutta.
- 1760 Our conquest of Canada from the French was completed.
- 1772 Slavery was declared illegal in this country. There were then about 10,000 negro slaves in Britain who were often bought and sold before this date.
- 1776 John Wesley preached in Axminster Market Place. This was also the year of the declaration of American Independence.
- 1785 The first 'mail coach' from London to Exeter was run this year. It took 24 hours.

By 1787 there were two great mail coach routes operating in Devon;

Shaftesbury - Exeter - Plymouth.

Dorchester - Axminster - Exeter - Falmouth.

The latter, of course, passing through this village on the old Roman Road which was then called the Great Western Road. The present main road round Shute Hill was not made until 1840.

The area near our present Baptist Chapel was then, and probably for many years before and afterwards, a coaching stop where horses were changed. George Farm was then the George Inn, next to it was the Old Forge, Hillside Close was probably a militia post (old muskets and powder horns were later found there) and the Old Bakery was next door to it. The recess in the wall of the copse opposite the Chapel was where the fresh horses stood. These were required for the long pull up over the edge of Shute Hill after the other long pull up Gammons Hill.



XIV THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The so-called Industrial Revolution took place from about 1785 to 1815. These years also included the reign of terror in France and the Napoleonic Wars.

It was both an industrial revolution, i.e. the social and financial developments of the new factory system; and also a mechanical revolution caused by inventions and discoveries, chiefly the development of steam power.

And it must have had considerable effect on this village because the Axminster Carpet Factory was founded in 1755, long before most other factories. It had been visited by King George III in 1789.

All previous civilisations had rested on the man whose brains were superfluous. But now many were needed where some intelligence had to be used and it became obvious that man had to be educated. Luckily Christian controversies and the necessity of catching adherents young had already produced a series of competing schools for children.

Steam power really came into its own when Watt finally patented the first successful steam engine in 1781. Its first use was to pump water out of a Cornish mine but, by 1789, Cartwright was using it to drive a power loom for the first time.

Twelve years later Trevithick watched his first model steam road engine run round the table in his Cornish home and only three years after that he nursed his steam engine along a railway track for the first time hauling 10 tons of coal and 70 people 9 miles at an average speed of 5 m.p.h. including several minor breakdowns.

But steam brought factories and these soon led to terrible slums in the big towns. The conditions of life for the poor were wretched in the extreme. The hours of work were 14, 15 or even 16 hours a day, 6 days a week except only for Good Friday and Christmas Day. In 1800, as in 1700, hours were intolerably long, wages low, houses insanitary and hunger commonplace.

But there was one great improvement, the deepening knowledge of medicine. Thousands had been dying from smallpox on land and scurvy at sea. By the turn of the century both had been conquered and the poor now stayed alive in increasing numbers which were to feed the factories and towns with the living material which created the wealth of England.

The then new craze of sea-bathing was also very beneficial to the nation's health. But it shattered me to learn that men and women were not allowed to bathe from the same beach for more than a hundred years after that.

At this time too the guillotine established the Reign of Terror in France and this was followed by the Napoleonic Wars.

In England then the Navy was just recovering from the mutinies at Spithead and the Nore; there was no police force; most of the Army was guarding our possessions in the West Indies, just decimated by disease in the process; and the Commander-in-Chief had just demanded a return of all Captains under 13 years old and Lt Colonels

under 20! It was at this time that Napoleon deployed his army in the North West of France to invade England. A Volunteer Force was raised quickly. Half a million joined including many from this village. The local Axminster Volunteers were commanded by Mr Tucker of Coryton Park, who later presented their standards to Kilmington Church where they still hang today.



Whitehayes from Brookside Close

XV VICTORIAN DAYS

I have stretched this period a little so as to go on where I left off about 1815. These were very important days in the world, the British Isles and this countryside. At their beginning the British Empire was widespread but still in its infancy. The factory system was established but still had many evils. Coaches and other horse transport were the only means of travel. Our China Clippers were covering the 15,000 miles to Canton in 109 days.

At their end the British Empire was almost fully developed. Britain was covered with a network of railways. She was the workshop of the world with her three great industries of coal, steel and textiles. She was also the world's banker, broker and shipper. But she was still consuming more than she produced, wages were still very low and hours of work long although the Saturday half holiday had started in at least some trades.

During these days;

The Suez Canal was opened. The Dominion of Canada founded. The Crimean War fought. The first Communist Manifesto published. The essential basis of all modern chemistry was established. Tower Bridge, the Forth Bridge and the London Docks

were completed. London was provided with its first system of main drainage and sewers; the safe water closet was beginning to evolve but had not yet reached the country— side; and British plumbers were the best in the world. Hundreds of miles of roads were tarred and 2,600 miles of canals constructed.

Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats and Tennyson were producing their great poetry. 700 Country Banks were established in England, each producing their own separate bank notes! The first steamer was registered and the first Cunarder sailed between Liverpool and Boston. Both had paddle wheels and sails as well.

The first modern battleship, the *Devastation*, was built driven by twin screws only. The R.N.L.I. was founded and its first self-righting lifeboat used.

The penny post; the telegram by wire, cable and wireless; the railway train; the safety bicycle with wheels the same size and pneumatic tyres; the safety lamp for miners; newspapers like the *News of the World*; our modern police forces; accurate large scale maps; the vote for agricultural labourers; and the Education Acts which eventually ensured that everyone could read, all came into the lives of the British people.

While the motor car, the film show, the gramophone, the gas cooker, the telephone, the dynamo, electric lamps, cookers, vacuum cleaners and washing machines were all invented but not yet in public use. And the first oil well was in production in America.

The story of these days in this countryside is now much more detailed because many more records are available. It starts with a Terrier (or Register of Landed Property) of 1821, which contains no mention of any land belonging to the Church. On the other hand the site of our present-day school has never paid tithe.

Then, in 1826, a school was built for this village - not on the present-day site but very close to it. In fact in the North-West corner of the garden of the present Old Parsonage next to the Southern Lych Gate of the Church. The money for this was raised partly from a gift by Mrs Tucker of Coryton Park, partly by four Church Rates and partly from a gift of £40 from the National Society "to receive the poor children of the parish and teach them the observance and duties of the Sabbath".

At that time the Church House or Poor House, as it was variously called, occupied the site of the present-day school.

Then comes the issue of the Tithe Map of 1828 and the subsequent Terrier Schedule. These gave the names of all our fields at that time and also the names of the owners and occupiers. The names of the owners and occupiers of houses are also given, but it is very difficult to trace the actual house owned or occupied by each individual.

(a)

In 1831 the following extract from the Topographical Dictionary of England describes our village at that time. "Kilminster, a parish in the Hundred of Axminster, containing 484 inhabitants. The living is a perpetual curacy annexed to the vicarage of Axminster. There is a fair for cattle on the first Wednesday in September. Kilminster has the privilege of sending 2 boys to the Axminster Free School." (b)

In this year reports from Beer state that every household is taking part in the joys of smuggling, and that the famous Beer stone from its quarries is being used for many famous buildings.

In 1832 an insurance policy was issued for the Poorhouse (100) and for the Schoolhouse (50) and it stated that this Poorhouse consisted of some houses occupied by the poor of the parish at low rents.

In this year also a Kilmington Rate Book was issued, extracts from which are given at the end of this section.

The next year saw the welcome return of our Baptist Chapel from Loughwood.

In 1834 tarred roads began to appear and there was a disastrous fire in the centre of Axminster on Trinity Sunday. When it was rebuilt it was called Trinity Square. In the next year the Axminster Carpet Factory closed down and its looms were transferred to Wilton. A hundred years were to pass before it returned to its modern site.

By 1838 the coaching time from London to Exeter had been reduced from 22 to 16 hours because of better coaches and roads, but also by overstraining the horses and changing them more frequently. The fare for 100 miles was 18/- for an inside place, 10/6d for an outside place and 8/6d for luggage. (These figures should be multiplied by 6 to relate them to 1966 prices).

The coaching stop at Hillside Close was still in operation but very probably closed down a few years later when the present main road was open for traffic. About this time the copse opposite Hillside Close was probably planted.

The tradition about this is as follows. Ale was brewed in Coryton Park and sold in the village. The actual brewer was the butler. Later on he was sacked and moved to Hillside Close where he promptly started brewing on his own. The then owner of Coryton Park was so angry at this that he planted the copse to hide the view of the rival brewery from his windows !

There is another old local tradition which must be recorded. It is about Kate's Well. This is actually a subterranean spring in the large field below the present Kate's Well House. If you go there you cannot see anything of it. The water is piped to the corner by Newton's where it runs out free for anyone to use. The tradition states that this water has healing properties particularly for eye ailments, and that Kate's Well derives its name from St Katherine, patron saint of the blind. One reason given for this theory is the presence of a very ancient cottage on the opposite side of the road to the spring which was believed to have been occupied by a priest whose duties were concerned with dispensing water from the holy well. But this ancient cottage (now in the garden of Wayside) is the Parish House given to the village by Robert Weston, Lord of the Manor in 1266 "to sell ale upon for the maintenance of the chapel". And this was certainly continuing in Elizabethan days.

A somewhat fanciful version of this tradition has been embodied in the following rhyme in archaic metre by a Kilmington resident at about this time -

At Kilmington Kateswell where cross roads meet
 Twixt New Inn Tavern and strait Silver Street
 Jettyes the clear fount farñous in antic times
 We hear our granfers tell demosel dedicated blessed St Katherine
 Dim sight healing with water bright welling from stone grott
 Fern bedecked standeth yet the cott thatched constructed over the pavement
 An ancient priest in-dwelling who did leechcraft dispense
 To the doleful pilgrims and pence of purse lighten.
 When his door is shute at dimply dawn
 Quiet fern quake and furze brake over the common
 As foul and sick brutes softly stealing
 For St Kates holy healing.

From the above it seems probable that the water from Kate's Well came out at that time at the road junction where the Lynhayes Council Houses now stand.

1839 was the year of the great Seaton landslip. It was on Christmas Eve that some merry-makers were returning to their cottages on the cliffs and were surprised to find the path a foot lower than usual. They went to bed to be woken up by noises and to see the walls cracking round them. They rushed outside to find that the earth was opening in great fissures. So they all withdrew inland, wondering perhaps what they had been drinking the night before! The disturbance went on all Christmas Day and a great reef rose in the sea a mile long and 40 feet high. But this soon began to sink and then disappeared below the surface of the sea.

1840 saw the present main road built to avoid the long climb over Shute Hill; and an Act of Parliament passed allowing Common Land to be taken over by private individuals.

This was followed two years later by another special Act of Parliament of the same kind, but referring specifically to the Common Land in Kilmington. Wm Dawson, Surveyor of Exeter, then held a public auction at the Old Inn "to sell divers pieces of land". But the only available record of an early sale was that in which James French of: the Old Bakery paid £16 for the first field on the left as you go up Shute Road from Hillcrest Cross-Roads. This field is now owned by Mrs Hubbard.

In this year (1842) too it seems very probably that Axminster Union was first formed and the famous old Axminster Hundred came to an end. (c)

It contained 18 parishes - Axminster, Axmouth, Beer, Colyton, Combyne, Dalwood, KILMINGTON, Membury, Musbury, Seaton, Shute, Stockland, Uplyme, Charmouth, Chardstock, Hawkchurch, Lyme Regis and Thorncombe.

A total of 96 square miles, 20,585 inhabitants and 4,306 houses.

It was therefore a much more compact and manageable area than the old Hundred. Dalwood and Stockland were no longer Dorset Islands and Chardstock and Hawkchurch were included. But the inclusion of the Dorset parishes of Lyme Regis,

Charmouth and Thorncombe was still a queer arrangement. The present Box House in Axminster was then the Workhouse with room for 450 poor people but with seldom more than 300 inmates. The Union had 20 surgeons, a Registrar and Clerk, a Relieving Officer and a Workhouse Master and Matron.

In 1844 the great Factory act was passed and the railway reached Exeter from London via Taunton.

In 1849 the old School House was thatched, the cost being met by Church ratements. It is also on record that there were too many inhabitants in the 'poorhouse'.

In 1850 the Gazeteer of Devon published the following report on Kilminster;

"Hundred of Axminster. Kilminster - 495 souls, 1763 acres. Cattle Fair on first Wednesday in September. Wm Tucker owns a great part of the parish. Church - Perpendicular, 5 bells. The vicarial tithes were commuted in 1841 for £240 and the rectoral for £100 a year. The latter are in the same appropriation as Axminster. Kilminster send 2 children to the Charity School at Axminster. The Baptists have a small Chapel there."

The report of 1850 goes on to give the following names of some people in the village then -

John Chapple (Vict) Old Inn; Wm Collins (Blacksmith); James French (Grocer); Jph Newbery (Plumber and Glazier); Jas Phippen (Grocer and Draper); Rev. H.B. Sands (Curate); Wm Tucker of Coryton Park; Benj and George Thorn (Farmers); Wm Snell from Old Coryton; Rev. John Stimbridge (Baptist Minister)

And the following further details -

Coaches Honiton to London and Exeter.

Royal Mail and Comet daily.

Sidmouth to London via Taunton.

Prince of Wales every other day.

Omnibus Honiton to Exeter Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Carrier Honiton to Axminster Saturdays.

Honiton to London Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Honiton to Exeter Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

The same report also states that Axminster was then a busy coaching centre with cobbled streets and a population of 2860.

In 1854 Pulman wrote his 'Book of the Axe'. In it he describes this village as follows - Kilminster 1854. Parish in the Union of Axminster. 1760 acres. Population 533, 45 being registered voters for the county! (Under 10%) A considerable part of the parish which was formerly Common Land has been enclosed in the last 10 to 12 years. In the Southern division of Devon, the deanery of Honiton and the Union of Axminster. Honiton is the county polling place.

The principal landowner is Wm Tucker but the manorial rights are now virtually lost.

In 1855 the Church House, or Poor House, on the site of the present-day school was pulled down.

Next year the Devon Constabulary was formed and the old Parish Constables at last relieved of their onerous duties.

In 1860 the railway reached Exeter via Axminster. Mr Charles Snell told me the sleepers for it in this area were provided by cutting down all the larch trees on Shute Hill and using a team of donkeys to drag them into the valley. After work this little team was turned out on the Common to graze and rest.

Next year our Church was pulled down except for the tower which was left intact. By the end of 1862 it had been rebuilt and re-opened for use.

There is quite a bit of news for 1864.

I learnt from Mr Harry Hurford that Mr Swabey lived at Coryton Park at about this time. From the proceeds of a lucky deal on the Liverpool Cotton Exchange he levelled and drained the Axminster Cricket Ground and brought a team down from Lancaster to open it. This gave the game a start in the district and the Kilmington Cricket Club was formed led by Mr Hussey, helped by Mr John Newbery and Mr Charles Snell's older brothers. We played Dalwood, Cox's School at Axminster, Seaton and others on the present ground between rows of walnut trees. (d)

I learnt from Mr Charles Snell that the pitch was anything but perfect. It was got ready before 6am by hand scything and raking and then rolling with a farm roller. The outfield was, of course, not cut.

Then there are old press reports about an excellent hot dinner given to 120 inhabitants of this village in a spacious tent on the cricket field after the Harvest Thanksgiving Service; and about a tea at Coryton Park for all the Sunday and Day School children; and about trouble in Axminster about the town's watercourse and drains!

1865 saw the passing of the anti-Motorists Act limiting speed to 4mph and compelling every car to have a man walking in front with a red flag! These restrictions lasted over 30 years. It must have been an extraordinary sight and one perhaps not often seen down here. Although Mr Tucker might well have had a car at Coryton Park.

In 1866 there was an agreement between Mr Tucker and the two Church Wardens - R.H. Follett and J. Snell and a deed was drawn up to implement it. The Church wanted an enlargement of the burial ground. Mr Tucker gave them the land to the North and East of the Church which is now our Churchyard. In return he wanted to erect a new school where the present-day school now stands. That is to say on the site of the old Poor House or Church House. At a vestry meeting on the 5th April this proposal was agreed to provided that the site of the new building should be permanently secured to the Parish.

In 1867 the new school was built and the old school was demolished, its stones being used for the new building. In 1868 the railway reached Seaton.

In 1870 a Parish Vestry Meeting resolved to continue its school under the voluntary system; a voluntary rate was decided; and a committee of five members including the resident curate was elected to run it. This system continued unchanged until 1894.

In 1873 a new classroom was added to the School. James French and John Tucker formed their charity, totalling £50, for “the support of the Gospel in the Chapel.”

These were also the days of Sir Henry Peek in Rousdon. He had bought 250 acres there in 1871, had built and endowed a new Church in 1872 and also his huge mansion which is now Allhallows School.

In 1876 he built a village school. On visiting this he was horrified at the malnutrition of the children. They were all so hungry that they couldn't begin to think of learning any lessons. So, sixty years ahead of the times, he started school meals there on his own to prove that it was possible to provide every child with a substantial midday meal at a penny a head. (equivalent to 6d in 1966). He did this so successfully that in the next 6 years he produced 110,221 dinners there for 107,406 pence!

Meals were prepared by the schoolmaster's family with help from the older girls. Most of the vegetables came from the school garden and milk was plentiful at 8d a gallon. Perhaps these days we wouldn't think much of school menus like jam pudding, thick meat soup, rhubarb pudding, roly poly meat pudding etc. but they were a great boon to hungry children whose fathers were mostly agricultural labourers with a wage of 13/- a week. They paid 5d a week for the first child, 4d for the second and 3d for the rest.

Soon educationists and social workers from all over the country were coming to visit this school. But it took 60 years and a great war to force the authorities to follow the magnificent lead from this countryside. For it was the evacuee problem in 1940 which finally made them establish nation wide school meals with far reaching beneficial results.

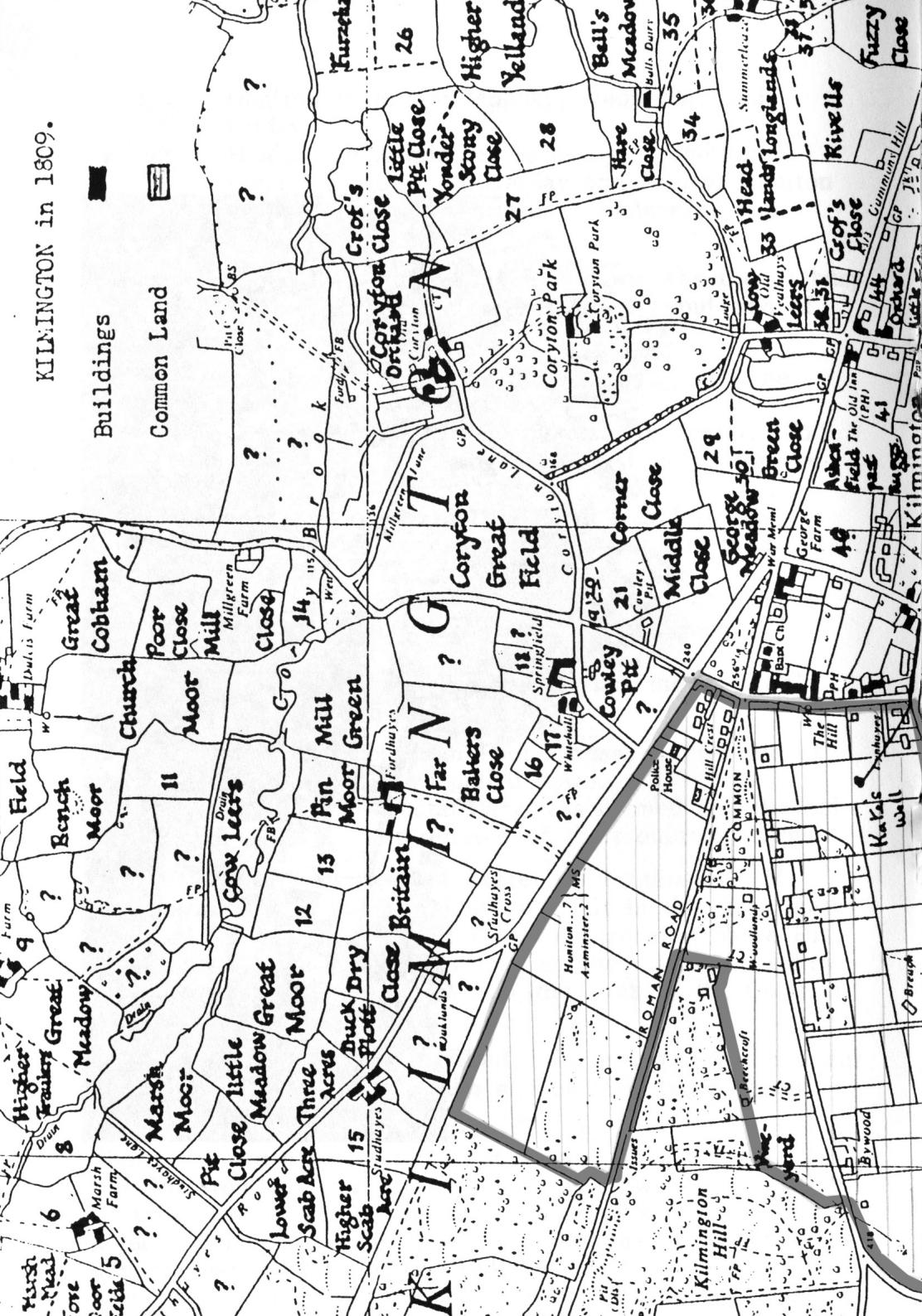
In 1880 the horse bus service between Axminster Station and Lyme Regis started. And continued until 1903 when the railway reached Lyme Regis. And a 1904 issue of a large scale map of Kilminster showed only 4 houses on the old Common Land - Heathfield, Goscot, Bywood and Eaglemont (now Greenhayes).

The following description of life in the village about this time was very kindly given to me by Mr Charles Snell a year or two ago -

“Life in this village has changed considerably. A lot of boys were up to all sorts of pranks especially in the long winter evenings.

The Village Shop, then run by Mr Follett was a great attraction. Many times the shopkeeper, when making up his books, was disturbed by peas rolling along his counter which had been blown in by boys through the bolt holes in the shutters. At the Shop a dozen nuts cost a farthing and, if you were lucky, you got 13. There were no chocolates and not a great assortment of sweets - only liquorice alisorts, peppermints, bulls eyes and acid drops. Fancy biscuits were a treat. You could buy oranges occasionally but they were very sour. The postman was James Banks who lived in Silver Street and worked as a gardener at Kilminster Farm in his spare time. He loved showing people round and would name the various fruit trees etc. He was especially proud of what he called the ‘damsel tree’.

Common Land



FIELD NAMES

Numbers are those given on the map

1	Old Horse Mead	37	Goose Platt Orchard
2	Starve Acre	38	Well Orchard
3	Bridge Field	39	The Croft
4	Lane Orchard	40	Park Gate Field
5	Marsh Plott	41	Ashen Fields
6	Meadow under House	42	Great Orchard
7	Lower Field	43	The Croft
8	Wadharn	44	Crof's Close
9	Foredoor Close	45	Nap Orchard
10	Ridge Acre	46	Hamillon's Orchard
11	Wood Orchard	47	Long Orchard
12	Hard Moor Orchard	48	Lower Long Orchard
13	hard Moor Meadow	49	Little Mead
14	Bridge Close	50	Sehlar's Field
15	Old Orchard	51	Higher Gore
16	Fuzzy Orchard	52	Three Corner Field
17	Whitehall Orchard	53	Higher Shopcraft
18	Hobsleigh	54	Elm Close
19	Little Plott	55	Higher Old Ley
20	Orchard Plott	56	Lower Old Ley
21	Close tinder Dave's Plott	57	Haddon Field
22	Hill Field	58	Ringborough
23	Hill Place Orchard	59	Field Behind Slaughter- house
24	Old Copse	60	Duncroit
25	Smith's Orchard	61	Townsend Field
26	Little Furzehams	62	Wakely's Orchard
27	Ball's Orchard	63	Great Glanville
28	Hither Stony Close	64	Sock Acres
29	Little Park Gate Field	65	Higher Oakhill and Collins
30	Nursery Plott	66	Middle Oakhill
31	Lower Glanville	67	Little Oakhill
32	Seacroft Orchard	68	Cribhouse
33	Higher Platt	69	Stockham
34	Pitt Close	70	Beer Wood
35	Crannon's Close		
36	Little Platt		

A map with the field names hangs in the Church Room

The post was brought from Axminster in a pony or donkey cart and there was only one delivery of letters. The village post office was at The Cross at the Southern end of the old curved cottages there, and afterwards at Mustons. There were no newspapers except Pulman's once a week.

Two or three concerts were held in the School during the winter. A number of people from Axminster would take part. There were songs, recitations and piano or violin solos. The piano was carried over from Kilminster Farm. The room was lit by oil lamps with candles on the piano and was always packed and very hot.

Kilminster Fair was held on the first Wednesday in September for cattle and sheep in the field behind the Old Inn and on the road, the cattle being kept together in bunches by men and boys along the road almost as far up as George Farm. Later on this had to be stopped owing to the increasing traffic on the road.

Sports Day was held the next day at the New Inn, where there were sack races, wheelbarrow races, climbing the greasy pole etc.

At this time there were:

two bakers, Sam French and Job Adams. The latter also baked gingerbread and lived in the old cottage opposite Balfour Terrace now called Borthwen and the only one with a porch.

Two blacksmiths, Robert White at the Old Smithy and Joseph Saunders at the Old Forge,

Two tailors, William Symonds and Richard Knight.

Three shoemakers, Mr Newbery, William Cloud and Roger Sparks.

Two thatchers, Reuben Snell and Richard Wood.

Two butchers, Mr Robert Dare of George Farm and Mr George Dare of Coryton Farm.

A wholesale butcher who used to send to the London market by train, Mr Bishop of Laburnam Cottage.

John Rogers at Mustons built coaches. The sheds he used are still there.

There were also two pit sawyers John Symonds and Harry White. This pit sawing was then the only way of cutting trees into long planks. A pit was dug with beams laid across it. The tree was then placed on these beams and then cut lengthwise with a cross-cut saw worked by two men, one in the pit and the other on top.

The School was a National School maintained by a voluntary rate which was collected. There was an exam once a year taken by the Rev. Howard. Later it became a Board School. There were horse races on the big fields farmed by Henry Coles on the top of the hill to the North of Ashes Lane. The field immediately beyond Beechcroft and opposite Bywood was called the Vineyard and used to be allotments then. There was an annual audit about them at the Old Inn."

Mr Charles Snell ended his reminiscences by describing a few outstanding characters whom he called 'the salt of the earth'. William White, the shepherd at Kilminster Farm, had 22 children and lived in the higher end of the house which is now Eli Collier's farm. His wife's name was Betsy and nearly all the family worked

at Kilmington Farm in turn. At one time there were three William Whites working there at the same time, father, son and grandson. William White the 2nd lived at Arch Cottage. Frank French the carter lived in the lower end of Eli Collier's farm. His wife's name was Amy and they had no family.

William Bonner Spiller, the cowman lived in one of the houses near the New Inn. He had two sons. Tom, the elder, after his marriage lived at Brook Vale where Mr and Mrs Hoare now live.

In 1884 Mr Follet left the village shop which was taken over by Henry Tucker.

At about this time the curate was living at the Old Parsonage.

In 1886 Axminster Hospital was where the present Drill Hall now stands.

1888 is marked by two Charities to the Baptist Chapel. Mrs Hannah Price's of £200 and Elizabeth Bowdige's of £300. Both were invested and the interest used to augment the Minister's salary.

In 1889 the Turnpike Trusts folded up owing to the competition of the new railways. The roads were then taken over by the County Council. About this time Mr Harry Hurford remembers that the school was often so overcrowded that some pupils had to be carted over to Shute every day. So, in 1893, the School was again enlarged, this time at the end away from the Church.

There is also a record that our population was then 558 and the acreage 1760.

1894 was an important year. For it saw the birth of Parish Councils. One of the first steps which our Parish Council took was to appoint a Committee to run the School. The Charity Commissioners also instituted a new scheme regarding the Axminster Charity School including the Penelope Saffin Charity. Under this scheme the yearly income of the endowment of the Kilmington portion - a field let for £5 - was to be applied by the trustees for prizes and rewards not exceeding 10/- in any one case. These were to be given to deserving children of labouring, artisan and other poor classes who had been two years at school and had certificates of good conduct, regular attendance and proficiency.

In one year a little later 28 children out of 60 received prizes of between 8/- and 3d placed in a Savings Bank and drawn out when leaving school or the village. Incidentally it seems that the school must have been terribly overcrowded with 60 children.

Axminster R.D.C. was formed in 1895.

1896 saw the first Olympic Games of the modern era and also the repeal of the Anti - Motorists Act, red flag and all!

In 1897 Mrs Sarah Anne Chapple founded her £100 Charity for Kilmington. The trustees were the Vicar and the Churchwardens. They were instructed to lay out the whole of the dividends each year in the purchase of blankets and flannel and distribute the same among the sick and aged poor in the parish. There is a tablet at the east end of the north aisle in the church recording this gift. In one year later on there were 6 recipients of blankets and 8 of flannel.

By the end of the century the bicycle, as we know it today, was flooding the country and mixing sexes and classes to the great benefit of all. The motor age had also begun. But London was still a city of horse drawn traffic and gaslight.

EXTRACTS FROM KILMINGTON RATE BOOK 1832-1859

Rates for the repair of highways in the parish. They varied between 1d to 31d in the pound. More often than not just 1d.

Some Rateable Values 1836 and 1845 -

Old Inn £8; Summerleaze £37.10; Ruggs £64; Vicarial tithes £154; Rectorial tithes £74; Newtons £7; Hills Farm £131.10; Kilmington Farm £154; Oxenleaze £73; Mustons £5.10; Cowley Pit £2.10; Moorhayes and Marsh £60; Thompsons Ashes £33; Studhayes £53.10; Dulcis £150; Clifthorne £57; Nower £74; Old Coryton Farm £69.10; Balls £53; Coryton House and land £131.10; Fordhayes £85; Gammons Hill £102; Linhayes £25; Springhead £5.

Total RV 210,315. Raised at 1d rate £7: 16 :4.

Example of expenses paid for repair of roads

6 days cracking and digging 6/-.

Put 2 horses one day 4/6d.

10 loads of gravel 5/-.

10 loads of stones 3/4d.

Mr Quick for clearing 80 rope of drains @ three farthings per rope 5/-.



Silver Street

Notes

- (a) A map showing the old field names now hangs in the Church Room and a portion is reproduced in this history.
- (b) For 12 boys and girls of Axminster and 2 of Kilmington. Built about 1790. Endowed with 6 acres of land and a further 2 acres given by Kilmington on condition that they could send two free scholars.
- (c) The 1850 report seems to indicate that Axminster Hundred still existed then. But other records disagree.
- (d) The last remaining tree in the garden of Mrs Broom in Eastleigh Close (Ed.)

XVI OUR CHURCH

The present building was erected in 1861/62 on the same site as the previous church. The earliest date of the latter, which I have been able to find is 1288.

But there are several reasons for my strong belief that a church or place of worship existed on that site long before 1288. These are

The fact that this date was in the middle of the period which was marked by the rebuilding of churches all over England to replace the old ill-lit churches of earlier times. The presence of the two lancet windows with foliated headings which still adorn our Sanctuary today. Two experts have stated that there is no doubt that these are of about the same age as the oldest part of the chancel of Axminster Church. And this was founded in AD 755.

The fact that, from the earliest days of Christianity in this country up to 1288 and for centuries after that, the Church meant everything to the people. They relied on it to educate their children, to assess fair rates, to look after the poor, the sick and the maimed, and to control almost every aspect of village life.

Finally there is the tradition of the Yew Tree planted in AD 937 in the oldest part of our present churchyard. And so I am myself convinced that a Church must have been one of the very early buildings to appear in Kilmington.

Our Patron Saint is St Giles. He is reported to have been born in Athens about AD 640. He is also the Patron Saint of 150 other churches out of about 13,000 in this country. He was the patron saint of the woodlands, lepers, cripples and those struck by some sudden misery and driven into solitude like the hind, which according to tradition, came to St Giles wounded.

There was always, and still is, a picture of St Giles in the lancet window on the north side of the Sanctuary. And silver images of St Giles and the beggar, presented by Mr Williams of Springfield, are screwed into the top of our present - day churchwardens' staves for special occasions.

Until 1912 our Church was a Chapel of Ease to the Mother Church of Axminster. But it was always served by its own resident curate or chaplain. Unfortunately I have so far only been able to trace the names of 13 of these curates and these are given at the end of the Section.

As a Chapel of Ease we had no right to bury our dead in our own churchyard. Up to about 1845 they were therefore buried at Axminster and we had to maintain 84 feet of that church-yard wall in compensation. The earliest date which I have been able to find so far on a grave in our churchyard is 1846, followed by others in 1852 and 1865. From 1869 onwards there is a steady stream of dates.

As will emerge shortly, experts have sometimes been very rude about our Church. But I think that we, in this generation, are very fortunate to have such a fitting and pleasant place in which to worship God. It is not an architectural treasure. Naturally our predecessors could not afford priceless stained glass. But it has its own simple dignity and beauty; it looks as if it has always been, and still is, loved and cared for; and there is little or nothing to distract attention from the service.

The following reports describe the old church which was pulled down in 1861.

Davidson 1826 The Church comprised nave, south porch, north porch, north aisle, chancel and tower. The chancel opened into the nave with a pointed arch beneath which were the remains of a rood screen with folding doors, above which was a rood loft. (The Oxford Dictionary defines a ‘rood’ as 1. A cross. 2. A crucifix. 3. The Cross as a symbol of the Christian faith. A rood loft is a loft or gallery forming the head of a rood screen which separated the chancel from the nave and, properly, had a rood on it.)

The steps remained in a large buttress against the north wall. In the south wall of the chancel there was a small locker for the ‘cruetts’ under a pointed arch. (‘Cruetts’ were small vessels for wine and water for use in the communion service.) In the west window and in one in the north aisle were some fragments of painted glass.

There were carved bosses on the roof. One of these bore the Stafford knot and another was carved with a bird pecking a wheatsheaf. There also seems to have been a “gallery” for the steps leading to it were repaired in 1840.

Report by the Diocesan Architectural Society 1846

Screen and doors remain. In the north aisle was a small piscine (A “piscina” is a perforated stone basin for carrying away the ablutions. It is generally placed in a niche on the south side of the altar.) A bracket over the north door. The Church was Decorated (1275-1375) and Perpendicular (1375—1490) in character with much of the debased super-added.

Pulman’s Book of the Axe (1854)

There was a chapel of St Christina at the east end of the north aisle. (Now the vestry). It was blessed by Thomas Vyvyan, Titular Bishop of Megara and Prior of Bodmin, on January 18th 1509.

And the east end of the South aisle (now the Lady Chapel) was the family seat of the Tucker family for very many years. (I think that there must be some mistake over this reference to the south aisle. For the 1826 report makes no mention of a south aisle; while the report on the new church stated that the south aisle was quite new then.) A portion of an ancient screen divided the chancel from the nave.

The nave, which in 1832 was greatly altered and liberally whitewashed, was lighted by flat - headed windows of three lights each with foliated headings. Besides the whitewashing a row of arches dividing the nave from its aisle was pulled down and a cumbrous gallery ran along the nave and was reached by ugly stone steps outside. Another gallery ran along the west end blocking the tower arch and window. The building was a victim of churchwardens' architecture for generations and very many interesting traces of the original building were smothered.

One generation left mutilated windows, another doors stuck in anywhere, and all vied in producing an architectural wreck and mutilation. The condition of the nave and aisle before rebuilding was terrible.

Another report says - The Royal Coat of Arms used to hang from the ceiling of the north aisle in the old days and was a reminder of the Sovereign's responsibility for the Established Church. It is found in many churches for this reason. It is believed to have dated from the time of Charles II (1660-1686). (It is now fixed to the sloping roof of the north aisle at its western end.)

A small but interesting church chest with three locks stands in the north aisle. (This old chest still stands there today. From the churchwardens' accounts it is known that it was repaired in 1559.)

The colours of the old Axminster Volunteers hang in the Church. These volunteers enrolled on the threat of Napoleon's invasion of England.

The following church plate was also recorded in the early days-

The Elizabethan Chalice (1574) (or drinking cup) with a cover ornamented with hit and miss work (a). On the bottom is the date but it bears no goldsmith's marks. It was preserved for us by a curious circumstance. It had been in use in the ceremonies of the Knights of the N.P.U. Rosae Crucis and Holy Cross Conclave at Coryton Park and, on its dissolution or rather amalgamation with the Rougemont Chapter, the chalice was presented to Kilmington Church by William Tucker of Coryton Park in Lent 1855.

A flagon, jug shaped with repousse work and chasing (b) with the same marks and inscriptions on it as the Elizabethan Chalice. The London hail mark is 1776. Two silver gilt pattens bearing the mark of Joseph Clore and the hall mark of 1723. (Pattens are thin dishes of gold or silver gilt for the altar bread).

Also a pewter flagon and pewter alms dish.

THE PRESENT BUILDING was opened on October 1862.

Records state that -

It was made 20 feet longer than the old one and seats 400 people. It comprises tower, nave, north and south aisles, chancel with chancel aisles. There are four bays on each side of the nave having octagonal columns with plain moulded caps, the work being very poor.

The south aisle is entirely new but, on the north side, the old octagonal 14th century pillars may have been retained. If so they have probably been cut down as the church is very low. (This remark is double Dutch to me for I have seen many much lower).

The nave roof is 'wagon' and those of the aisles 'lean-to'.

The tower arch is panelled dating from the end of the 15th century. The tower of three storeys is square, embattled and has a turret on the south-east side. It is supported by buttresses, has pinnacles and gargoyles and contains six musical bells. It is typical of 15th century Perpendicular architecture.

The chancel is small, divided from the nave by moulded responds. (c)

On the north and south panelled arches divide it from its aisles. Here again the north arch is most likely the original one mentioned in all early accounts of the church.

The octagonal Perpendicular font with the characteristic ornaments of quatrefoils and cusped niches (d) is small but a very good example of 15th century work and has an interesting old wooden cover.

The west doorway is square headed with foliated carvings in the spandrels (e) of the arch and with a good stream course above it.

On re-building the fine old tower arch and tower window were thrown open, the old lancet windows and the panelled arch in the chancel were retained, and the old font was set up again. The old tower was retained. The chancel aisles were used as chapels for the Coryton Estate on the south side and for the Dulcis Estate on the north. The new east window and another window were filled with stained glass. The principal entrance is through a pointed doorway in the tower. And there are doors in both north and south sides, the latter having a wooden porch.

The pulpit and reading desk are placed against the piers of the chancel arch and the old pews have given place to open benches.

The work was carried out by Mr C. Edwards of Axminster as architect and Mr Downes of Sherborne as builder. Although it is evident that the church was in a considerable state of dilapidation when it was pulled down, it is obvious that the rebuilding involved the loss of many ancient and interesting features which might have been preserved. In fact little remains of the previous building except for the tower and the two lancet windows in the sanctuary.

The cost of rebuilding was £1300, which is equivalent to about £8,000 today (1966). The rebuilding fund was based on a legacy of £400 by the Reverend Charles Tucker of Honiton. Another £400 was raised on the security of the rates. Liberal subscriptions and grants from Societies then came in until the full £1300 was finally raised and expended on the project.

CHURCH BELLS. In the inventory of the church goods at the Reformation (1534) taken by the Royal Commission and preserved at the Record Office an entry relative to the village is as follows -

“Kylmyngton iiij bells in the tower there and one chalice”

In about 1800 there were again iiij bells inscribed:

1. My treble voice your hearts rejoice.
2. Mr James Anning, Warden cast.
3. Anno Domini 1677.
4. Mr Francis Anning and Mr Laurence White, Churchwardens 1775.
5. John Pringle and John Tucker, Churchwardens 1672.

We now have six bells and, as always, a splendid band of ringers.

CHURCH MEMORIALS. Experts say that there are a surprising number of monuments and memorials for so small a church. And they congratulate the re-builders of 1861/62 for retaining them. But one is missing, for Rogers mentions an incised cross on a floor stone which no one can find now.

The oldest memorial in the church is a stone in the north aisle inscribed - “Here lieth ye bodies of Elizabeth and Joan ye daughters of George Southcott of Dulheise, gent 1671.” On this are the arms of the Southcotts in a lozenge.

If you are interested in the church memorials perhaps the best way of listing them is to take you for an imaginary tour of the church.

Starting from the north door and looking west you will see the Royal Coat of Arms fastened to the sloping ceiling of the north aisle. You will remember that it used to hang there in the old church.

Against the north wall, and both west and east of the north door, you will see three old memorials to the Tucker Family of Coryton Park all down the years from 1671 to 1885.

Moving eastwards up the north aisle you will see the old memorial to the Southcotts of Dulcis. And then the tablet commemorating the

Sarah Anne Chapple charity. Close to them is the fascinating old church chest with three locks.

The north chancel aisle is now the Vestry. Previously it had been the family seat of the Southcotts of Dulcis and, before 1861, it had been the Chapel of St Christina. On its west wall there is a brass tablet memorial to Charles Boucher’s wife Helen (1919) and, by the entrance to the pulpit, another tablet to his daughter Elizabeth Copleston (1908).

In the chancel the choir stalls were presented in 1921 in memory of Ann Anning.

The South African War Memorial, made with wood from the famous yew tree, is on the north wall near the organ. The sanctuary is lit by the two ancient lancet windows, the one on the north side containing a picture of St Giles and the hind.

The altar candlesticks were presented by C.J. Cornish Browne, Esq., JP in 1913.

The lovely all seasons dorsal was presented by Mrs Cornish Browne of Bywood in 1956. And the brass bowl for flowers by Mrs K.E. James in memory of her husband.

The Bible on the lectern was presented in memory of Flight Lieut. Neville Marwood Tucker, killed in action over Germany 13.8.1944.

The reading desk was presented in memory of Charles Boucher, Esq., JP of Eaglemont (now Greenhayes) (1898). And behind it there is a brass tablet in memory of his elder daughter, Helen (1904).

The old colours of the Axminster Volunteers hang at the west end of the chancel.

The South chancel aisle, late the family seat of the Tuckers, is now the Lady Chapel. It was dedicated by the Bishop of Crediton on 21 September 1958.

The new stained glass window at its eastern end is in memory of Mrs Cornish Browne (1958) and there are two more Tucker memorials on brass tablets on each side of it.

In the corner at the east end of the south aisle there is a brass memorial tablet to Captain V.N. Smith, killed in action at the Battle of the Ancre in 1916.

Moving westwards down the south aisle we find two memorial windows and one tablet to the Anning family and tablet memorials to Lieut. Gardner who died on active service in South Africa (1901); to Col. Bridges of Heathfield (1900) and his son; and to Wm Hope Hall of Coryton Park (1910- 1920) and his family.

West of the South door there is an old memorial, dated 1756, to the Anning family and a memorial window to Elizabeth Wakely (1892).

Moving back to the North door past the old 15th century font the arms of the Tucker family can be seen hanging on the wall of the tower, and also the prayer book racks in the cross aisle presented in memory of Col. Orange Bromhead (1961).

Although I have, for convenience, strayed a long way out of the nineteenth century in this imaginary tour of memorials in the church, it seems best to try and weave most of the modern church story in with other events of the twentieth century. There are two exceptions. The first is the following personal reminiscences of Mr Charles Snell of the times when he was a chorister and bell ringer of the church between 1879 and 1898.

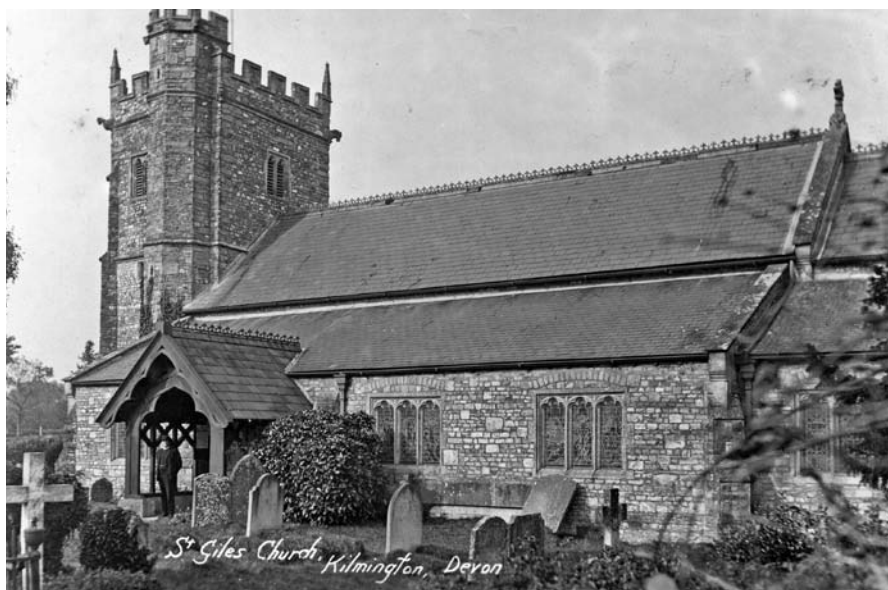
“Our church choir was credited with the title of the best village choir between Salisbury and Exeter. It was very fortunate in having the training of Miss Swabey (later to be Lady Coleridge of Coryton Park), Miss J. Scott of Eaglemont and, for the Diocesan Choral Festivals, of Mr F. Ceuritz whose father was the Vicar of Colyton. To begin with the choir was not surpliced and the pride of the boys when the first surplices were worn can easily be understood.

During the time when the Rev. Boxham was curate here the choir consisted of 8 men and 9 boys. There was no organ then. Music on the harmonium was played by Miss Swabey, Miss J. Scott and Mr Elias Quick on alternate Sundays. The organ was later bought for the church by public subscriptions. It was a grand outing for the choir to go to the Choral Festivals at Exeter Cathedral, Ottery St Mary or Sidmouth by horse brake.”

The second exception is that it might be helpful to include here a list of the Vicars, Churchwardens and Organists since we ceased to be a Chapel of Ease in 1912. They are therefore listed below for easy reference if required.

Notes

- (a) Hit and Miss Work. From Hitty-Missy (random). Probably chase work with a random pattern.
- (b) Repoussé work is the art of ornamentation in relief by hammering from the reverse side. Chasing is the art of engraving or embossing in relief.
- (c) Respond - a half pillar or half-pier attached to a wall to support an arch.
- (d) Cusped - With pointed ends generally of the shape of a crescent moon.
- (e) Spandrels - The triangular space between the outer curve of an arch and the rectangle formed by the mouldings enclosing it.



Kilmington Church

CURATES OF KILMINGTON

Sir* Colman	1562/63	
Sir Wyllyam Abbot	1564/66	
Sir Addis	1571/72	
Mr Cooke	1580/82	
Mr Slee	1597	
Mr Tucker	1799	
Mr Ellard	1802	
Mr Steer	1835	
Rev. H.B. Sands	1850	
Rev. Bloxham	About 1890	
Rev. A.A. Slipper	1905	
Rev. J.T. Harris	1906	
Rev. J.H.H. Copleston	1908	He then lived at Old Ruggs

*This ancient title of 'Sir' for a curate seems to be interesting.

Date	Vicar	Vicar's Warden	People's Warden	Organist
1912	Rev. C. K. Botwood			Mr Quick
1913	"			"
1914	"			"
1915	"			"
1916	"			"
1917	Rev. C. R. Bull	Mrs Bridges	Mr Loveridge	"
1918	"	"	"	"
1919	"	Mr Cornish Browne	Mr F. Dare	"
1920	"	"	"	"
1921	"	"	"	"
1922	"	"	"	Miss Quick
1923	"	Mr George	"	"
1924	"	"	"	Mr Mearing
1925	"	"	"	"
1926	"	"	"	"
1927	"	"	"	"
1928	Rev. E. E. Benson	"	"	"
1929	"	Col. Bridges	"	"
1930	"	"	"	"
1931	"	Mr G. Trott	"	"
1932	"	"	"	"
1933	"	"	"	"
1934	"	"	"	Mr Hoare
1935	"	Mr G. Wyatt	"	"
1936	Rev. L.A.Dukeswell	"	"	"
1937	"	"	"	Mr Denslow
1938	"	"	Mr J Dare	"
1939	"	"	"	"
1940	"	"	"	"
1941	"	Mr Adkin	"	"
1942	"	"	"	"
1943	"	"	"	Mr F. Leach
1944	Rev. Stamp	"	"	"
1945	"	"	"	"
1946	"	"	"	"
1947	"	"	"	"
1948	"	"	"	"
1949	"	"	"	"
1950	Rev. Quelch	"	"	"
1951	"	Sir George Hammick	"	"
1952	"	"	"	"
1953	"	"	"	"
1954	"	"	"	"
1955	"	"	"	"
1956	Rev. Mason	"	"	"
1957	"	"	"	"
1958	Rev. R. H. Callard	"	"	"
1959	"	"	"	"
1960	"	"	"	"
1961	"	"	"	"
1962	"	"	"	"
1963	"	Mr H. Trott	"	"
1964	"	"	"	"
1965	Rev. G. Rogers	"	"	"

XVII OUR CHAPEL

It has been said that “the story of the Baptists, their influence, and their expansion, is an arresting challenge to thought. The beginnings of their continuous record are extremely modest - revealing but a handful of English ‘Separatists’ who found in Holland refuge from Stuart persecution at home.”

It is with the same modesty that we regard the beginnings of the “Kilminster Baptist Church”, whose history is inextricably linked with that of the ancient Loughwood Meeting House, in the parish of Dalwood.

The earliest existing records date back to the year 1653, when there appears a list of 131 persons, whose custom it was to gather at Loughwood and observe there “Christ’s holy ordinance and to edify and comfort one another”.



Loughwood Meeting House built in the 17th Century

The present Chapel in Kilminster was erected in 1832, during the ministry of the Rev. Job Stembridge. From that time until about 1945 Services of Public Worship were held regularly both at Loughwood and Kilminster.

Negotiations for the transfer of the Loughwood Meeting House to the National Trust as a place of historical interest, were completed in 1968, with the sole right of worship remaining with the Kilminster Chapel. Harvest and Anniversary Services are held at Loughwood every year, whilst the regular pattern of Christian witness is carried out from Kilminster.

(This section was contributed by the Rev. A.W. Jordan).

XVIII THE TWENTIETH CENTURY - To date 1966

(A first “shot” at it and only the beginning so far).

Looking back to the beginning of this century, and knowing what benefits we enjoy today, it seems incredible that so much could have happened in so short a time. And that such great improvement could have been made in the lot of the great majority of our people.

As a nation we seem to have stood nearly at the peak of world power about 1900 and to have been sliding downhill ever since. For the British Empire was then almost at its zenith. Now it is disintegrating.

We were the chief creditor, shipper, customer and workshop in the world. And all this is now lost. Our National Debt was then £700 Million. Now it is £26,000 Million. And one golden sovereign then bought as many goods and services as SIX one pound notes in 1966.

The reason for this is simple, and to our great credit. For twice we have bled ourselves white in men and money to save mankind. And this is no idle boast for history shows clearly that Britain was the rock on which two massive attempts at world domination foundered.

Yet, despite this appalling handicap, we have achieved so much of real value. For, in the first half of this century. The death rate was halved. The average expectation of life was raised from 50 to 62. The death rate of mothers in childbirth was 1/5th and of children from diphtheria was 1/40th of that in 1900. And the greatest saving of life was among our youngest children in their first few years.

Added to that there have been wonderful improvements in the lot of our working classes. To realise that we have only to compare present day conditions with those that history tells us existed in 1900.

From Rowntree's great social survey of 1899 it is clear that 30% of the population were living in poverty. And this he defined as the availability of only 3/- a week for food for each adult and with no money available for recreation or holidays.

19% of working class homes had no water supply: 27% had no separate closets: and a large proportion of the latter were “midden privies” with flies swarming everywhere.



The War Memorial



The Hill

From other records it is clear that

An agricultural labourer's wage was 12/- a week: that a maid received 2/6 to 3/- a week and a cook general £15 a year. And that all these worked long hours including Sunday mornings.

A woman, working at home to make ends meet got 1d for 384 buttons or 12/- a week for stitching skirts for 17 hours a day!

But some improvements in their lot had been established by 1900 -

The August Bank Holiday and the 56 hour working week (a ten hour day with six hours on Saturday) for factory workers.

Trade Unions with powers to protect their funds, withdraw their labour and use "peaceful" picketing.

The Independent Labour Party which had been formed to put up working class candidates at elections.

Turning now to the benefits we all enjoy, the tremendous advances in medicine and surgery seem to be the most important.

Looking back to 1902 we find that King Edwards VII had to have his appendix taken out and that this was then described as a rare and dangerous operation.

And looking back again some years earlier we are told that he nearly died of typhoid because of the faulty sanitary arrangements in Windsor Castle!

Of course the medical profession had also made progress in the 19th century. By 1900 a start had been made in anaesthetics, X-rays, vaccination, inoculation and blood transfusion. And Lister had at last brought simple antiseptics (a solution of carbolic) to improve the then disgusting conditions in operating theatres.

But these were small faltering steps in medicine and surgery when compared with the giant strides which were to come in our lifetime.

Another famous man, Chadwick, had issued a report as early as 1842 urging -

A municipal pure water supply for all towns.

Scientific drainage in both town and country.

And an Independent National Health Service.

But very little was done and it was to be about before all his dreams were realised.

Some other benefits had also been firmly established in the 19th century-

The Government had started free education for all and was building schools wherever the voluntary societies had not already founded one.

The St John's Ambulance Brigade and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution had been founded and the latter had self—righting lifeboats.

The Plimsoll Line had given security to merchant seamen by preventing the overloading of ships.

The Ordnance Survey had been created and had produced first class maps on all scales up to 25 inches to the mile.

And the 'push bike', on much the same lines as the one we know today, had been produced in large numbers.

In the field of politics the secret ballot had been introduced and the vote had been gradually extended until every male householder in both town and country had a vote. But Universal Adult Suffrage was still many years away.

Local Government, including Parish Councils, had just started. And Devon had its own County Police.

A number of other benefits had been invented in the 19th century but not yet developed. The electric light bulb, the telephone and the motor car had been invented. But you would have been very fortunate indeed in 1900 if you had had electric light, or a telephone, or a bathroom with running water, or a safe water closet in your home or a car in your garage. Even London was still a city of gaslight, hansom cabs and horse drawn buses and trams. The speed limit for cars had just been raised from 4 to 12 MPH although one had actually travelled at nearly 40.

'Macadam' had been invented but travellers on nearly all our roads were still smothered in dust. Marconi had invented wireless but had only just succeeded in sending signals from England to France.

Telegraph messages could even be sent by cable to Europe and America. But telegraph lines were only just reaching villages. In 1900 Queen Victoria received the news of the relief of Mafeking by telegram. But it reached villages by the joyful ringing of church bells in the local town. The very first short cinema film had been shown. But there were still not one cinema theatre in the whole country. Gramophones and records of a sort could be bought. But the sound was 'tinny' and short lived.

Perhaps the things most appreciated by most of our people in 1900 were -

The possession of a 'push bike'.

Playing or watching football.

Reading the weekly newspaper. (Pulmans started in 1848).

Plentiful beer at 2d a pint.

Fish and chips at very low cost. (Introduced in 1864).

The closing hours of the nineteenth century were marked by a violent gale which raged across this country. So violent that it blew down one of the gigantic stone uprights at Stonehenge. And, as this century opened, the news of three resounding defeats of British forces at the hands of the Boers reached this village.

What did it (the village) look like then? It had about 520 inhabitants in 110 homes compared to about 700 people in 300 homes today. So each home was far more crowded than it is now. On the other hand living conditions here then compared very favourably with those in the overcrowded slums of our big cities and towns.

Broadly speaking it looked very much the same as it does today without its bungalows, council houses and other obviously modern homes.

If we could have walked round the village in 1900 we would have found that:

All our present day stone and cob farms were there.

The old Butter Factory and the Turnpike House were there too.

Near the Cross there were no red brick houses and no Hill Top Bungalow.

Vealhayes and Old Vealhayes were then Vealhayes Farm and its outbuildings.

The cricket field was there but it was smaller and had no pavilion. The site of the latter was then a pond and Mr Charles Snell used to shoot ducks rising from it!

There was no Church Room and no bungalows near it.

And the present day tennis court, practice nets and putting course were then part of an orchard belonging to the Coryton estate.



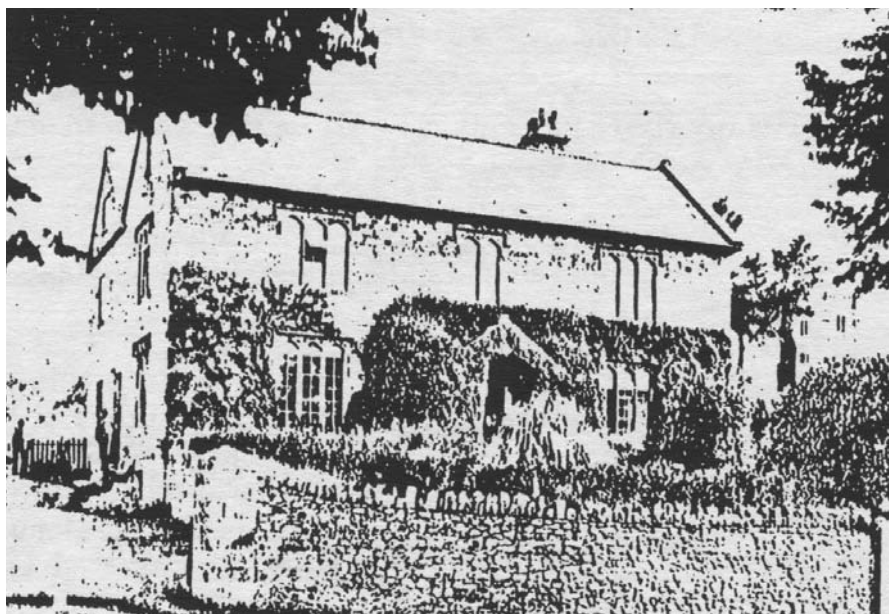
The Butter Factory



The Old Bakery



1975



Kilmington Farm
past and present



APPENDIX A UNUSUAL WORDS

(A first shot at it and only as far as I've gone to date.)

BORDAR A villein (q.v. below) of the lowest rank who rendered menial service for a cottage held at the will of his Lord.

BOROUGH BURH In the old days a burh was a combined place of refuge and centre of resistance. The modern term borough (Burgh in Scotland) stems directly from this but has a different meaning i.e. A town possessing a municipal corporation and privileges conferred by Royal Charter.

CONSTABLE A post held only by men which was, like jury service today, unpaid and compulsory. Every man was liable to serve as one in his turn unless he was rich enough to pay someone else to do it for him. The sole keeper of the peace and superintendent of punishment in the parish until 1856 when the Devon Constabulary was formed. The Church Wardens' accounts show how varied were his duties.

DOMESDAY BOOK

The actual entry in this book for this village was -

"Acreage 968. The King has a manor called Chinemetona which Earl Lewin held and it paid gold for 2 hides. (See below). There 10 ploughs can till. Thereof the King has in demesne ' a hide and 1 plough and 8 bordars, 2 serfs, 3 beasts, 1 mill paying 5 shillings, 6 acres of woodland, 30 acres of meadow, 1 furlongs and 12 acres of pasture. It pays 7 pounds of gold a year weighed and assayed."

EARL A governor of one of the great divisions of England in the old days.

MEAD An alcoholic drink made by fermenting honey' and water.

MOOT An assembly of people especially one forming a court of judicature. Hence our modern term — a moot point — meaning one which is debatable.

PETER'S PENCE An annual tax or tribute of one penny from each householder having land of a certain value which was paid to the Papal See before the Reformation. And, apparently, after that to the Church as it was paid in Axminster as late as 1669.

ROMAN VILLA Nothing like our modern villa. But a complete economic unit in some industry such as farming, metal work, cloth making etc. It had an open courtyard surrounded by many rooms. One, near Stroud, had 64.

SLING WARFARE These old forts were based on the simple fact that you can sling a large stone a long way down a steep hill and only a very short way up it.

TRADITION That which is handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another.

VILLEIN A class between free men and serfs. A peasant occupier or cultivator entirely subject to a Lord or attached to a Manor.

The term 'hide' is explained in the second paragraph of Part V.

APPENDIX B OLD HOUSES IN THE VILLAGE

The dates shown are the earliest which I have been able to find so far after making many enquiries and searching all available documents in the County Records Office. But it is obvious that many houses may well have existed well before the dates given. Any information on this subject from anyone will be very welcome.

Before 1087	Old Coryton. Originally timber built.
Before 1190	Balls Dairy or Ballshayes (Owned by John de Balle).
Before 1246	Studhayes. This word meant Stallion Enclosure.
Before 1272	Hills Farm.
Before 1272	Dulcis or Dowelihayes (Owned by the Doviles or Douvils).
Before 1272	Nower Farm.
Before 1288	Our Church. But may well have existed long before this.
Before 1330	Vealhayes.
Before 1525	Oxenlears (near Hills Farm).
Before 1537	Hillside Close.
Before 1555	Clifthorne.
Before 1555	Gammons Hill Farm (Owned by Cristofer Gammon).
Before 1565	Lynhayes (Believed to have been near Summerleaze Farm).
Before 1612	Old Ruggs (Owned by John Rugg of Axminster).
Before 1633	Summerleaze Farm.
1697	Mansion at Coryton Park. Built by Wm. Tucker of Westwater. And rebuilt in 1756.
Before 1752	Marsh Farm.

The next available records are the Mudge Map of 1809 and the Tithe Map of 1828. On both of these the old cob and stone houses still in the village are all shown.

APPENDIX C OLD FAMILIES IN THE VILLAGE

The dates shown are the earliest I have been able to find so far after making many enquiries and searching all available documents.

But it is obvious that each family may well have existed long before the dates shown. Any information on this subject from anyone will be very welcome.

FAMILIES STILL LIVING IN THE VILLAGE

Anning	Before 1578
Chick	Before 1828
Clegg	Before 1828
Dare	Before 1555
Gill	Before 1828
Hurford	Before 1879
Knight	Before 1828
Lavender	Before
Newbery	Before 1828
Parsons	Before 1828
Quick	Before 1828
Seward	Before 1828
Snell	Before 1828
Trott	Before 1828
Tucker	Before 1828
Wakely	Before 1828
White	Before 1828

FAMILIES WHICH HAVE NOW LEFT THE VILLAGE

Boucher	About 1897
Follett	Before 1884
French	Before 1843
Goff	Before 1951
Hammick	1948-1963
Hitchcock	1903
Marwood Tucker	About 1754
Swabey	About 1864
Tucker	About 1697

1828 is the date of the
famous Tithe Map.

APPENDIX D POPULATION, HOUSEHOLDS AND ACREAGE THROUGH THE CENTURIES

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1087			968	Domesday Book
1555		51		2 houses, 41 places and 8 coots
1584		57		2 houses, 47 places and 8 coots
1801	444			
1809		80		The Mudge Map (a)
1828		80		The Tithe Map (a)
1831	484			
1850	495		1763	
1851	523			
1891	558			
1901	523		1760	
1904		114		
1931	521			
1949	557			
1951	539			
1961	562	216		1961 Census
1965	673	266	1760	
1976	700	300	1760	

It is interesting to note that there was considerable growth, especially in houses, in the first 60 years of this century and a big jump in both population and houses caused by modern development in the last four years.

(a) The Mudge Map was the first accurate 1" to 1 Mile O.S. Map drawn by Col. Mudge. The Tithe Map was the earliest large scale map of this village in the County Records Office.

APPENDIX E THE CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF MONEY

This is a very complicated subject. But there are three simple things which might help us to get some idea of the meaning of recorded facts such as; “In 1555 an agricultural labourer’s wage was 6d per day”.

The first is the price of a sheep. Records of this exist throughout the ages. But allowance must be made for the fact that the modern sheep is considerably bigger and better than that of a thousand years ago. The second is that in 1966 it takes SIX one pound notes to buy as much as one golden sovereign did in 1900. And the third is that, although there were minor fluctuations in Victorian times, the value of money in 1790 and 1825 was the same as in 1900.

From that it seems probable that -

Offa’s silver penny of the very old days was worth £1 today (1966).

In Norman times the penny was worth about 1/8d today (1966).

In Elizabethan Days a penny’s worth was about 1/- today (1966).

In the coaching and Victorian times a penny was worth about 6d today (1966).





Vealhayes



APPENDIX F THE LONG ROAD TO UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE

- 1216 The First Parliament.
- 1238 Honiton and Colyford became boroughs without representation in Parliament but with the right to send their own representatives, distinct from those of the Hundreds, before the King's Justices of the Assize.
- 1265 Parliament summoned by Simon de Montfort. Two representatives from each County.
- 1284 Lyme Regis became a free borough.
- 1362 English at last replaced French as the language to be used both in Parliament and the Law Courts.
- 1640 Honiton became a borough with representatives in Parliament owing to the growing importance of its cloth industry. But borough representation was manipulated by the Whig and Tory parties and no longer represented the towns in whose names the M.P's sat. Many were not even Devon men for Devon boroughs. The election procedure varied widely. For instance - Exeter gave the vote to all freeholders, Tiverton to the mayor and Corporation only and Honiton to any resident who "boiled his own pot". They were called the 'potwallopers'. There were only about 60 of them and since there were too many to be controlled they had to be bribed and made a comfortable income by just selling their votes to the highest bidder.
- 1832 The Reform Act gave the vote to all town dwellers with rent of at least £10 a year and to all countrymen with rent of at least £50 a year. This may seem a big step forward but actually less than one per cent of the population of Devon now had the vote.
- 1867 The Reform Act gave the vote to all male borough householders paying Poor Rates, to male lodgers paying £10 a year in towns and £12 a year in the countryside.
- 1884 The Reform Act effected a wide re—distribution of seats and practically gave universal adult MALE suffrage. Women still had no vote.
- 1928 (Only 37 years ago). Universal Adult Suffrage at last achieved by giving all women over 21 the vote.

APPENDIX G

Billings Directory and Gazetteer of Devonshire 1857

KILMINGTON.



KILMINGTON is a small village and parish on the western acclivities of the Axe valley, 2 miles W. by S. of Axminster, 7 S.E. from Honiton, and 28 from Exeter; the parish contains 1760 acres of land, and a population in 1851 of 583 souls. The number of voters in 1857 was 82.

Kilminster was originally spelt *Kilmenton*, which took the name from the great slaughter of the Danes in Athelstan's days, as much as to say, the place of slain men, for here they were forced to fly over the river Axe, and were vanquished. A great portion of the parish belongs to the Tucker family, who came from Exeter about two hundred years ago. The present mansion, in Coryton Park, was erected 1756, and has some fine views of the valleys of the Axe and Yarty.

The **CHURCH** (St. Giles) has a tower and three bells, and contains nave, chancel, and aisles, the nave being divided from the chancel by an ancient carved screen. There are several memorials to the Tucker family, and one of Thomas Southcott. The living is a Curacy, consolidated with the vicarage of Axminster, to which it is ecclesiastically a Parochial Chapelry. Rev. John Temple, B.A., Curate.

The *Baptists* have a small chapel here, supplied by various preachers.

Kilminster sends two children to the charity school at Axminster,

A fair is held here the first Wednesday in September, for cattle.

Ansell Charles, Esq., Coryton Park
Strimbridge Rev. Job, Baptist Minister

Temple Rev. John, B.A., Curate
White Mr. William, Myrtle Cottage

Board James, tailor and stay maker
Bowditch Ann, farmer, Rugg's
Dare Robert, farmer, butcher, and victualler
Dommett Henry, farmer, Hills
Downton James, beer retailer
Chapple John, victualler, *Old Inn*
Clark William, shoe maker
French James, farmer, baker, and general shopkeeper
French Robert, carrier
Gage Benjamin, farmer, Marsh
Gollop William, carpenter
Hook George, butcher
Kibby Thomas, farmer, Studhays
Overman John, shoe maker
Parsons Joseph, brewer, Kilminster brewery, and
steward for Mrs. Tucker

Parsons John, wheelwright
Phippin James, grocer and draper
Seward Edward, farmer
Seward Lewis, farmer, Dulcis
Snell John, farmer
Snell Samuel, farmer, *KILMINGTON FARM*
Stuart James, farmer
Stuart Samuel, wheelwright
Swain Samuel, farmer, Sunnerliago
Thorn George, farmer, Vealhays
Thorn John, farmer, Gammonshill
Tooley James, beer retailer
Trott Thomas, farmer, Fordhays
Trott William, farmer, Nowe
Vivian Joseph, shoe maker and shopkeeper
White Robert, blacksmith

POST OFFICE.—John Chapple, Sub-Postmaster. Arrival, 7 30 a.m.; despatch, 5 45 p.m. Post from Axminster, which is the nearest Money Order Office.

CARRIER.—Exeter, French, from his own house, every Thursday.



Coryton Park - rebuilt in 1756, largely demolished in 1953



Cricket Pavilion - built about 1906



The Butter Factory

