

## **East Brent Parish History Group**

### **Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

#### Visitors from Near and Far

We were pleased to welcome Margaret Thompson back again who together with her husband was able to bring along Brian Fry from New Zealand. As previously mentioned, Brian lived with his parents in Holly Tree Cottage, Church Road until his move to New Zealand in 1960. Brian related some of his memories of his life in East Brent. A few local friends of Brian were able to come along to meet him and discuss their memories.

#### Meeting with Ben Ward of Atlanta, U.S.A. (see meeting report of 7 Dec. 2011).

After our last meeting, I had a surprise call from Ben who was visiting his sister in Gloucestershire. He took time out to visit East Brent and we had a useful discussion. Ben's great-grandfather was Dixon Ward a metalworker and brass founder who lived in Anvil House (Medical Centre). His grandfather was Gilbert Ward who was sometime of headmaster of Cannington School and Gilbert's son James was Ben's father. Ben's maternal grandfather (P.B. Davis) was Vicar of Cannington.

Ben moved to Atlanta, Georgia, USA when his employer (Rolls-Royce, Patchway, Bristol) opened an office in Atlanta.

#### Storage of EBPHG Data and Documents

We are now in a position to proceed with the purchase of a storage cupboard for documents etc. This will be situated in the Village Hall and will be accessible by arrangement. A full list of the documents will be made available in due course.

The other method of data storage will be via the Parish Council Website. The precise format is under discussion and it is expected that some availability will be possible in the next few weeks. Thanks are due particularly to Ron Champion plus Bill Walker, John Rigarfsford and Nigel Lloyd-Jones and others who are involved in formulating the website.

#### Presentations at Future Meetings

If anyone can suggest any particular aspects of the Parish's history to be investigated, please let me know. These could be the subject of a presentation at a future meeting. One on how the Parish's poor were treated (and looked after) has already been offered.

#### The History of Somerset

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Rev. John Collinson compiled a History of Somerset and a copy on CD has been donated to the Group.

Some of the information given at the time has since been updated but it is interesting to see what was known and thought of at the time of its publication. For example it states that Brent Knoll is about 1000 feet above sea level – sunk a bit since then I think!

A few snippets from it states :-

- “This neighbourhood did sustain much injury from the ravages of the Danes” and that “Brent derived its name from having been brent or burnt by these invaders”. This is not at all certain as the annals of Glastonbury many years before the Danes refers to ‘Brent’.
- Ina, king of the West-Saxons in 690, bestowed the manor, consisting of ten hides, on the abbey of Glastonbury.
- King Alfred, (871 – 899) is supposed to have defended himself here against the Danes.
- A piece of ground still preserves the memory of some notable skirmish in the name of Battleborough.

- Even the legendary King Arthur is mentioned as giving it to the abbey of Glastonbury, of which it was some time held by the family of Bythemore, and then the Percivals of Tickenham.
- The Domesday Book is mentioned as stating – “The church itself holds Brentemerse.”
- “In the time of king Edward it gelded for twenty hides. The arable is thirty carucates, of which in demesne are four hides, There are eight ploughs, and five servants, and fifty villanes, and forty-seven cottagers with sixteen ploughs, and twenty acres of meadow.”
- When the abbey of Glastonbury was dissolved, the manor of East-Brent, was granted to the duke of Somerset. Afterwards it came to the possession of the City of London, and was sold to Sir William Whitmore. It then descended to his nephew, Sir Thomas Whitmore of Shropshire, who sold it to Arthur Green Wollers, esq. of whom it was purchased by Robert Mackrath, esq; the present possessor (in 1789).
- It mentions Rook's-Bridge as being situated two miles east, and containing nineteen houses. “This hamlet is so denominated from a bridge erected here, by one Rook of the abbey of Glastonbury, over a canal or cut from the river Brew, through the parish of Mark to the river Ax, in old writings called Pillrow-Cut. Before this bridge was built passengers were conveyed over the river in a boat, kept at this place,, *per antiquum afftomarium, by one of the abbot's tenants in East-Brent; and those tenants of the lords of South-Brent.*”

This booklet/disc makes very interesting reading and is available if anyone wishes to peruse it more.

#### Next Meeting

There will be no meeting in August as other events and holidays take Group members away. The next meeting will be held in the Village Hall on **Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at 7:00 pm** when there will be a further presentation concerning the history of the Parish of East Brent.

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