

ST. LAURENCE 'S CHURCH, WEST WOODHAY

The Church was built in 1883: but two West Woodhay churches preceded it. Fortunately for us, the evidence for the two vanished churches is precise - and available.

In the vestry is a Faculty (recovered and presented to the parish about 1912 by the Rev. Thomas B. Willson, Litt.D, Rector, 1912-1925) granted by Robert Loggan, Chancellor of the Diocese of Sarum, to pull down the medieval church. It is dated April 27, 1716.

'Whereas (says the Faculty) the Worshipfull William Sloper Esqr Lord of the Mannor and patron of the parish Church of West Woodhay in the County of Berks and the Diocese of Sarum together with the Reverend Daniell Bevan Clerk Master of Arts Rector of the said Parish Church and also Henry Durnford Thomas Thatcher and severall others of the parishioners and householders of and within the said parish of West Woodhay HAVE ...represented that the Church of the said parish is very Ancient and in great decay and not any ways (with safety) to be repaired and continued long standing notwithstanding the daily cost and great Expense the parish hath been at from time to time in repair of the Same ...'

In short (as the Faculty reveals) the Lord of the Manor was minded to provide the parish with a new church. It goes on: 'AND that the said William Sloper Esqr is pleased (out of the great Esteem and Reverence he hath to the Church and for the sake of his Tennants) to provide and undertake at his own Charge to pull down the old Church and substantially to rebuild it again in the same place and as near as maybe to the same Dimensions as it is now of ...'

When the new church of 1716 was itself pulled down, there were discovered 96 magnificent medieval floor tiles. These were mounted into the wall of the Memorial Chapel below the belfry. They are among the most beautiful of their kind in England: in particular the lion-head tiles, and a near complete geometrical roundel. Moreover, we have a good idea of the dimension of the first church - which stood, like its successor, in the grounds of West Woodhay House. For the foundations of both small churches have been preserved. Today they form the setting for an intimate small garden surrounded with flowering shrubs and paved with ancient tombstones.

The new church was wholly unlike its predecessor. Three photographs of around 1880 (in the Vestry) show a brick-built classical revival church with the 'Book of Common Prayer' furnishings of its time. It was not very beautiful: but it was one of the earliest country churches of its kind in England. (There is a grander and altogether more handsome example of the same date at Wolverton, near Kingsclere.) Of this church nothing remains except the foundations, and all that was transferred from it is the marble wall memorial above the floor-tiles in the Memorial Chapel. This can clearly be seen, in its original setting, in the photographs. Thus the present church contains material witness to the two earlier churches.

The new church of 1882 was moved clean away from West Woodhay House. It was built by William Henry Cole, who had bought the West Woodhay

estate in 1880. The architect was Sir Arthur Bloomfield, a prolific Victorian architect, who provided - at a cost of £3000 - a simple flint and Bath stone church in the then favoured Early English style, of much the same size as the two earlier churches: that is to say, sufficient to seat the Lord of the Manor and his family, his staff and his tenants. The church was extended eastwards by twelve feet in 1894.

The east windows (1883 and 1890) are by Morris & Co, that notable stained glass workshop with which Sir Edward Burne-Jones was closely identified. The design of the central window (the Crucifixion) is certainly his. The nave windows (woefully light-excluding - but a 'dim religious light' was then much appreciated in churches) are by Powell of London. They were installed in 1890 as a memorial to William Henry Cole, and illustrate themes from the Te Deum.

Striking features of the sanctuary are three high-relief carvings by the Belgian, Goyer. (Note, by the way, a framed, illuminated vellum on the north side of the nave which notes the gift of these carvings, among other records of the church. It was the gift of Mrs. Neville Chamberlain, wife of the Prime Minister of the late 1930s who was a member of the Cole family.)

The organ is by the younger Henry Willis. It was installed at much the same time as the vestry screen - which is a memorial and thanksgiving for the relief of Ladysmith and of the ending of the Boer War.

Much of the carving (pulpit, lectern, bench-ends and the like) is by Miss Jessie Cole, a gifted daughter of W.H.Cole, who had her own workshop in West Woodhay House. An equally gifted sister, Edith, was an embroiderer, examples of whose work survive in the hanging over the inner belfry door and in one of the altar frontals which is usually to be seen in everyday use.

The church has a number of other memorials to members of the Cole family, who held the estate until the 1920s, when it passed into the hands of the Henderson family - its present owners. Mr. W.H.Henderson pannelled the nave. His grandson, Mr. John Henderson, and his wife Sarah, presented the church with the three putti (found in Scotland) which fly from the walls above the font. Pevsner describes them, justly, as 'exceedingly pretty'.

Since the end of World War 2 the church has been relit, so that the solid Victorian craftsmanship of the roof timbers can be properly appreciated: and the small Memorial/Sacrament Chapel created beneath the bell-tower. The furnishings are to the design of John Hayward.

The Memorial Garden which adjoins the churchyard to the west is not part of the church or churchyard, but by happy inspiration opens directly out of it. It is the family memorial to Mrs. Sarah Henderson killed in 1972 in a hunting accident. The pavilion was designed by John Griffin and built by Henry and Richard Rumble of West Woodhay. The garden was designed by John Russell. Inscriptions and garden seats were designed and made by the sculptor John Skelton.



The Goddard Association of Europe.

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7 September 1999

Dear Mr McKinnon,

Further to our conversation at East Woodhay church "At Home" I can now confirm that Terence Conran is indeed a descendant of the Sloper family. Sir Robert Sloper, whose memorial slab is set in the main aisle of St Martins was his great great grandfather. Mr Conran's grandmother, Marian Orby Sloper married Bertram Conran. Sir Robert, unfortunately, had a chequered career and is said to have been sent home from army service in India as the Governor of Madras for "incompetence". For further information about the Slopers and Conrans read

*The authorised biography of Terence Conran by Nicholas Ind
Portrait of a house [West Woodhay house] by Mary H. McClintock
The Provoked Wife, the life and times of Susannah Cibber, by Mary Nash
and the enclosed, further copies of which can be obtained from Newbury Heritage Centre [the museum] at £3.*

*My husband has written a monograph about the Goddards of East Woodhay and Castle Eaton and copies can be obtained by sending a cheque for £2.50 to
Richard Goddard, Sinton Meadows, Stoks Lane, Leigh Sinton, Malvern, Worcs WR13 5DY
This line of the Goddards died out at the death of Rev Edward Henry Aemilius Goddard, then the Vicar of Paghham, in 1878. His main claim to fame is that he was a collector of the original manuscripts of the music of Handel and spent much of his time touring the continent with his cousin Richard Buckner searching for them.*

I hope that the refurbishment and repairs continue to go well,

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.R.Goddard



Newbury Weekly News Feb 7th 1864

GODDARD Jan 23 At The Axe and Compasses Inn, East Woodhay, after a painful illness
Thomas Goddard aged 57 years, deeply regretted

GODDARD ASSOCIATION OF EUROPE



October 19, 1998

Dear Mr Hobson,

Henry & Maria Goddard nee Shaw of East Woodhay

Thank you for your letter of enquiry concerning the above Goddards. Over the years we have had several enquiries about Goddards at East Woodhay, unfortunately there have been a number of unrelated Goddards living in the village and it is sometimes difficult to separate them.

Firstly there is the landowning family who bought the house called "Stargroves" (after the first owner). Vincent Goddard, the third son of Thomas Goddard of Ogbourne St George, Wilts. bought the manor of East Woodhay in 1565. They lived there for two hundred years, putting a memorial to Edward Goddard, who died in 1722, in St Martin's church. The head of the household became rector of nearby West Woodhay in the 1780s and the family moved there. This branch of an immense family died out with Edward Henry Aemilius Goddard who died in 1893 while vicar of Pagham (amongst other things).

Secondly there are agricultural labouring Goddard families who have flitted in and out of the village from north, south, east and west as Goddard is a common name in Berkshire and Wiltshire. Your Goddards, who, as you say, do not appear in the 1881 census seem to have been one of them. (Nor can I see them in the Berkshire 1881 census). I have had enquiries about these Goddards, but a lot earlier than the dates you give. You could try writing to Mr R.J.Aubrey, "One Oak", 29 Harrop Road, Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 9DD whose ancestor was Mary Goddard, born East Woodhay in 1776.

It so happens that East Woodhay Historical Committee are writing their history and have been over to see out Goddard records. They too have done some research and I would suggest that you write to Mrs Dorothy Cooper, "Madena", White City, Woolton Hill, Newbury. Enclose a stamped addressed envelope for a reply.

I shall keep your letter on file in case someone writes in with a similar family tree; in which case you will be contacted.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.R.Goddard
Research Co-ordinator



8 Marlboro

inge Road,



22.9.98

Dear Sir, I understand you have made a special study of

the surname Goddard.

I am interested in some Goddards who lived at East Woodhay, in the sub-district of Highclere, in the Registration District of Kingsclere, Hampshire in the 1870's. They were Henry and Maria Goddard (nee Shaw). They lived at Hall Farm. They were married on 28 Jan 1834 at St. James Westminster.

I have been to Hall Farm and have it marked on an O.S. map. I have Maria Goddard's death certificate, and a copy of her will. They had three children, Emma Maria, Henry and Ellen.

The I.G.I. seems to show Goddards in the area for several centuries. However I cannot find any Goddards on any census for the area. It seems that the Shaw family, into which Henry Goddard married, owned property in Antigua, which was the subject of extensive correspondence.

So we want copies!

I have copies of this, and of one Emma Shepherds (who went to Australia) letters describing the voyage. I am not quite sure how she fits in, but would like to know.

If you have any matching information, or would be interested in copies of what I have please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you and enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your use.

used for acknow. & invite

Yours sincerely,
Philip Holson.

Acknowledged.
Invite sent
Copy to Julie to deal.

East Woodhay

1823 resolved by the Vestry to pull down the unsafe church. The Goddard memorial was untouched.

The bells were made by John Corr of Aldbourne 1728-1754. On the tenor bell is inscribed that Edward Goddard Esq gave £100 towards this peel.

The Goddard bowl - was used by Oliver Cromwell at breakfast before the second battle of Newbury Oct 27 1644. It was given to the Rectory as an heirloom for the parish in 1863 by the Edward Goddard then living in London, who was the last male heir of this Goddard branch.

In 1825 the rectory was in a very bad state. Firstly the new Vicar Rev T. Douglas Hodgson had difficulty in finding the village. Having got off the coach in Newbury he couldn't find any one who knew where East Woodhay was. In the end the ostler at The Pelican undertook to show him the way, but the roads were so muddy and overgrown that he was disheartened and on seeing the Rectory he nearly gave up the post before taking it!

West Woodhay

1796 Directory of Berkshire

"At West Woodhay is Belvedere the seat of William Sloper Esq., the parsonage house the seat of Charles William Sloper Esq., and Woodhay House the seat of General Sloper."

GODDARD ASSOCIATION OF E



September 29, 1998

Dear Mrs Tomlin,

Having offered to assist the East Woodhay, Hants., local history group with a history of their village I got out our files about the Goddard family there, whom, you probably know held the patronages and provided the clergy for both Water Eaton and East Woodhay.

I have now read, a little more diligently than before, your book on Castle Eaton Church and on page 11 you write "Back came the Goddards of de la Zouche descent". It is news to us that any Goddards were of de la Zouche descent. According to the Goddard family records the Goddards at Castle Eaton were a branch of the Ogbourne St George Goddards and in consequence, the Swindon Goddards.

We would be most grateful if you could look through your notes and tell us where you think the link between the de la Zouches and Goddards is. I see from the acknowledgements that you had some information from Mr Chris Watson about the Goddards. As to my knowledge he has never been in contact with us, I should be most grateful to be put in touch with him, for both our advantages.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.R. Goddard
Research Co-ordinator

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Oct. 4th. 1998

Dear Mr. + Mrs. Goddard,

In response to your telephone call, on Oct. 1st, I enclose copies of two references which were used in my work on Castle Eaton Church, 1992.

You will recall that I received correspondence from The Goddard Society, some time ago, which made the offer to correct the lists of Rectors and Patrons, presumably with special regard to the Goddard family. This offer was noted but not taken up because the source of my records has been extremely carefully researched. None of those records could have been printed without the diligent work of those credited on Page 33.

It may be helpful to you to know that the lists, up to Bullock (1829), Rectors and Patrons were translated and cross checked from the Sarum Registers. With the exception of the last, they were extracted from — 'INSTITUTIONAL CLERICORUM in COMITATU WILTONIAE, at Anno 1297 ad Annum 1810, researched and recorded by Sir Thomas Phillips, Bt.' In 1836 the Rural Deaneries of CRICKLADE, MALMESBURY and CHIPPENHAM, were transferred to the DIOCESE of GLOUCESTER and BRISTOL. Records from these later dates were researched in those archives.

All the work, requiring much travelling and personal expense, was initially done by John Harrison — [John Allen Harrison, Vicar at CASTLE EATON 1945-1965]. He was tireless and meticulous in leaving his handwritten Vestry Notes. All his research was checked by Dr. T. R. Thomson. Between them, they cross-checked every W.A.M. reference

and verified registers and Latin translations too. I can remember Dr. Thomson rechecking the GODDARD WILLS [printed in CRISP, FRAGMENTA GENEALOGICA VII] as he searched for the early leases of WATER EATON. John Goddard's Will, from Ogbourne St. George 1500-01, mentions "the yeeres of my farm at Eton" - but Dr. Thomson could not find the Subsidy Roll entry for that year. He did prove that John's son, Thomas Goddard, was the father of the John Goddard who died in 1560 at WATER EATON. [cross reference FRAG. GEN. as above and Records Office Wills]

Both Dr. Thomson and Rev. Harrison were known personally by me and I have never had the slightest reason to doubt their distinguished and well respected scholarship. Of course, if you wish to correct their work it is your right to do so.

You may know that there is a definite case for looking at Plurality in the Castle Eaton list of Rectors. Thomas Goddard was there 1701-31

yet Rector of North Wraxall	_____	1697-1708
and " " North Tidworth	_____	1708-1731
then Chaplain, House of Commons	_____	1705-1707
and Canon of Windsor	_____	1707-

Many have discussed the possibility of Plurality and it was fairly common in the eighteenth century, for obvious reasons, for a remote village to have a Rector who lived away but installed a Curate. The Castle Eaton Curates list is very fascinating. Sometimes, as at the village of Wotton Rivers, the Plurality was challenged. The Outram v. Brasenose College & W. Rivers Churchwardens is a well recorded case.

Mrs. Goddard telephoned to say that the Zouche - Goddard link could not be found. I enclose a copy of Chris. Watson's notes. His research is very sound and easy for you to check at any

reference library holding medieval Feet of Fines. You will probably have your own volumes so I will not bore you with details. Frances as wife of John Goddard and daughter of William Zouche is the recorded link. The reference is excellent because those field names, truly medieval in content, are still used in deeds drawn up at Castle Eaton today. Overborstead and Netherborstead are lands not far from the church.

Through the Castle Eaton, Milton Hilbourne and Wortton Rivers researches I have been so lucky in meeting lovely people who share my enthusiasm and love of learning. This week, while at Wells Cathedral, I met a Goddard family who do all their own research. They told me of their admiration of Jill Chambers work and we were able to think of the Ramsbury connections and the diverse situations which those Goddards found themselves in, sadly.

I hope that the enclosed references help you to solve your 'diametrically opposed' records and doubts,

Yours sincerely,
Audrey Tomlin.

ENC. Copies of Pages 31.33. Vestry Notes. C. Eaton Church
Copy of Goddard Family Lecture Notes. C. Watson.
ref - Zouche.

(There are a great many other Goddard references in the Vestry Notes, - not space to print them all.)