

MINUTES OF THE 25th MEETING OF AYNHO HISTORY SOCIETY HELD IN AYNHO VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 27TH JANUARY 2010

Present: – Brian Reynolds - Chairman
Peter Cole – Secretary.
Ian Parkes – Treasurer

Altogether 50 members and guests attended.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Kevin Berrill, Gill Phillips and Ted & Valerie Sutton.

2. Correspondence

Peter Cole

The Secretary said no one had responded to the name of Thompson regarding the 1914 postcard.

Bill Land's son had given him a collection of 23 Women's Institute membership and annual programme cards that had belonged to Lillian. It is quite amazing how many of these bear the names of current History Society members, or their relatives. Peter mentioned one delightful press cutting that was included with one of them. It is a brief snippet from the Peterborough column of the Daily Telegraph dated 19th April 1982: - "At a recent Women's institute meeting in Northamptonshire there was a competition for 'The most useless gadget in your kitchen'. It was won by the member who sent in a photograph of her husband".

As the W I. also keep an archive, it was agreed that the documents should be passed to them for safe-keeping. Details have been kept for our own archive.

There has been one interesting piece of correspondence, with reference to the Seccoll family, who were stonemasons in the village for over 200 years.

A Simon Smith emailed the Secretary from Melbourne, Australia to say that his grandfather was James Seccoll, and family legend suggests that he emigrated in 1860, with a cousin William, probably because his mother had died, and his father had remarried. He asked if this could be confirmed this from local records.

Thanks to Dawn providing a complete set of census records, it was established that in 1841 John Seccoll and his wife Anne had one son James age 10 months, and there was a William Seccoll, of similar age to John, who had a son William age 2. There were two older Seccolls, who appeared to be the parents of both families.

In the 1851 census Anne no longer appears, but John is married to Sarah from Goddington. James is age 10 and William 13, and there are younger children in both families as well

In 1861, when James would be 20, and William 23, neither is present, which seems to confirm that they had by then both emigrated from Aynho. John's family contains no fewer than 8 children, one of whom is Eli Seccoll then age 4, a step-brother of James.

This Eli appears in every one of all the other censuses. He becomes the senior family member, marrying Rhoda Anne. One of his sons, Edward John, was one of the 14 Aynho men who died in the First World War, and who are commemorated in the War Memorial in the Church.

Peter asked Sybil about the Seccoll family, and she said that the last one to live in Aynho was Eli, who died in 1933. He lived in 3 Skittle Alley, which was always known as the Seccoll's house. His widow Rhoda went to live in Bodicote, but both are buried in Aynho churchyard.

I passed all this information on to Simon Smith, and he was very grateful. Simon also said that his grandfather James and his cousin had stopped first in South Africa, and William stayed there. He

had a son, Arthur William Seccull, who became a well-known cricketer. Born in 1868, he was a member of the first South African team to tour England in 1894. Back in South Africa in 1895-96, he played in the third Test at [Cape Town](#) against the [England side](#) under [Lord Hawke](#), scoring 6 and 17 not out and taking two wickets for 37 runs. So we can add another name to our list of famous people to be associated with Aynho, a South African test cricketer

3. Finance Report 2009 Ian Parkes

The Treasurer reported that funds at the end of last year stood at £721.47, although as a good many people had paid their subscriptions that evening, the total would now be considerably higher. Seven new members had just joined.

4. Chairman's Report Brian Reynolds

Brian said that he had heard from Time Team, but unfortunately they did not feel that Aynho would be of sufficient interest for their viewers. Zetica would be able to come again with digital imaging and ground-penetrating radar to see if they can identify other tunnels. O.U.A.S. are still examining earth, etc taken from the tunnel to see if can offer any clues. A Victorian child's shoe has been found when a pond at Ramblers Cottage was emptied for work to be done there.

The piano that John Fulcher contributed towards is now in place in the Hall. We must decide soon what to do with the £100 he has given to our Society.

Elizabeth Cartwright-Hignett has visited Aynho, and she is very impressed with both the Cartwright Hotel, and with what James Perkins has done to restore the House. He has won a national award from the Georgian Group for his restoration.

A Community Connection Roadshow will be held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 24th February from 9.30 to 11.30 am, with service providers, and representatives from village organisations, including our Society, to give advice and tell people about what is provided in our village.

Brian has bought a book on eBay, which includes an article "Spotlight on Aynho".

5. **The Cartwright Papers** Dr. Jim McDermott

Dr. McDermott said that to avoid going over ground he had covered last time, he had decided to concentrate on the Cartwright family's life in the decade of the 1880s. This was an interesting period, because there is a great deal of information and there were two strong influences. Firstly all the landed gentries were beginning to feel the pinch due to the agricultural depression, so that land values had really plummeted, and tenants were no longer able to afford their rents.

In his long life William Ralph Cartwright had purchased a lot of properties, and had paid a great deal for Soane to rebuild the House, but he had always played the stock market very badly, so on his death he had left the estate with large debts. Sir Thomas had inherited these debts, but he only lived for three further years, and many properties needed repair during that time. Provision had to be made for both widows, further adding to the debts.

On taking over, William Cornwallis Cartwright sat down and calculated all the income and liabilities, and realised that excluding the House, the (mostly paper) assets amounted to £17,500, the actual debts were £16,000. Realising that rental income was going to reduce considerably, he was therefore obliged to rent out the House, and live abroad for most of the time, which would be cheaper. Later on he became an M.P., and rented a house in London.

Secondly, luckily for him, in 1881 his cousin Major Fairfax Cartwright of Edgcote died without an heir, so after 30 years of belt-tightening he inherited a large sum of money, a yacht, and importantly a portfolio of very nice London properties. This saved the family from penury. William Cornwallis lived off the £5,000 income from these rents, and allowed the Aynho estate money to be used solely for the upkeep of the estate. His elder son, Tommy (to distinguish him from W C's

brother Thomas), received £3,000 per annum plus Brackley House. The other son, Fairfax, received £500 a year.

William Cornwallis was not a typical English squire. He was half German; he had married a German, and was very fond of them. Both his sons had been sent to school there, where they had mingled with the German imperial family, and they knew the man who was going to become Kaiser. Tommy didn't like Germans, and Fairfax spent most of his time as Viennese ambassador writing to his government to warn them of Germany's ambitions.

William Cornwallis was a great worrier. He worried about the future, about England's position in the world, and often about the Irish, who were causing great problems at that time. Tommy on the other hand lived only for hunting, shooting and fishing. Fairfax was very widely travelled. He didn't keep a diary, but he did correspond a lot.

Tommy went to take the waters in Bad Homburg, and a childhood liver infection flared up, which may have been a major contributory factor of his committing suicide a few years later.

Having failed his Cambridge exams, Fairfax seemed set to be a failure, but he took an exam for the diplomatic service. His career soon took off, and he went on to hold several good posts.

William Cornwallis had left the handling of the Aynho estate to his brother Thomas, who had inherited Newbottle House, so most of his time was devoted to politics. However in 1885 his parliamentary career stalled when he voted against his party's Home Rule for Ireland. Twice he tried to stand as an independent, but did not succeed. Despite his stand on this, he was quite prepared for the Irish church to be disestablished, and he had discussions with cardinals about this.

He started to get more involved in the Aynho estate, but he had frequent arguments with Thomas, and later on Tommy as well, as he was always reluctant to consider reducing farm rents, which the other two kept reminding him was essential.

Tommy travelled widely in both Canada and America, and his diaries are full of comments on railways, liners and the various cities, etc that he came across.

Correspondence from Fairfax was quite copious, and he kept reminding people that his diplomatic salary was not huge, so he was short of money.

In Aynho one of the problems was flu, which seemed to strike most people each year. By 1889 financially the Aynho overdraft still stood at over £2,500, and rent arrears were £1,420. Some non-payers were evicted, and gradually the Cartwrights tried to buy back Aynho properties that had been sold to tenants by Shakerley Marmion many years earlier.

W C began to entertain in the old-fashioned manner, including winter shooting parties attended by groups of Germans, and by British parliamentarians. All other times of the year he was abroad.

His wife Clementine died in June 1890, and although he was to live for a further 25 years, he was never quite the same after this. He took less interest in the Aynho estate, and Tommy took over until his death in 1896. His sister, Roma, became her father's caretaker, not a role that she would have chosen, as it condemned her to being a spinster. After Tommy's suicide, Fairfax helped by taking over some of the running of the estate. He had wanted a baronetcy, but this was not to be.

Dr. McDermott invited anyone to visit the Northamptonshire Records Office to inspect any records in detail. It is at Wootton Hall Park, Northampton, NN4 8BQ. It would be helpful to telephone 01604 – 762129 in advance, so that the particular box of documents needed could be got ready for them.

In response to questions he said that there are about 100,000 documents altogether, the earliest being manorial records dating back to 1273. It is certainly the biggest collection of papers in Northamptonshire, and possibly in the country. He has almost finished cataloguing it all.

Most early Cartwrights were army officers, but after William Ralph Cartwright's sons, they were mostly M.P.s or diplomats. The reason for the agricultural depression was due to over-production, the transfer of land from farming to industry, and cheap meat and grain imports from abroad.

Peter said that if anyone wants to visit the Records Office, he has broad details of the contents of most boxes catalogued so far, which he can easily supply.

6. A. O. B.

Rupert Clark said that he had finally managed to track down details of the life of William Tuckwell, a leading Oxford surgeon in the early 1800s who had originated from Aynho.

In response to a question Brian said that the exact dimensions of the Cartwright pub sign would be obtained, so that we can decide exactly whereabouts it can best be displayed.

7. Forthcoming Meetings

February 24th	The Role of The Country Carrier	Martin Greenwood
March 31st	Memories of Aynho School	David Morgan