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## Naunton Notes and Queries

By Brian Torode 2005-9 (copyright Cheltenham Local History Society)



1919



## NAUNTON 'NOTES & QUERIES'

### 1. THE NAUNTON PART OF THE TITHING - FOR THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE EXHIBITION (2007)

In the middle ages, Cheltenham was divided into three tithings- in simple terms, this means districts or units of land (hamlets as Atkyns calls them) comprising ten households where each household was responsible for the actions of the others. Of course a tithing of ten households could in practice number between 50 and 100 people.

The three which comprised Cheltenham were (i) Cheltenham itself; (ii) Arle and Alstone; (iii) Westal, Naunton and Sandford.

There are many references in old documents to the district with which this exhibition is concerned. In those days of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, much of the area was woodland or waste land and the soil was mostly clay.

The area we are looking at today stretched from approximately Thirlestaine Road to the bottom of Leckhampton Hill and from the Old Bath Road across to the Leckhampton Road. This constituted most of the Naunton part of the Tithing.

The earliest form of the spelling of the word Naunton, was Newenton and we have at the Gloucester record Office, several deeds recording the transfer of land from one owner to another at the end of the twelve hundreds:

Alice de Newenton and Margaret her daughter TO William de Warwyk, 1 acre in Newenton.

Robert de Bradusdok, son of John TO Thomas Godmo of Sandforde, half an acre of land in fields in Newenton middulforlong

John, son and heir of Nicolas de Newenton TO Richard, son and heir of Walter de la Hulle of Newenton, 12 acres in Newenton fields.

More picturesque and detailed transfers are recorded in the thirteen hundreds:

**The Feast of the Circumcision 26 Edward III, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1352/3:**

Gift of Walter Calverhous of Westhale TO Juliana and Cecelia his daughters, one and a half acres in Chiltenham, in Newenton field

**The Feast of St Barnabas 9 Edward III 11<sup>th</sup> June 1335:**

Given at Newenton. John, son and heir of Richard de la Hulle of Newenton, TO Richard the Chaplain, brother of John above, the title to 4 acres scattered in fields in Newenton, which John's father gave to Richard. (ie as heir to his father, John resigned any claim to land given to his brother)

**Sunday after Corpus Christi 40 Edward III 7<sup>th</sup> June 1366:**

Lease for lives: Walter de Homme TO John atte More of Chorleton Regis and John and Richard his sons, 2 acres, 2 selions and 1 headland in Newyenton next Chiltenham, to Jhn atte More for life and then to his sons for life.

And finally, **Monday after the Feast of Pentecost 9 Henry V, 12<sup>th</sup> May 1421:**

Given at Cheltenham: John Lane, tanner of Gloucester TO William Frenche of Westal, one and a half acres in a field called Pilley; half an acre in a field called Newtonyshulle and half an acre in Neunton.

In 1712 Atkyns in his History of Gloucester wrote that there were divers hamlets in Cheltenham, Westal having six houses and NAUNTON having 5 houses.

In 1726 there exists a sale document for land near Naunton Close field and the bridge (possibly the bridge over the Nolty Brook near where Naunton Lane met the public pathway through what was to become the Fairfield Estate. )

Another deed of 1751 describes the extent of land passed between Edward Ballinger of Leckhampton and John Allen of Winchcombe:

4 portions of arable land in Naunton Field; land south of Whitecross furlong; land west of Naunton Close, late owned by Walter Cox; in Noltey Filed, the sellion shooting east and west on the stone bridge and next to it south of Nolty brook; land near Webbs Close.

And in October 1822 William Ballinger bought from Arthur Parker a parcel of land in Naunton Field described as:

Stretching 75 feet from east to west, bounded on the south by land belonging to Benjamin Newmarch and on the east by Henry Norwood Trye. Land on the west is in the process of being sold to William Baldwin. On the north by a central road of width 30 feet, together with

right of way at all times and a likewise right of way from the turnpike road up and down a certain other road leading to the premises of John Ferris Petherick, and from there over a new road, 20 feet wide.

Lots of scope for more local history research here!

Although these deeds are difficult to put into modern geographical locations, they do tell us who the property owners were from time to time and the names of the fields some of which have been perpetuated in current street names.

The Fairfield Estate was to occupy quite a large part of the Naunton Field frequently mentioned in early deeds of transfer.

A Leckhampton estate plan of c1822 shows the position of several Naunton fields and of special interest is Naunton Green, roughly where the old railway line crossed the present Leckhampton Road.

Simeon Moreau's Cheltenham Guide 1783:

Naunton from Nant which in the British language signifies valley, and sometimes a brook.

A fine of lands was levied by Francis Grevil, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed VI, 1550 in Naunton and Cheltenham to the use of Thomas Barret and John Willis; by Sir Henry Capel and Anne his wife, 3<sup>rd</sup> Mary 1556, in Naunton and Alstone to John Ilk and Richard Horwood.

## 1. FAIRFIELD HOUSE, LECKHAMPTON ROAD (2005)



Fairfield House, black and white as well as tinted, by kind permission of Mrs Gaynor Weeks (her copyright)



One of the larger privately owned estates in the area was that upon which was built Fairfield House.

Fortunately, a photograph of the house has come to light, thanks to Mrs Gaynor Weeks, and from sale particulars and legal documents, we know the actual boundary of the property:

To the south, the present Naunton Lane;

To the north, more or less the line of the present Fairfield Avenue;

To the east, the present Fairfield Parade, and

To the west, the present Leckhampton Road.

The whole estate covered 12 acres, 2 roods and 31 perches.

Running across the estate from north to south was a public footpath, currently Fairfield Walk and alongside was a sizeable pond into which flowed the Noltly Brook. A small footbridge gave access from the house grounds across the pond, into an orchard. Beyond that, was meadow and pasture land, the site of which is now occupied by the houses in the Fairfield Parade, Naunton Lane, Fairfield Walk, Fairhaven Street and Fairhaven Road terraces.

The lands in question had passed through several owners, including Henry Thompson, the builder of the original Montpellier Spa, and an owner of extensive property in the Cheltenham area; John Higgs, and Benjamin Newmarch, well known in the early nineteenth century affairs of the town; James Cherrington, butcher, who had willed his holding to an Elizabeth Summerfield, widow, and William Ballinger. Later much of this property was acquired by one of the Cheltenham Town Commissioners, Robert Younghusband who in 1834 sold most of it to Mr George Harvey who was able in 1837, to increase his holding by purchasing some adjoining land from a Kitty Niblett.

Fairfield House was built about 1830 by Robert Younghusband a Cheltenham Town Commissioner. It was purchased from him by George Harvey in December 1834.

George Harvey was born in Langley, Buckinghamshire c1806 and came from a privileged background. He remained a bachelor all his life, but had several well-married relatives. From his will we learn that he had a brother William who was buried in the churchyard at Ss Philip and James, Leckhampton; a nephew and niece, possibly his brother William's children, the niece having married the Duke of Buckinghamshire and the nephew Sir Robert Bateson Harvey, Bt, of Langley Park, Slough. A great niece was Lady Caroline Temple. Female cousins had married into the Lyle and Hammond families. It will be easy to follow up George's family tree and this will be done shortly.

The Census for 1841 gives George's occupation as of 'independent means' and he is living at Fairfield House with a male servant, John Levison aged 35, the same age as George himself; Mary Williams a female servant aged 25; and Caroline Kearsy another servant aged fifteen.

George's nearest neighbours were Shurdington Cottages on the side nearest Bath Road and Trowscoed House occupied by Rev Griffiths Lloyd and his large household.

In 1847 George Harvey obviously planned to be away from Cheltenham for six months and Fairfield House was advertised to be let for that period from September in that year. This description of the property appears in the Cheltenham Looker On:

*Desirable residence containing four sitting rooms, six chambers (bedrooms), coach house, stabling and a well-stocked garden. It commands beautiful views and is a most healthy spot with the advantage of town and country.*

*Particulars and terms, which are moderate, may be seen at the house any day between one and five o'clock.*

On the night of the 1851 Census George was away from home and only two servants are listed as being in the house.

By 1861 Fairfield House has many more neighbours on both sides and it is interesting to note, in view of the bequests made in his first will, that Fairfield House is situated in Cheltenham South Ward, in the Hamlet and Tithing of Westall and the ecclesiastical parish of St Luke.

In this Census, George Harvey is described as Gentleman of independent means, aged 59 (showing a discrepancy of four years compared with the 1841 Census). Living with him were Colin Levester general servant and another bachelor, aged 57: James Cook, footman and unmarried aged 19 and Sarah Hemmings unmarried aged 55.

While in his possession, George Harvey seems to have made significant additions to the house, but also sold some of the land, reducing the estate from 12 to about 7 acres.

Just two years after his death the house is again available to let, unfurnished and the CLO carried the following advertisement from March to September 1883:

*Fairfield House, a detached family residence, charmingly situated within a convenient distance of the Cheltenham College and the town.*

*The house is approached by a carriage drive and contains four reception rooms and seven bedrooms, box room etc. There are charming pleasure grounds and tennis lawns, a productive garden and grass lands, in all about seven acres. There is a large lake for boating and fishing and stabling and other out buildings.*

*For details apply to Mr Ward, Fairfield House, or Engall Sanders and Co, House and Estate Agents.*

George Harvey composed his will in which he made over to George Ward of Cheltenham, his faithful and attentive servant, *"Fairfield House, the coach house, stables, outbuildings, meadow, pasture and all the household furniture, excepting those items specifically mentioned" to be held by the said Ward and his heirs forever, "in consideration of his faithfulness and attention."*

This was legally witnessed and surrendered into the use of the said George Ward, on behalf of George Harvey, by his solicitor, Frederick Stroud, on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1877.

George Harvey surrendered, appointed granted and confirmed to the said G Ward and his heirs,

*The messuage, (House), stables, coach house, outbuildings, garden, land adjoining and belonging to Fairfield House, being the premises purchased by George Harvey, from Robert Younghusband 31<sup>st</sup> December 1834, and the additional 2 acres purchased from Kitty Niblett on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1837, together with all houses and all the estate etc., to hold unto the use of the said G Ward and his heirs and assigns for ever. Also all the household furniture except that mentioned.*

Ward was also admitted a tenant of the Lord of the Manor for further land held by Harvey in January 1878, the same date as that on which Harvey added the Codicil to his 1876 will.

### **The Sixth January 1876**

The last will and testament of me, **GEORGE HARVEY** of FAIRFIELD HOUSE, Cheltenham.

In this will, Harvey left many bequests to family, employees and charitable institutions. I have summarised them as:

To Peter, Henry and Mark, sons of my late cousin, Sally Hammond, £1,000 each.

To each servant who shall be in my employ at my death, £5 each for the purchase of mourning and to each also, **EXCEPT GEORGE WARD**, one year's wages.

To my faithful servant, **GEORGE WARD**, free of legacy duty, an annuity of £100 paid during his life-time by monthly instalments, commencing from the day of my decease. I also instruct my executors to invest a sufficient sum, to pay on the death of George Ward, £1,000 to his widow. If she predecease him, this is transferable to their children.

Legacies from £250 to £1,000 were left to The Church Building Society, Church Pastoral Aid Society, The Colonial Church and School Society, Society for Protection of Cruelty to Animals, Army Scripture Readers' Society, Mission to Seamen, Cheltenham Hospital and the Poor Clergy Relief Fund suggesting Harvey was strong supporter of the Established Church.

The rest of his estate – real and personal, he left to his nephew, Sir Robert Bateson Harvey, Bt, of Langley Park, Slough, to convert into capital and to distribute as follows:

Three eighths to the children of my late niece, the late Duchess of Buckingham and their issue;

Five eighths to the use and benefit of himself, the said Robert Bateson Harvey, absolutely or if he predecease me, to his children.

I direct my remains shall be interred by the side of my brother William in St Phillip's Church in the Parish of Leckhampton, and I nominate the said Robert Bateson Harvey to be my executor, revoking all other wills.

This will was witness by two solicitors.

### **Two and a quarter years later, George Harvey added a Codicil to the 1876 will.**

*I revoke in my previous will all the legacies in favour of my cousin's children, Peter, Henry and Mark Hammond, my cousin Hugh, son of my cousin Catherine Lyle and I revoke all the payment of wages to my servants with the exception of **GEORGE WARD**, and substitute a payment of £19.19.0.*

*To my late housekeeper, I bequeath ten shillings a week for life.*



*To my faithful servant **GEORGE WARD** I leave £1,000 in addition to any other benefits previously given to him.*

*To each of my five godchildren namely, Georgina Harvey, daughter of Sir Robert; Lady Caroline Temple Grenville, youngest daughter of the Duke of Buckingham; Margaret White, youngest daughter of the late Rev. James White; Helen Cummings, youngest daughter of Colonel Cummings of Segrave House, Cheltenham, and **Reginald George Harvey Ward**, youngest son of my said servant **George Ward**, £250 each, in addition to anything else I leave them.*

*To Spencer White, Margaret's brother. £250 and to **Charles Ward, son of George Ward, £250.** And to Henry Bailey of South Parade, Bath £110.*

St Phillip's Church received £50 for the benefit of the poor of the Parish, St Luke's £150 for the same purpose, the Boys' Orphan Asylum, £100 and the Conservative Association, £50.

**He concluded the will as follows:**

*In all other respects, I confirm my said will of 6<sup>th</sup> January 1876, witnessed this day, 19<sup>th</sup> April 1878.*

**George Harvey** died at Fairfield House on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1881.

**The Will** valued at under £20,000 was **proved at Gloucester** by oath of Sir Robert Bateson Harvey, on **7<sup>th</sup> February 1881.**

Who was this **George Ward**, the faithful servant of George Harvey? Why had Harvey favoured his servant and his family, in preference to his own relatives?

George Ward was born in Whitchurch, Herefordshire, and his wife whom he married on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1865 was a Gloucester girl. All their children had been born in Cheltenham.

Sometime before 1875 Ward and his wife entered the employ of George Harvey, and in 1875, Harvey made over some of his property to Ward. He and his wife were highly thought of by Harvey, who made ample provision for them both in his will of January 1876.

From the 1881 Census we discover that George Ward is head of Fairfield House, where he is living with his wife and family. He is described as a retired butler, aged 44!

His wife Mary is twelve years his junior, and living with them are their three children, Reginald George Harvey Ward, aged 5 – George Harvey's godchild and beneficiary under his will; Florence Ward aged 3 and Gladys Ward aged 1.

The eldest child of the family, Charles Albert John Ward was aged 14 but was not at home on the night of the Census. Also living in Fairfield House were George Ward's sister Ellen acting as companion to his wife Mary; his niece Minnie aged 14 a housemaid; and a cook Elizabeth Tremblett.

George Ward died intestate on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1884, only three years after his benefactor. He was survived by his widow Mary Jane, of Leckhampton, and Charles Albert John Ward, his eldest

son and heir who had been born in July 1867. Letters of administration were granted to Mary Jane on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1884 and held the property in trust until Charles attained his majority, which he did in January 1888. However, Mary Jane had paid to the County of Gloucester Bank, the sum of £585.9.7 upon her husband's death, being the amount owing on property deals not connected with the Fairfield Estate. When Charles attained his majority he had to redeem his debt to his mother before he could inherit that property.

In July 1893, Charles was a solicitor, living in Cardiff and he asked Young and Gilling to make a valuation of Fairfield house.

By 1894, he had apparently got himself into enormous debt with the Gloucester Bank. He agreed to pay the Bank any money owed at 5% and also agreed to convey to the Bank "all the singular hereditaments and premises and fixtures of the Fairfield estate, with the proviso for redemption and reconveyance. The property was no longer lived in by himself nor his mother it would seem, for the property referred to and its tenants are given as follows:

Fairfield House – Colonel Griffiths

Lodge Field – William Smith and William Kemiss

The Lodge – Charles Young.

Lady Luck however smiled on Charles and in February 1897, the Bank released to Charles all the mortgaged property his debts having been cleared. BUT this had not been achieved through careful investment. Charles had in fact mortgaged the property at a lower rate of interest to George Frederick Moore of Bourton on the Water, in the sum of £3,650, which he promised to repay by 24<sup>th</sup> June of that same year. The property mortgaged was in size, the same as that left to Charles' father in 1877 and the tenancy agreement between Charles and Colonel Griffiths would be honoured. The mortgage agreement also included the proviso that should Moore ever come into absolute possession of the estate, then Charles would not raise any objections to it being developed for building purposes.

Eighteen months later, although Charles had paid the interest due to Moore, he had not reduced the capital outstanding. He unwisely borrowed further money from Robert John Heath of Cardiff, repayable within a month, at 10%.

A year later the principal was still owing to Moore of Bourton on the Water, £3,650, and in February 1899 Charles conveyed to his wife, Ada Grace Ward, all the property listed in that mortgage agreement of February 1897 in consideration of £170 and she agreed to assume his debts borrowing from the County of Gloucester Bank. However this went into liquidation in December 1900 and it was taken over by Lloyd's Bank. It was not until November 1902 that George Frederick Moore conveyed to Ada Grace Ward, all the mortgaged property "all the principal money and interest having been paid." The following year, Lloyd's Bank released to Ada, the Fairfield Estate, she having paid off her mortgage to them.

But what of Charles Albert John Ward? By 1903 he had left the country and was living in Cape Town. His wife had moved from Fairfield House and was living further up the road at Treelands. She had survived the mortgage and re-mortgage and borrowing and interest affairs of her husband quite successfully.

Later that same month, Ada agreed the sale of Fairfield House Estate to Frank Ernest Jenkins for the sum of £6,250, but it seems that Jenkins had difficulty in raising the money immediately so he sold a portion of the estate to John David Bendall, Builder of Cheltenham for the sum of £1177.10.0 to be paid directly to Ada Grace Ward. The cost of Jenkins' purchase was therefore £5,072.10.0 a large portion of which was supplied by the Wilts and Dorset Bank. In 1904, Jenkins' plans for the development of the Fairfield House Estate was approved and the several 'Fairfield' roads remind us today of what must have been a very impressive and attractive, almost country, estate: Fairfield Parade, Fairfield Road, Fairfield Avenue, Fairfield Park Road, Fairfield Walk.

The Leckhampton Local History Society Research Bulletin, No 3, Autumn 2004 has a very interesting article about a neighbouring property to Fairfield House – Trowscoed Lodge – and many of the characters we have met at Fairfield appear in the Trowscoed story too.

## **1. THE FAIRFORD ESTATE PLAN OF 1903 (2009)**

The house was demolished at about this time. The shape of the house is quite clear on this plan.

Notice the parish boundary between Cheltenham and Leckhampton which crosses the Leckhampton Road side of the property. The old wooden boundary post can still be seen in Naunton Lane a few yards in on the right as one enters from Leckhampton Road.

The Nolty Brook is now culverted and is crossed where Fairfield Walk meets Naunton Lane.

The public footpath shown on the plan is Fairfield Walk.

The uppermost boundary of the estate is today's Fairfield Parade.

Tinder Box Row was a row of ten cottages in what is today Fairfield Road. Their position can still be identified today, and one can also see the remains of one of the boundary walls of the Fairfield Estate behind where the cottages would have stood.

Fairfield Park Road and Fairfield Avenue cut right through the Fairfield Estate from west to east and both were in existence by 1904.

Most of the hedges and plot outlines on the plan dictated the actual line of the roads that we see today.

## **2. NAUNTON PARK TERRACE/ NAUNTON PARK ROAD**

Probably opened about 1880 to connect Old Bath Road to Naunton Lane. The actual Terrace was on the side overlooking Naunton Park. Houses began to appear in the early 1880s.

This Examiner report of October 1893 gives some idea of the road's early days:

The road is in a poor state of repair, in fact a dangerous state.

It was a private road and therefore not the council's responsibility.

There were only two street lamps in the road, and no others could be provided until it became a public road.

The Council thought the road was in an abdominal state and by withholding lighting, it might bring pressure upon the owner of the road to put it into proper repair.

One committee member remarked that the condition of the road made it all the more important to have proper lighting.

There were twenty-two houses in the road, some newly built and it was one of the darkest roads in Cheltenham.

It was eventually agreed that there was no council objection to fixing lamps, but only as far as the length of the terrace.

## **3. CHELTENHAM EXAMINER 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1893**

A BURNING FATALITY: an inquest was held at the General Hospital on Monday, before Mr Coroner Waghorne, on the body of Elsie Elizabeth Maud Hill, five years of age who died at the institution on the previous Thursday. The mother of the child, (who with her husband, Robert Hill, gas stoker, lives at Pear Tree cottage, Naunton Crescent), gave evidence to the effect that her daughter was sent to Naunton School on Thursday morning and that at half past twelve, information was brought to witness by her niece that the deceased had been burnt. Witness went to her brother in law's house where she saw her daughter and had her at once removed to hospital. The house surgeon told witness that the child had been badly burnt and that he was afraid it was a hopeless case. Witness stayed with the child with the exception of brief intervals, until she died at half past seven on Friday night. The next witness was George Nash of Exmouth Street, who works at the laundry and who stated that he lit a bonfire of rubbish in Naunton Lane about 10.30 on Thursday morning. Witness saw three children playing near the fire about 11.30 but did not see the deceased there either then or at any other time. The fire had 'gone down' before twelve o'clock. Frederick A Tarling coachman of 35 Naunton Crescent, stated that about 12.20 on Thursday he was passing down the Crescent near number 29, when he heard a child screaming and saw the deceased run out of that house.

The child was in flames and witness ran up to her and put his arms round her and extinguished the flames; a man named Clarke then picked her up and carried her into the house which was that of her uncle and aunt. Mr H Boyd Cardew house surgeon at the General Hospital said that the child sustained extensive burns on the lower part of the body. The usual remedies were applied but death took place on Friday night due to shock to the system, as a result of the burns.

The Coroner having ascertained that there was no one except a child two or three years old with the deceased at the time of the occurrence said it appeared to be impossible to carry the case further though it was unsatisfactory that they could not find out how the child's clothes actually did take fire. The child's mother said her daughter told her 'the fire ran after her' and that she had no reason to suspect foul play. The coroner remarked that it was a very improper proceeding to light a fire in the lane. The jury concurred and returned a verdict of accidental death. The coroner at the suggestion of the jury, cautioned Nash against lighting a fire in the Lane.

(Poor Nash – it was nothing at all to do with him, and the child should not have been in the house alone with only a two or three-year-old for company.)