



September 2009

Normally Peter Goodhugh writes and edits our Newsletter having taken on this task from Mary Underwood. Unfortunately for this edition he is not able to do this and so the responsibility has been devolved to me, Roland Ware, as the temporary and very reluctant Secretary having resigned from that post two years ago. I claim little or no literary ambition.

At this time our committee is, to put it mildly, decimated. Whilst visiting in North Wales Christine, Peter's wife was involved in a severe road traffic accident being struck by a car driven by a drunken driver. She spent a long time in hospital in Bangor having reconstructive surgery to both legs before being transferred to Salisbury for more operations and treatment. Whilst Christine reposed in Bangor of course Peter had regularly to commute the more than 250 miles each way to visit and to add insult to injury managed to fall and break his leg in three places finishing up in the next bed to Christine.

To add to the tale of woe, Bill, who was Secretary, has had to resign from that post due to continuing ill health and Mary fell over while gardening and has fractured five ribs and currently languishes in the Durrington Suite of the Salisbury General Hospital, thank goodness Lucy has joined us.

So, for information the Committee looks like this;

Norman Parker	Chairman (01980 62 ² 087)
Ian Smith 5 Harvard Way	Treasurer (01980 626824)
Linda Smith As above	Membership Secretary do.
Roland Ware	(Temporary) Secretary (01980 623123)

Committee *Peter Goodhugh, Christine Goodhugh, Bill Dunn, Mary Underwood, Lucy Evershed*

Those shown in italics are temporarily "hors de combat"

We have not had a president now for many years, any suggestions?

While on this subject and just as a gentle reminder, subs are due at the AGM at the rate of £2.00 for the young and not so young and £3.50 for everybody else. (this has been the same now for several years)

Anyway despite all the doom and gloom above we do have a programme of speakers for the Autumn season;

16th September (afternoon meeting) Mr Mathew Charlton of Enthuse IT
(There is a project being lead by the Society to make a video history of Amesbury by Enthuse IT which will consist of interviews of "Amesburians" old and young, film of the present Town and old prints and photos - a well worth while project which will need all of us to help)

21st October (evening meeting) Lucy Evershed of the National Trust on the Stonehenge Landscape

19th November (afternoon meeting) Annual General Meeting followed by more photographs/ slides from the collection of Julian Beecham

All of these promise to be of great interest so do come along to the Melor Hall and enjoy them

A programme for next year will be in the next Newsletter.

Aviation Museum

In 1917 the Royal Flying Corps requisitioned 333 acres of land from Messrs. Wort and Way (originally this had been part of the Antrobus Estate, sold off in 1916) and opened an airfield called Red House Farm. While waiting for suitable accommodation to be built the officers were billeted in the George Hotel in Amesbury. The airfield's name was soon changed to that which we all know today - Boscombe Down.

While the George was being used as a Mess many occupants etched their names

onto a window pane which has fortunately been preserved. The hotel's historic value to early aviation has long been recognised and is now to be the venue for a display of artefacts from the Boscombe Down Aircraft Collection showing items from the many airfields in this area and the aircraft used.

From time to time we receive interesting articles from people who live many miles away but have historic ties with the town and have gone to great lengths to trace their ancestors. There follows such an article written by Judy Fleming a descendent of the Mist family who lived in Amesbury many years ago. Judy lives in Toronto and visits each year with her husband Don to continue research into her antecedents.

OUR AMESBURY COUSINS

It is often the wealthy and distinguished who merit a place in history books, but it is local history which often sheds light on the real people who contributed so much to the development of a culture. We very much appreciate local history, with so many fascinating stories about those who may previously have seemed to be merely ordinary citizens, going about their daily lives in a simple way, but against the backdrop of the challenging events and the often turbulent history of the period.

It is interesting to consider what various directions life may often take, depending upon one's choices. It is often said today that when one door closes, another often opens, and this may well be the case for a number of my Mist ancestors who lived in Amesbury, Wiltshire, in the 17th and 18th centuries. My 8X, 7X, 6X, 5X, and 4X great grandfathers all lived and worked in Amesbury, and the extended family was large. Many of their baptisms, marriages and burials took place at Amesbury Abbey Church, and several were church wardens there.

Recent family history research has allowed us to learn a great deal about some of my Mist ancestors who were first cousins to my great grandfathers, and who made wise choices, and instead of remaining in agriculture or local trades in Amesbury at a critical time in agricultural history, some chose to move to London, and became apprenticed in artisan trades in the late 17th and 18th centuries. Georgian London would have been highly attractive to a young apprentice with its buoyant economy, increasing population, centre of government and parliament, and

London, with the result that their lives were very different from those of my direct line, who instead remained in agriculture.

A glimpse into the lives of these Amesbury Mist cousins shows that one, Philip Mist, left Amesbury to apprentice in London in 1669 and became a sword cutler there. He lived and worked on Russell Street north in Covent Garden, and made swords and bayonets for The Office of Ordnance during the reign of Queen Anne. He was a church warden at St. Paul's Covent Garden Church from 1700 until 1703, and became Master of the Worshipful Company of Cutlers in 1710.

Another Amesbury Mist cousin, Thomas Mist (1711-1767) apprenticed as an iron and brass founder in 1726, and later had a very successful brass business at 116 Long Acre. Among other things he made the original brass chandeliers for St. Paul's Covent Garden Church in 1766, but these are sadly no longer there, due to a fire in the roof in 1795. He and his wife are both buried in a vault in the chancel at St. Mary and St. Melor Church in Amesbury.

Another recent discovery has been delightful. Stourhead House is considered to have one of the most picturesque gardens in England, and so it was most interesting for us to learn that the stonemason and sculptor who built most of the garden buildings at Stourhead from 1745-1755, according to Henry Flitcroft's designs, was William Privett of Chilmark, Wiltshire. The sister of Thomas Mist, the chandelier maker mentioned above, was Mary Mist, also born in Amesbury, and she married this William Privett at St. Edmund's Church in Salisbury, in 1721. There were several generations of William Privett connected to the stone quarries and masonry business in Chilmark, and we have just completed extensive research to confirm that our Mary Mist of Amesbury was the wife of the sculptor and stonemason at Stourhead Gardens.

Another interesting and hard working cousin was John Mist, a pavior, who obtained a large number of contracts during the period from about 1716-1737. He worked for HM Office of Public Works, and was recognized for the high quality of his paving with hand cut cubic stones. He was also the contractor for a group of six houses on Broad Street (later renamed Broadwick Street) in Soho, and did a great deal of work in such streets as Haymarket and Sackville Street, St. James Square, and at some of The Queen Anne churches. This John Mist is buried at St. John The Baptist Church, Hillingdon, and there is a beautifully carved stone plaque on the wall in his and his wife's name.

Another Mist cousin, Sarah Mist, was the wife of Charles Bridgeman, one of the pioneers of the English Landscape Garden Movement, who became the royal

gardener to King George II. Sarah was born in London, and attended St. Ann's Church in Soho, but her roots were in Amesbury, including her grandparents. Charles Bridgeman had trained under Henry Wise at Brompton Park Nurseries, once located where the V&A is now. Charles Bridgeman was the last gardener solely responsible for all the royal gardens, and it was he who designed the Round Pond at Kensington and the Serpentine at Hyde Park, as well as vast gardens at many stately homes. He is considered to be the one who invented the use of the ha-ha in English landscape gardens, a significant feature which opened the door to succeeding garden designers to go even further in allowing rural settings and farmland to become part of the informal designs of the 'jardin anglais' which became so popular. Charles Bridgeman created a garden design for Amesbury Abbey which was signed in 1738. He associated with a circle of friends who were well known artists and architects of the period, and a portrait of this Virtuosi Society of St. Luke is held at the National Portrait Gallery in London.

One may wonder how a considerable number of our Amesbury cousins had such significant connections through the artisan trades. Like today, encouragement by their parents and other family members may well have played an important part. The parents of Thomas and Mary Privett (nee Mist) mentioned above were Henry and Mary Mist (nee Harrison, a descendant of the well known Harrison family of Amesbury). It is also very likely that networking may have allowed some of our cousins to make important connections which opened doors and led to lucrative contracts. We believe that Sarah Mist met her husband, Charles Bridgeman, through her brother John Mist, the pavior, who along with Charles Bridgeman, worked at the Office of Public Works during the same period of time. In any case, it has been wonderful for us to research these Amesbury Mist cousins and to learn so much about their contributions to English social history.

Vespasians Camp

Following the excavations on the edge of Vespasians Camp in what is called Blicks Mead - see newsletter No. 85 - perhaps the following might be of some interest:-

It has always been assumed, by me at least, that names for archaeological features such as the name given to the hill fort to the west of the town was a fanciful and inaccurate Victorian invention, a practice that is unfortunately continued today by the renaming of what has been known for at least 400 years as "Seven Barrows" to the ludicrous title of "New King Barrows" for example. While looking for

some information in the Devizes Museum recently I came across an article by William Stukely concerning the origins of the name of the hill fort to the west of the Town called Vespasian's Camp. In this work "Stonehenge, A Temple Restor'd to the British Druids" written in 1740 he discusses the possibility that the Stones came out of Africa to Spain and then to Ireland and thence to Britain and of its being erected here by Merlin in the same form by art magic and that the stones are of medicinal value (presumably this is from the writings of Geoffrey of Monmouth) and then goes on to talk of Vespasians Camp as follows:

"Between *Stonehenge* and the town, hanging over the river; upon elevated ground is a fine and ancient camp, commonly called *Vespasians*; and not without much probability attributed to him. That great man, destin'd by providence for executing the final vengeance on the people of the *Jews*, and thereby accomplishing our Saviour's prediction; by his successes in this place paved a road to the imperial dignity. Having conquer'd the *Isle of Wight*, he pursued his good fortune; higher up into this country, where he made his camp and another across the heath named *Yanesbury*; which seems to retain the latter part of the name. The camp we are speaking of near *Ambresbury*, is an oblong square, nicely plac'd upon a flexure of the river, which closes one side and one end of it. There is an old barrow inclos'd in it, which doubtless was one of those belonging to this plain and to the temple of *Stonehenge* before this camp was made. It is pretty to observe that the road from *Stonehenge* to *Ambresbury*, runs upon the true *via praetoria* of the camp. The Generals tent or *praetorian* was in that part south of the road, between it and the river towards *Little Ambresbury*" (West Amesbury). "There is another gate of the camp; at the lower end, northward the *porta praetoria ordinaria* in the Roman language. Now I apprehend that *Stonehenge* was originally call'd the *Ambres*, from thence this camp was call'd *Ambresburgh* and thence the name of the town underneath."

So from this, the name might well have been based on fact even though records generally agree that Vespasian operated through Dorset towards the west and had little or no dealings with this area but it seems that the name had been in use for many years before Stukely. It should be noted that, from my practically non-existent knowledge of Latin, *praetor* is the root of the English word *Prefect* or in this case *General*. It is a pity that little or no Roman remains have been found in this hill fort to prove or not this idea.