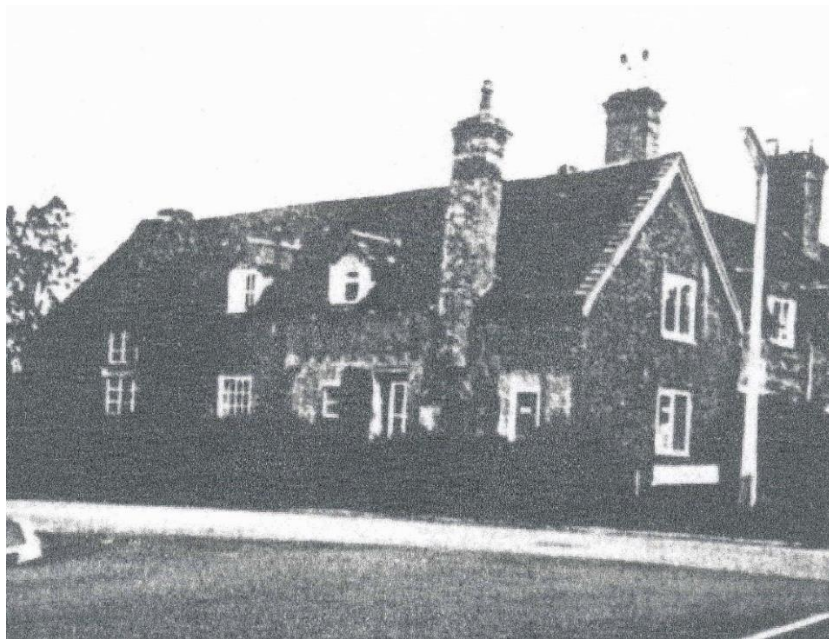

Lillington Local History Society

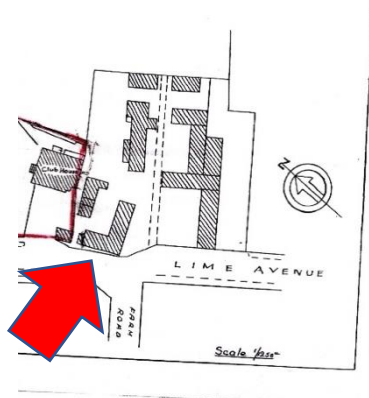


Our sixth on-line newsletter: March 2021



A very rare image of Manor Farm before the section of the building nearest the road was demolished so that Lime Avenue could be straightened. This image is a photocopy of an original photograph, whose current location is unknown.

The sketch map below left shows very clearly how much the front half of the house (red arrow) stood out into the course of Lime Avenue. Below right: Manor Farm today.



Images from LLHS archive, Chris Rhodes

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

When I started researching my family history some years ago, I discovered, looking at the 1891 census, that my paternal great uncle, ie my father's father's brother, was working as a Gardener at Elmhurst, a large detached house at No 59 Lillington Road.

My great uncle, William Henry Powell, was born in Hartlebury, near Stourport-on-Severn in Worcestershire, so how did he find his way to Lillington?

When William was born in December 1871, his father, George, was a 'Farmer of 7 acres' at Lincomb, near Hartlebury. William was the fourth child of George and Elizabeth, his wife, who would go on to have 11 more children. With a growing family, George would have found it difficult to support his family, so in 1873 he joined the police force which necessitated a move to Warwickshire. Judging by the places of birth of their next five children, the 1881 census tells us that the family had moved to Wolvey, between Coventry and Hinckley, then to Allesley, Ansty, Rowington and, finally, to Claverdon, near Warwick, where my grandfather, their youngest child, was born in July 1887. After retiring from the police force, George returned to his roots and farmed at Lower Pinley Farm, Claverdon where he lived until he died in 1924.

But, what of William? Further research into William's life revealed that he had married a young lady called Sarah Whiting who was born in Pencombe, Herefordshire in 1868, just a few years before William.

How did the two young people meet, I wondered? The 1891 Census revealed that Sarah was residing in Lillington where she was employed as a Housemaid at a house called Eccleshall, No 57 Lillington Road – right next door to William.



*'Elmhurst' - No 59 Lillington Road (with later additions)
Image: Denise Watson*

Romance blossomed over the garden wall and William and Sarah were married at St Mary Magdalene's Church, Lillington on 18 September 1894. They went on to have seven children between August 1895 and June 1906 – four daughters and three sons. By 1901 the family were living in Lower Langley, near Claverdon, where William was running his own Market Gardening business.

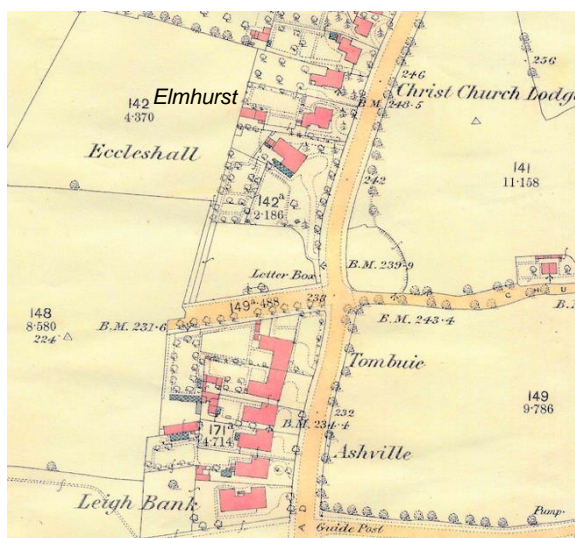
Unfortunately, William and Sarah's story didn't have a happy ending as Sarah sadly died in January 1908, aged just 40.

William married for the second time in 1910 and in 1911 was 'Employed on his own account' as a Farmer at Hatton. William's second wife, Amy Elizabeth, died aged 58 in 1927; William lived for another 30 years and died at the age of 86 in 1957.

What do we know about Elmhurst and Eccleshall – the neighbouring houses where the young William and Sarah were working and met in the early 1890s?

Old maps of the area reveal that Eccleshall (No 57) and Elmhurst (No 59) were situated just past the Cloister Crofts/Church Lane junction on Lillington Road. Eccleshall is listed in the 1881 Census but there is nothing between it and Ivor Lodge (No 63) which leads one to assume that both Elmhurst (No 59) and what was later listed as Christ Church Lodge (No 61 – now The Cedars) were built between 1881 and 1891, with Eccleshall built slightly earlier as it isn't listed on the 1871 Census.

Elmhurst still exists, but has been extended and converted into flats, but Eccleshall was demolished some years ago and Southfields, the sheltered housing complex, was built on the site in the early 1980s.



This map, dated 1889, shows quite clearly that Eccleshall was a large house with what appears to be a greenhouse or conservatory along one side of the building and extensive gardens.

Elmhurst's plot was modest by comparison, but has a separate stable building at the end of the garden.

Cloister Crofts is the road to the left of the crossroads in the centre of the image, with Church Lane to the right. Cubbington Road is the road off to the right at the bottom of the image.

Image: Peter Coulls

The 1891 Census reveals that, when William was working as Gardener at Elmhurst, he was employed by George Berrill, aged 67, a Retired Fruit Merchant. George lived there with his second wife Marianne (or Mary Anne), his daughter Lucy from his first marriage, Marianne's daughter May (from her first marriage), and his mother-in-law Elizabeth Reynolds. In addition to William, George also employed a Cook, a Housemaid and a Coachman who lived in the stables building with his wife and two daughters.

At the same time, No 57 was occupied by just three people - Eliza Orris, the Housekeeper, Sarah Whiting (who would become William's wife) who was the Housemaid, and Esther Maycock, the Kitchen Maid. It is not known who owned Eccleshall and employed Eliza, Sarah and Esther – a mystery. Looking for clues in the 1881 Census, there was still no sign of the owner, but Eliza was employed there as a Cook, together with a Housemaid and a Page.

By 1901, however, Eccleshall was occupied by Georgina Whieldon, aged 35, who was 'Living on her own means'. Georgina lived there with her three sisters – Eveline, Eleanor and Cecile – together with a Housekeeper, Medical Nurse, Cook, Waiting Maid, Housemaid, Kitchen Maid and a Groom – quite a crowd! No 59 was by now occupied by Thomas Sewell, a Church of England Clergyman, with his wife, Mary, and daughter, Margaret. Their household also included a Cook, Parlour Maid, Housemaid and Kitchen Maid with a Coachman living in the stables with his wife.

Sources: www.ancestry.co.uk

Denise Watson

THE TRIAL OF SARAH REASON

On Wednesday 26th February 1872 at the Winter Assizes, Mr Justice Keating was the judge when Sarah Reason, a 28-year old domestic servant, pleaded not guilty to an indictment for murder of her child William on 13th January 1872. The Judge knew that if Sarah Reason were to be found guilty, he would be obliged to pass a sentence of death by hanging, so he took the unusual course of instructing one of the counsel present in court for another case, Mr Buszard, to represent her.



Thomas Lyons, a labourer, of 15 Clemens Street, Leamington, gave evidence that on Wednesday 14th January 1872 he was walking along the canal from Warwick in the direction of Hatton when he noticed a black bundle at the bottom of the canal. He got it out of the water; it was a child's body wrapped in a black shawl. He called a constable who took the body from him and contacted PC Ruane.

On Wednesday 4th February, PC Ruane went with Police Sergeant Brown to a lodging house at 21 Comyn Street in Leamington to speak to Sarah Reason. (*Comyn Street runs between Holly Street and Princes Street, off Campion Terrace, but now completely rebuilt with modern houses.*) Two months earlier PS Brown had spoken to her about her child "with reference to affiliating it to a man in Nottingham". Brown said to Sarah, "You have a male child and send it out to nurse.". Sarah replied, "Yes, to a lady in Tiddington - Mrs Smith - it is dead and buried a fortnight ago.". Brown asked, "Did you go and see it buried? ... I must know more about it.". Sarah hesitated ... and at this point defence counsel asked the judge to stop the officer from telling the jury what Sarah was about to say because the officer was threatening her. The Judge refused the application and allowed the officer to continue. He reported that Sarah then made an admission "I did do away with it in the canal.". PS Brown then told Sarah about the child who had been found drowned in a canal in Warwick.



When arrested, Sarah said, "I had nothing for it or myself to eat. It was very restless on the day before. I gave it a little laudanum and took it out with the intention of taking it home. Going through Warwick I thought it was dead and I then put it in the canal. I thought it was dead when I put it in the water. It felt no pain and I've felt bad about it ever since."

PC Ruane took Sarah to Warwick Police Station and handed her over to Superintendent Hickling who later charged her with the murder of her child. Sarah stated, "Three weeks yesterday I brought the child to Warwick and went up the road by the GWR station. It was dark. I undressed the child by the side of the water, I pinned it up in the shawl and put it in. I gave the child some laudanum and it never awoke ..."

Mary Sutherland, who was a neighbour at 17 Comyn Street, gave evidence that she knew that Sarah had a child who was about six months old, and she had seen that the child had running sores behind her ears. On 13th January Sarah left the house with the baby saying she was "... going to Stratford". On the next Wednesday, 21st January, Sarah came to Mary's house who asked, "Where's the child?". To which Sarah replied, "The child's better.". The last time Mary had seen the child it had been very restless and she suspected it might be teething.

Dr John Tibbett, who was the Mayor of Warwick, did a post-mortem and concluded that the baby was about four months old and had died of drowning. The child had not been in the water very long because there was no sign of decomposition. There was nothing inconsistent with laudanum intake but there was no trace of it, but then he did no tests to trace laudanum. The Judge directed the Jury, "Ask these questions: Did the Defendant intend to kill the child either by giving the laudanum or by putting it in the canal? If 'Yes', it's murder, if 'No', acquit.". The Jury acquitted Sarah and she was released.

Larry Connor

What else do we know about Sarah?



We can see from the Census returns that she was born in Stratford in 1844, the youngest daughter of five children. Her father was a butcher. The family lived in Henley Street. In 1861, aged 17, she was employed as a live-in house servant at 6 Warwick Street, Leamington. Ten years later, a year before her trial, she is recorded as a live-in domestic servant in a boys' boarding house next door to Leamington College.

Could it be that that she had a relationship with one of the staff or older boys, was thrown out onto the street and had to lodge in a cheap lodging house?

There are no further records for Sarah. Either she married or disappeared. Sadly, not an uncommon fate for many in those times.

Chris Rhodes

*Image of flower girl and convict: Bing
Law courts: www.warwickshire.gov.uk*

LILLINGTON SCHOOL: QUALIFICATIONS, SALARY AND STAFFING

The census returns (Form 9) for Lillington School were made available to the Lillington History Society in March 2020. The returns available were from the school year ending February 1900 up until 1935. They were used both to audit and monitor school funding and attendance. Census returns remain in use today for much the same purpose.

The returns until 1925 gave details of the teaching staff employed, their salary and qualifications. Many categories of teaching staff were employed. The establishment of the first teacher training college in 1840 by James Kaye Shuttleworth helped to regulate the complexity of the situation but a wide range of categories remained. By 1900 the following categories were employed.

Pupil Teachers

These were boys and girls aged between 13 years and 18 years who wished to teach. Each year in training ended with an examination. They were required to work no more than five hours in any one day.

In 1891 a Pupil-Teachers Centre (Central School) opened in Clapham Terrace. Classes were held on five evenings a week and on Saturday mornings. Fees for attendance were paid by the Managers of Lillington School at £2 a year. Subjects studied were English Literature, Recitation, Grammar and Composition, Singing and Drawing. Maths was for men only, with Domestic Economy on offer for women students. The best students gained a King's or Queen's Scholarship and, with a grant, were able to attend a training college. The final accolade was a Certificate of Merit. Those not making the grade remained uncertified.

The turnover of Pupil Teachers at Lillington was high. We find that there were three pupil teachers in 1901 – Ellen Entwistle, Alice Duggins and Elizabeth Dilkes. Miss Cutter is named as the principal teacher, Emma Tubbs as a probationer and Hannah Field as an assistant teacher in the Infant Department. No male pupil teachers are recorded.

Louisa (Lottie) Summers

In 1903 Lottie had passed her examination and was awaiting confirmation of her indenture to Lillington School. In 1904 she is listed as a pupil teacher and was awaiting her scholarship results, but in 1908 she is registered as an unqualified assistant teacher. Lottie left in 1904.

Assistant Teachers – both certified and uncertified

In 1902 there were two assistant teachers, one pupil teacher, one Infant Assistant, and two probationers.

In 1906 Miss Ada Gibbs was the first member of staff who achieved a qualification from a teaching training college.

In 1920 Miss Emily Agnes Duggins was appointed as the first fully college-trained teacher.

One fact is particularly interesting, between 1900 and 1935 not one male was on the staff.

Contrary to popular opinion several teachers married and carried on teaching after their marriage. In 1917, four married teachers were on the staff – Mrs Edith Neal, Mrs Ethel House, Mrs Ethel Allen and Mrs Lucy Biddle.

Principal Teachers

These were teachers in charge of the school but who usually taught a class in addition to their management duties.

Miss Cutter was appointed on 25th June 1883 and remained in post until April 1924. She was a certified teacher but untrained. A biography of this Lillington lady can be found on the website of the Leamington Spa History Society. During the early years of her headship, she lived above the schoolroom before moving to 8 Farm Road. She was replaced by Miss Clementina Elizabeth Evans in April 1924. She was extremely well qualified, not only was she a certified teacher but she also held a BA degree. Miss Evans lived at 4 Waller Street.

Supply Teachers

These were assistant teachers employed by the Local Education Authority to cover staff absences. Many of these were married. Among the names mentioned are Mrs Elizabeth Shearsby, Mrs Jeannie Trowton and Mrs Annie Knowles.

Salaries

In March 1900, both the head's and assistant teacher's salaries increased by £5. This brought Miss Cutter's salary to £110 pa. Salaries were paid through school accounts overseen by school managers. This information is included in the school returns. The requirement to give these details ended in 1915. In 1919, the Burnham Committee standardised teachers' pay. In 1916 we read of Miss Cutter's contribution to the superannuation scheme for teachers.

World Events

The census details show some detail of the effect that the First World War and the Spanish Flu epidemic had on Lillington Primary School. Over a hundred years later we see schools facing the same challenges with the Coronavirus pandemic disrupting children's education. I hope that the Census Return for January 2022 will be completed in happier times.

Claire Walsh



--The website address is: www.lillingtonhistory.org

This Newsletter is published by the Lillington Local History Society, c/o Lillington Free Church, Cubbington Road, Leamington Spa, CV32 7AL. The views expressed in the Newsletter are personal to the contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Society.