

# Ongar Millennium History Society Newsletter

## August 2018

Welcome to the latest edition of the OMHS Newsletter. We are now distributing the newsletter by email where we have email addresses for members. We have made this change to help with production and distribution of the newsletter. Where members do not have access to email we will continue to distribute hard copies of the newsletter.

We are holding our AGM on the 19<sup>th</sup> September and hope for a good turnout for the AGM and the talk by Anne Padfield on the pubs of Ongar. We hope to see you there.

### Ongar Millennium History Society AGM

19<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
7.30 for 8.00 pm  
Chipping Ongar Library

The AGM will be followed by refreshments and a talk by Mrs Anne Padfield on the "Inns of Ongar" with a particular focus on the Kings Head.

Parking is free and we would love to see you on the evening so please come along.

#### Committee members

Chair	Vacancy	Venues Sec.	
President	Felicite Barnes	Membership+Speaker Sec.	Lorna Vaux
Secretary	Sandra Dear	Committee Member	Lawrence Mendoza
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## **The sale of the manor of Chipping Ongar**

Recently an indenture dated January 1717 (1718 modern style) for the sale of the manor of Chipping Ongar was donated to the Ongar Millennium History Society, on the understanding that it would be deposited in the Essex Record Office.

The manorial descent has never been entirely clear, though it was in the hands of the Gouldesburgh family for three generations after its acquisition by Thomas in about 1663. By the early eighteenth century, his grandson (also Thomas) was said to be in financial difficulty and, by 1716, had already sold Ongar castle and various parcels of land in the parish for £1000. He then proceeded with the sale of the manorial rights in January 1718 for the sum of £1200. The vendors named in this indenture are Thomas Gouldesburgh, John Havers and his wife Mary. Havers himself received the purchase money and signed the receipt. Was Havers acting as Gouldesburgh's agent, or was he foreclosing on Gouldesburgh to redeem a debt owed to him? We know very little about Havers. Though described as a yeoman, he was able to sign his name, and to bequeath property as well as cash to his four surviving children at his death in 1726. The 1718 indenture also shows that he was tenant of the manor house which, in 1670, had been the largest in the parish with ten hearths, and was then called the Brick House but now known as Castle House. It is probably reasonable to assume that, by 1718, Havers enjoyed a comfortable level of affluence and that Gouldesburgh was no longer resident in the town – and probably in debt to him.

The 1718 indenture sets out the assets of the manor in laborious detail, but it is likely that this is merely a formulaic legal description which was used by attorneys in all such documents, rather than an actual description of the Ongar manor. For example, it lists a mill (of which I have never found any evidence) as well as ancient manorial rights such as turbarry, escheats, amerancements, heriots and view of frankpledge which may have already lapsed by that date, and certainly did so soon afterwards. It is curious that it does not mention the market tolls or the lease of the annual fair which may have been the main sources of manorial income at that time. It does, however, list the Brick House (tenanted by John Havers), a cottage (tenanted by Henry Colling), a farm with its associated buildings (tenanted by George Allum) and another cottage (tenanted by the widow Elizabeth Hance).

The identity and intentions of the 1718 purchasers, Joseph Goodale and Edward Harnage, both gentlemen of London, are uncertain. Of the former, two possible individuals in London have been identified. One, described in his 1724 will as a painter stainer, seems unlikely, as he would have lacked gentleman status. A more likely candidate is the Joseph Goodale, a proctor in Doctors' Commons, who advertised in 1705 for information about a pamphlet in which he had been libelled. He certainly could have described himself as a gentleman, and would also have had some useful knowledge of property law.

Edward Harnage, the other joint purchaser, was almost certainly the Shropshire landowner who was noted in the Shropshire electoral roll of 1713 to be resident in London. Later, in 1739, as a member of the landed gentry, he was selected as a candidate in the election for sheriff in his home county. Neither of these gentlemen appear to have had any connections with Ongar or Essex. Were Goodale and Harnage acting as agents for Edward Alexander, the next known owner of the Chipping Ongar manor, or were they working together in a speculative venture to purchase manors and sell them on at a profit? Though there was a market for manors at this date, it was usually for the interest in mineral rights, rather than for the customary manorial dues.

Two months after the sale to Goodale and Harnage, another indenture (now in the Essex Record Office) was drawn up to acknowledge that the £1200 purchase price had actually been paid by

Edward Alexander, and that they, as purchasers, would surrender the ownership of the manor to him on request, and on payment of the appropriate legal fees. It is significant that a similar arrangement was made with the sale of the castle in 1716, through the intermediary was a different individual (Joseph Studley of London, gentleman) and Edward Alexander did not reclaim this property until 1735.

In his will dated 1745, Edward Alexander described himself as resident at Doctors' Commons where, as mentioned above, Goodale had been a proctor. It is clear that by this date Alexander had recovered the ownership of both the manor and the manor house at Chipping Ongar. At his death in 1751 he had risen to the position of some eminence in the legal profession as procurator general of the Court of Arches, but left instructions in his will that he was to be returned to Ongar and buried in the chancel of the church where a vault 'large enough for 8 or 10 corpses' was to be built. His intention was to provide for his descendants as well as for himself. In spite of his professional success in London, it would seem that being lord of a small country manor still conferred valued status.

The manor was probably not a good investment. Its last court was said to have been held in 1732, and by 1805 the court rolls had been destroyed though one membrane dated October 1706 has survived and is now in the Essex Record Office. By 1835 the only remaining manorial rights were the lease of the annual fair, and the tolls from the weekly market, and both of these were sold off in 1841, though technically the manor remained in the possession of Edward Alexander's descendants until finally sold by the trustees of the last survivor in 1918.

## **Michael Leach and Kathy Wenborne**

Sources:

Notices in *Daily Courant* 1/2/1705 and *General Evening Post* 3/11/1739

Essex will of John Havers (1726) ERO D/AEW 34/2/47

Ferguson, F, Thornton, T & Wareham, A, 2012 *Essex Hearth Tax*, British Record Society

Indenture dated 13/1/1717 (to be deposited at ERO)

Indentures & correspondence relating to manor of Chipping Ongar, ERO D/DQ 55/72

PCC wills for Joseph Goodale (1724), Edward Harnage (1740) & Edward Alexander; PROB 11/597/404, 11/706/391 & 11/798/326

Powell W R, 1956 *Essex VCH*, iv, 161-2

## **Three Hundred Years Later**

Recently, a gentleman named Bob phoned Felicitie Barnes and left a message regarding an old document that he had in his possession.

Having contacted Bob, a very pleasant gentleman of 95, I was able to glean that he had a document which he thought appertained to a property in Chipping Ongar.

Anyway, I was intrigued as to how the document had come into his possession and he told me the full story.

Thirty to forty years ago a scrap dealer in Peckham was asked to clear out a defunct solicitor's office, presumably in London. He duly did so and then sold some of the old documents, as it was in vogue at that time to have them made into lampshades. Then Bob visited the scrap dealer with a friend and showed an interest in the documents and was told that he could take some. So Bob, who lives in Beckenham, has had this document in his possession for some years.

I said that I was not able to tell which property it belonged to without seeing it; so Bob's son in law kindly emailed a photograph of it to me.

To my surprise it did not relate to a property but was a transfer of ownership of 'The Manor of Chipping Ongar' dated 22 January 1717/8 for the princely sum of £1200 which is approximately £139000 at today's value. This wouldn't go far in Ongar today!

Bob has decided that the document rightfully belongs in Essex and has donated it to the OMHS to be given to the ERO for safe keeping.

**Kathy Wenborne**

### **Ongar's market crosses**

As mentioned in another article, the owner of the manor of Chipping Ongar was said to be in financial difficulty by the early eighteenth century, and in March 1715/6 he sold the physical part of the manor (i.e. not the manorial rights) for £1000. This sale comprised the freehold of Castle House 'being below the hill called Castle Hill on which a castle lately stood', the hill itself, a field called Stoney Field, another called Langfield and certain other meadows – totalling 60 acres in all.

The indenture provided a little more detail. The mansion house and Castle Hill was for some time in the occupation of Thomas Velley gent, then passed to Thomas Williamson, John Goodwin and finally Robert Savall. The ownership also included a shop, a corn chamber, a shambles and a stable in the market place of Chipping Ongar, as well as the market house, two market crosses and the market tolls.

Various threads can be pulled out of this. Thomas Velley must have been the father of the similarly named Thomas, rector of Chipping Ongar who died in 1750 aged 47. John Goodwin may have been the yeoman of that name who died in 1710. Thomas Williamson and Robert Savall cannot be identified, but we know from other sources that by 1718 Castle House was in the occupation of John Havers, another yeoman.

Presumably the Castle House property butted on to the High Street, possibly on the site of the medieval access to the castle, now an insignificant alleyway filled with dustbins! Ongar's shambles – the notoriously offensive part of the market used by the butchers – have been noted before, and presumably were not replaced after their collapse, without loss of life, in 1745 (see OHMS Newsletter of February 2017). The market house, now in a shocking state of disrepair, would have been open at ground floor level, with the upper rooms used for collecting the market tolls, and for other semi-official purposes.

What is surprising is the entirely unexpected reference to two market crosses. Some of these structures were erected in the Middle Ages to mark the granting of a market charter, others were wayside crucifixes which either did not survive the Reformation, or were severely mutilated by later puritan iconoclasts. Similarly named structures may have been waymarkers or boundary posts. The age, purpose and site of Ongar's 'market crosses' remains a mystery. By the eighteenth century they may have been reduced to eroded, mutilated stumps, or possibly replaced with elegant classical obelisks. The earliest image of the town centre is dated 1818, and does not show anything suggestive of a market cross.

**Michael Leach**

Source: Chipping Ongar manor, indentures and correspondence, ERO D/DQ 55/72

## **A Treasure Trove in Colchester**

Few families can be better documented in contemporary records than the Taylors of Ongar, as they came to be known - at least if one excepts the aristocracy and those from the higher reaches of government and society. For instance, several memoirs and autobiographies and an obituary of the first Isaac Taylor (1730-1807) by his eldest son Charles (1756-1823) were published in the 19th century, and many of the letters written by members of the family survive, as do numerous portraits, the minute-book of the Independent (later Congregational) Chapel in Ongar kept by the Revd Isaac Taylor (1759-1829), his sketchbook and many of the visual aids developed for his public lectures in Colchester, four of the pocket books of the younger Ann Taylor (1782-1866), who became Mrs Gilbert, the family album she kept throughout most of her married life and many of the diaries of Ann Gilbert's daughter-in-law Susan and of *her* brother Thomas Green. What's more, the family has been the subject of significant interest by researchers more recently, as evidenced notably by Christina Duff Stewart's magisterial *The Taylors of Ongar: An Analytical Bio-bibliography* published in 1975.

So it is something of a surprise (though a pleasantly exciting one!) that a further major source of information about the family that eluded even the exhaustive researches of Christina Duff Stewart should have come to light only relatively recently. This has been thanks to the efforts and perseverance of Georgina Bailey, who embarked about seven years ago, as a part-time mature student of the University of Essex, upon a doctoral thesis on the Taylors<sup>i</sup>. In the late 1990s, Georgina had assisted in the preparations for an exhibition in Colchester featuring the Taylors, and she remembered being shown by a member of staff at the Colchester Public Library an extensive collection of published works by the Taylors and some other items that were kept in a strong-room there. Wishing to consult this collection in the context of her research, she made enquiries, but, owing to extensive staff turn-over in the succeeding decade, she at first failed to find anyone who knew anything about it. She did not give up, however, and eventually made contact with the right librarian, who gave her access to the collection. How long it has been in the Library and how it got there no one any longer seems to know. It is probable that it belonged originally to Henry Medland Taylor (1837-1916), a grandson of the Revd Isaac Taylor, who conducted a great deal of research into the family in the late 19th and early 20th century, but how it got from him to its rather unlikely resting place remains a mystery.

The published works in the collection are not without interest, in that they include four titles<sup>ii</sup> no other copy of which is known to have survived, but, for family historians, it is those "other items" that are of crucial importance. First, there is a family Bible with notes on the fly-leaves in the handwriting of the Revd Isaac Taylor giving the names of some of his and his wife's ancestors<sup>iii</sup>, the dates and places of birth and, where applicable at the time of writing, death of their children and the dates of the family's moves from London to Lavenham, Lavenham to Colchester and Colchester to Ongar; there are further annotations in another hand, possibly that of Henry Taylor. Secondly, there is a notebook of the Revd Isaac Taylor's younger brother Josiah (1761-1834), which records the (extraordinarily formal and legalistic) signed agreement of 16 May 1786 between him and his father, the first Isaac Taylor, on Josiah's taking over the day-to-day running of the publishing house known as the Architectural Library and which contains copies of a number of Josiah's business letters, including one each to Humphry Repton and to Pugin. But the pearl of greatest price is the third item: an unpublished manuscript memoir<sup>iv</sup>, some 450 pages long, by Mrs Ann Taylor (née Martin) (1757-1830), the Revd Isaac Taylor's wife.

The memoir, which is vividly and (the idiosyncratic punctuation apart!) elegantly written, was begun in Ongar on 1 January 1825 at the request of her children. It records Ann's difficult childhood and the earlier years of her married life in London and Lavenham in intimate detail, in the process

illuminating aspects of day-to-day existence in late 18th century England, from the workings of Ann's mother's<sup>v</sup> pawnbroking business, which she seems to have run with precious little help from her three successive husbands<sup>vi</sup>, to the Gordon Riots. It also provides - of inestimable value to a family historian - detailed information on the names (and, in some case, dates and places of birth and death) of Ann's grandparents<sup>vii</sup> and of her step-fathers and step-siblings and on the family's residences in London<sup>viii</sup>. One very interesting and previously unknown fact to emerge about Isaac Taylor is that, at the time he first met his future wife, he was all but engaged to a Miss Conder<sup>ix</sup> - tantalizingly not given a Christian name, though she was, it seems, six years older than him - a member of a family on close and friendly terms with successive generations of Taylors<sup>x</sup>. An appendix to the memoir contains the texts of a number of poems, including two of those written by Ann as part of the "paper war" between her and Isaac when he was courting her<sup>xi</sup>. The Ongar years are covered in much less detail, presumably because they were already well known to her children who "commissioned" the memoir, but some omissions may be significant, such as any mention of her son Martin Taylor's marriage to Elizabeth Killingback in 1823<sup>xii</sup>, an event that is not recorded either anywhere else in the extensive canon of surviving contemporary Taylor writings.

Long after Ann Taylor's death and shortly before he himself died, her son Isaac Taylor of Stanford Rivers (1787-1865) consulted with other members of the family whether the memoir should be published<sup>xiii</sup>. It was unanimously agreed at that time that this would be inappropriate. Fortunately for us, however, the manuscript was not destroyed, and it is to be hoped that it will before long at last be transcribed and published<sup>xiv</sup>, not only for the benefit of those interested specifically in the Taylors, but for the unique picture it provides of aspects of life in this country over two hundred years ago.

## Robin Taylor Gilbert

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<sup>i</sup> The main focus of the thesis, which is approaching submission, is a re-evaluation of the Taylor family's literary enterprises, using both the new material and other surviving primary sources. For instance, it looks at the rôle of both faith and pragmatism in the literary careers of members of the family.

<sup>ii</sup> *A Book of Martyrs and Picturesque Piety* by the Revd Isaac Taylor and *Tales & Dialogues* and *The Family Bible* by his son Jefferys Taylor (1792-1853).

<sup>iii</sup> Surprisingly, Isaac Taylor seems not to have known the names of his paternal grandparents: he recorded his grandfather as Isaac rather than William and did not name his grandmother at all. The later annotator corrected Isaac to William and wrote "Ann Cook" in the space left for the grandmother; although it is known from the record of his baptism that the first Isaac Taylor's parents were called William and Ann(e) and although there is a record of the marriage in Worcester in 1715 of a William Taylor to an Anne Cook, there are in fact reasons to doubt that these were the first Isaac Taylor's parents.

<sup>iv</sup> I spent two days in the Colchester Public Library in June 2018. In the short time available, it was not feasible to do more than speed-read as much of the memoir as possible and to take photographs of which pages seemed without careful study to be of the greatest potential interest (about half of the total), but it may well be that I missed important new information on other pages.

<sup>v</sup> Her mother's maiden name was Mary Plaxton. It is stated in Ann Gilbert's autobiography that Mary was born in York, that her father was ruined in a building speculation in that city, after which she moved to London as a very young woman, and that her grandfather was a "clergyman of Beverley". The memoir tells us further that her father's Christian name was Thomas, that her mother's maiden name was Rachel Hurst and that her grandfather ran an academy in Beverley. Although this additional information has pinpointed with certainty the records of her baptism on 29 November 1730 - the family Bible gives her DoB as 1 November 1730 - and of her parent's marriage on 4 February 1725, it has not so far proved possible to identify her grandfather or to establish his relationship, if any, to a number of other clerical Plaxtons known to have been active in Yorkshire in the 17th and early 18th centuries.

<sup>vi</sup> Thomas Martin (1735-1764), Ann's father; William Lucas (1731-1766); and Thomas Hewitt (1735-1784).

<sup>vii</sup> Her paternal grandparents were William Martin (c.1705-1781) of Kensington and Anne Pierce of Newbury, Berkshire, who were married at St Martin in the Fields on 13 July 1731. No trace of Anne's baptism has yet been found, but some almshouses in Newbury were endowed in the will of one Thomas Pearce in 1671. William Martin was 75 when he died in March 1781 and may conceivably have been the William Martin, son of William, who was born on 24 April 1705 and baptised at St Sepulchre on 13 May 1705. On Ann Taylor's maternal grandparents, see Note 5 above.

<sup>viii</sup> Ann was born in a house in Liquorpond Street opposite Richard Meux's Griffin Brewery, which makes it possible to pinpoint its position with reasonable accuracy. In March 1769, her stepfather Thomas Hewitt rented a house not far away in Leather Lane "next to Cold Bath fields", the fields then being "decidedly rural".

<sup>ix</sup> Probably a daughter of John Conder (1714-1781), an Independent Minister and theological tutor at what by this time had become the Homerton Academy. In 1753, her apparent date of birth, her father would have been nearing the end of his long pastorate at the Hog Hill Independent Church in Cambridge; he moved to London in 1754.

<sup>x</sup> John Conder's grandson, Josiah Conder (1789-1855), bookseller and writer, was a friend of Isaac's & Ann's daughters Ann and Jane and collaborated with them on the poetry anthology *The Associate Minstrels*, published in 1810.

<sup>xi</sup> "...a more important incident was the exercise of his skill in engraving her initials upon the silver shield in front of the beautiful little teapot, still in our possession, and in which he deposited a copy of verses upon returning it to her. These led to a smart rejoinder, and that to a paper war which, for a time, made the gossip of the little circle, till it was terminated by a treaty of peace, never afterwards infringed" (*Autobiography & Other Memorials of Mrs Gilbert (Formerly Ann Taylor)* Vol. 1, p.16). These verses were given by Ann to her friend Ann Withey, later Mrs Christopher Moon, and much later, in 1867, offered for sale to her grandson, (later Canon) Isaac Taylor (1829-1901), though, astonishingly, there is no evidence that the offer was ever followed up (Suffolk Record Office, HD 588/4/7).

<sup>xii</sup> The marriages of her daughter Ann and her son Isaac and the engagement of her daughter Jane are all mentioned in the memoir. The fact that that of Martin (1788-1867) is not may indicate that there was something about the marriage that was distasteful or embarrassing. Since Helen Taylor (c.1818-1885), later regarded as Martin's daughter, appears to have been born several years before he married Elizabeth, it is possible that she was in fact the illegitimate daughter of Elizabeth or even of Martin himself. See further *Why Navestock? - now we know* in the OMHS Newsletter of March 2011.

<sup>xiii</sup> This is recorded in a memorandum dated 17 March 1865 accompanying the memoir and signed by Isaac and by his daughters Jane, Phoebe and Jessie.

<sup>xiv</sup> I am indebted not only to Georgina Bailey, but also to my fourth cousin Fiona Martin, a great-great-granddaughter of Isaac Taylor of Stanford Rivers and great-granddaughter of Henry Taylor, who has already embarked upon the transcription of parts of the memoir using the photographs I took and has energetically followed up various leads in the text.

## **World War 1 Post cards from our archive**





## **Future Events**

Further events will be announced in future newsletters and on the website as they arise. Have you looked at our website? The site is regularly updated with future events so this is where you will hear the news first. The address is <http://www.omhs.org.uk/> or just search OMHS.

## **Newsletter Contributions**

We need your help with articles for the newsletter. If you have anything that you would like to contribute no matter how small or large, please submit to the editor or through the website before the end of October 2018 to be in time for included in the next edition of the newsletter