

Farms of Higher Brixham

Residents in the area of Brixham known as Cowtown in the Parish of St Mary's Church during the time of Queen Victoria

The project set before us is the aim to produce information about the residents of Higher Brixham during the Victorian period, particularly from 1850 to 1900.

Many of the parishioners buried in the churchyard were wealthy Mariners from Lower Brixham, situated in the part of town known as Fishtown. and I have already produced a piece of work which falls into this category. However the real aim is to identify the many farming communities of the area known as Cowtown in the area of Higher Brixham and that is what we set out to do.

Clues are on the many gravestones situated in the vast churchyard of Saint Mary's Church, but because of erosion over the years, they have become very difficult to read. Because of this, and with a pressing enthusiasm to begin work on the project, my brief has been to identify any particular farm and trace the family history of its residents.

My research has almost immediately presented me with a wealth of information on many of the families who lived on farms and owned the grazing lands which stretch from the borders of Kingswear to the coast and beyond to Brixham.

My first task has been to locate the many farms in the area and so using the information given in the census of 1861 I have been able to find who was living there at the time. The 1861 census gives details of the resident, their family and occupation, and in the case of the farmers, the number of acres they farmed and the number of farm hands they employed. Using the names from the census I then established whether any of their records of life events such as Baptism, Marriage or Burials were associated with

Saint Mary's Church,. Although within the tithe map of the parish, it may not be the case that they also worshipped there

I had no particular reason for making my choice of which family to research more closely, except that it was a reasonably large farm of 200 plus acres, farmed by a yeoman farmer, and the name rang a bell as large landowners in other parts of Devon. My choice was to be the family of one William Bastard.

William Bastard, living at Coleton Farm House and a yeoman farmer of 300 acres. Little did I know that this simple task of researching a family, whose home in the idyllic countryside of vast open fields of sheep, gently grazing on land which led down to the sea, would create a proverbial tangled skein of wool that any spinner would despair of, I was like a kitten with a ball of wool, I set out to find a beginning and an end. The mystery began with his wife!

William Bastard was born in Slapton and that is where he married Eliza Paige Bastard in 1856. The church record of their marriage shows clearly that the young couple are related and I have established that William's father, also named William Bastard, was the brother of Eliza's father Richard, making the young couple cousins, sharing the same surname. The family were all yeoman farmers from Slapton, farming many acres. I believe they may have been sheep farmers with a connection to the woollen trade. Devonshire wool had a reputation for fine quality and Dartmouth was famous for its Dartmouth kersies, lengths of woollen fabric and Dartmouth being an important port, Merchant Mariners had a regular trade for such goods with Europe, in exchange for tea and exotic spices.

1856. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Slapton in the County of Devon								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
68	October 21	William Bastard	of full age	Bachelor	Yeoman	Coleton, in the Parish of Slapton	William Bastard	Yeoman
		Eliza Paige Bastard	of full age	Spinster		Slapton	Richard Bastard	Yeoman

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by licence by me, *Richard Antrobus*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *William Bastard* and *Eliza Paige Bastard* in the Presence of us, *W. D. [unclear]* and *Percy [unclear]*

The marriage of William Bastard with his cousin Eliza Paige Bastard

Even though this particular family came from Slapton, it would seem quite logical for the farming community in general to cross the River Dart and expand into the areas of our current study, from Kingswear over the steep rolling hills leading towards Brixham. It can be seen from the marriage record that at the time of their marriage William was already living at the farm in Coleton,.

Eliza, daughter of Richard Bastard and Eliza Paige, born in 1829 was one of five children. Eliza was named after her mother, following the tradition of also taking her mother's maiden name as one of her given names, her full name was Eliza Paige Bastard.

Coleton Farm



Coleton Farm

Her father, Richard Bastard born in 1802 is described in the census of 1851 as a Yeoman Farmer and Miller of 200 acres employing five labourers. They lived at Pool House, Slapton.

After marriage, Eliza lived with William in Coleton Farmhouse. At the time of the 1861 census, William was 30 years old, he employed four men and boys, one of whom was only eleven years old. They also employed servants, a Dairymaid, suggesting that the farm had their own herd of cattle, a Housemaid, and a Child's maid, because

the couple also had a three year old son called William.

Unfortunately William Bastard did not live to any great age, he died in 1888 aged 59 years and was buried at Slapton. Eliza also moved back to Slapton where she died some twenty seven years later at the age of eighty six. Sadly I have to admit that my choice of farm did nothing to help me in our quest to find farmers who may have been buried in the churchyard of Saint Mary's Church. Clearly the Bastard family were from the villages and hamlets of the South Hams and that is where they remained, but my research was revealing a number of farms in the area owned by members of the Paige family. The name rang a bell as it was the name of Eliza's mother, before marriage, and so it is with the Paige family that I continue my story.

I went on to discover that the Paige family, originally from East Allington near Kingsbridge, had been farming the land close to the coast on the outskirts of Kingswear and Brixham for many years. There were no less than five farms and a Mill occupied by members of the extended Paige family and living in very close proximity to one another. The farms of Nethway,, Boohay, and Hoodown, were all owned by different members of one family and had been for many years covering several generations, In terms of acreage, this certainly covers a large proportion of this area. Woodhuish Mill was run by another branch of the family, but still closely related to the Paige family.

My current research is concentrated on the census of 1861, but it is obvious from the family tree that this would obviously change upon the death of the head of the family. In some instances the property has passed automatically to the son, but this has not always been so, and I will be looking into that situation at some time in the future.



The farms indicated on the road sign today are:

Boohay-Nethway-Hoodown-Coleton

Embracing the families in 1861:

Bastard-Paige-Lang-Jellard





Woodhuish Mill

In 1861 the Mill was occupied by Richard Fogwell, who was born in Brixham in 1807, he had inherited the Mill from his father George Fogwell, a miller who had been married to Agnes Paige, daughter from the second marriage of John Paige from Kingswear and Catherine Gillard. Richard was the youngest of three children but unmarried and in 1871 he is living in Milton Street with no occupation.



Boohay Farm

Situated at the end of Pepper Lane, with its own well and a spring nearby Boohay Farm was occupied by Richard and Mary Paige. Richard was born in Brixham in 1792 brother to Robert of Nethway Farm and William of Hoodown, Farm he was buried at Saint Mary's in 1868. Mary had been Mary Bastard Jellard from Blackawton before marriage. They had a family of four children. Mary died in 1876.



Nethway Farm

Nethway Farm, occupied in 1861 by Robert Lang Paige 1799-1866 and his wife Jane. Although born in Brixham, he was buried in Saint Saviour's church in Dartmouth.

The farm was originally farmed by Robert Paige 1747-1799 who, as one can see from the Paige family tree, being his mother's brother, was Robert Lang Paige's uncle. His mother made no change of name, she was Agnes Paige before and after marriage,



Hoodown Farm

Neighbouring the farms of his brothers, Hoodown was occupied by William, the elder of the three brothers, he was born in 1787. I have no details of when he died.

Hoodown Farm had originally been farmed by John Paige, the elder brother of Robert, and farmer of Nethway farm.

Woodhuish Farm and Cider Mill

Within sight of the coast, a steep stony and muddy lane leads down to Mansands, a very scenic and somewhat secluded cove. A row of isolated coastguard cottages sit looking out to sea. Although out of sight from the position where we are standing, they have withstood the sea winds and storms for a couple of centuries.



The building as it is today

Woodhush Farm was a separate enterprise with many farming acres

The farm is set back and out of sight from the lane, but farmers with their dogs were working around the new buildings. I am



Entrance to the mill

told that the barns which can be seen, and no longer in use, are the homes of Barn Owls and because of this, they are protected. Orchards with fruit laden trees

stretch out beyond the gate, set into a bramble hedges.



The mechanism for milling flour

The ancient millstone and cider press illustrated in the pictures have been refurbished by the National



Barns which are homes to barn owls today

Trust in recent times. From their rustic appearance in the old stone building it is not hard to imagine how it may have been.

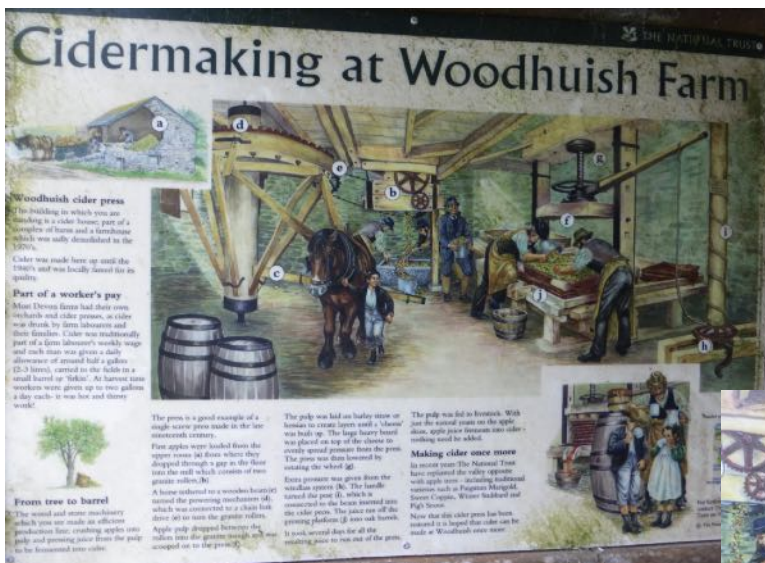
Richard Fogwell lived and worked here in 1861, he followed in his father's footsteps, the mill was previously run by his father George Fogwell. Unlike many mills which were operated by water to turn the wheel, the Mill Stone would have been operated by a horse circling the mechanism to mill the flour.

On the opposite side of the mill was a cider press, as illustrated by the pictures supplied, the apples would



The cider press

have been picked from the orchards across the lane then sorted and pressed to produce the local cider for which the whole area was so well known. Perhaps one day cider will be made once more at the Woodhuish Cider Mill.



depending on what would have been available in the area.

With an abundance of orchards in Devon and Somerset, cider was the preferred beverage. In the area of Yalberton and Stoke Gabriel whole areas were given to cider orchards.

Grown for the purpose of making cider the apples were smaller than eating apples and although they looked tempting, the taste was not at all pleasant. There were several grades of strength to the cider produced, some being sweet and pleasant to drink but others were stronger and harsh. Rough cider, known as scrumpy and very intoxicating in its alcoholic content was readily available in all the local inns. Old men who consumed scrumpy for much of their working lives developed a very florid complexion. Often available direct from the farm it would have been sold by "a casket, a barrel or half a hog's head". (a hog's head equated to 52^{1/2} imperial gallons)



a cider orchard just across the lane from the mill

Boohay Farm

It was while researching the details of William Bastard and his wife Eliza Paige Bastard, that I discovered my first link in the Paige family connection to many of the farms in this area of Higher Brixham. I had recalled seeing the name Paige as one of the residents of a neighbouring farm while looking through the census record. Being aware that Paige was part of Eliza's name too I realised there had to be a connection. However, it did not stop there, because by complete surprise I suddenly uncovered family links to other farms in the vicinity I will do my best to explain the complexities of this family as their proverbial



Boohay Farm

tree spreads its branches further over the countryside. There appears to be a Paige family connection to almost every farm in the area.

In 1861 Boohay farm was occupied by Richard Paige, his wife Mary and their family of four children. All baptised in St Mary's church and named after close family members, they were Mary baptised in 1822, one year after their marriage, Agnes in 1825, Fanny in 1832 and John in 1835. In 1861 the household consisted of two house servants and three young men employed as ploughmen. Situated at the end of

Pepper Lane, with its own well a spring nearby and a row of farm cottages, the farm covered an area of 200 acres.

Richard Paige of Boohay Farm was born in Brixham in 1792, he was buried at Saint Mary's in 1868. His wife Mary had been Mary Bastard Jellard from Blackawton. Mary died in 1876. They had a family of four children. It can be seen at a glance that Mary's middle name happens to be Bastard, yet another link to Eliza and William, but we are not going any further with that at the moment, it just serves to illustrate how closely related these families were. Her family name was Jellard, another name which is carried through many generations of children born into this particular farming community. The Jellard family originated from Blackawton, another village of the South Hams.



Farm workers cottages in Pepper Lane

Nethway Farm

Just a stones throw from Boohay Farm, Nethway Farm is situated within its own land and hidden from the lane.

Occupied by Robert Lang Paige, younger brother of Richard Paige of Boohay Farm. In the census of 1861 he was living with his wife Jane who was 10 years his junior aged 50 years. the farm covered an area of 200 acres and he employed four labourers and boys.

His son Robert aged 20, his daughter Mary aged 19 and Edmund aged 6 were living at the farmhouse along with Ann Cornish aged 24, a married daughter, described as a Merchants wife, and so there is every chance that her husband was away at sea at the time, and Emma Paige Cornish her little daughter aged 1 year.

There was a house servant named Eliza Martin aged 14 and three male farm servants, Robert Thorn aged 22, George Sitton aged 15 and George Medway also aged 15.

Robert Lang Paige 1799-1866 although born in Brixham, he was buried in Saint Saviour's church in Dartmouth.



Hoodown Farm

There is just one more farm to add relating to the Paige family and that is Hoodown Farm. Farmed by another brother of this family, William Paige. Older than his two brothers William Paige was 73 years old at the time of the 1861 census. Farmer of 287 acres he lived at the farm with his wife Sarah Paige who was also 73. An unmarried daughter Mary aged 45 and a grandson William Perring Paige aged 22 working as an assistant also lived with them. Other members of the household were assistant Mary aged 18 a dairymaid, and Mary J a house servant Three young men, named only by their initials, J Perring 18, J Maunders aged 14 and Hy Heale also aged 14 were employed as ploughmen.



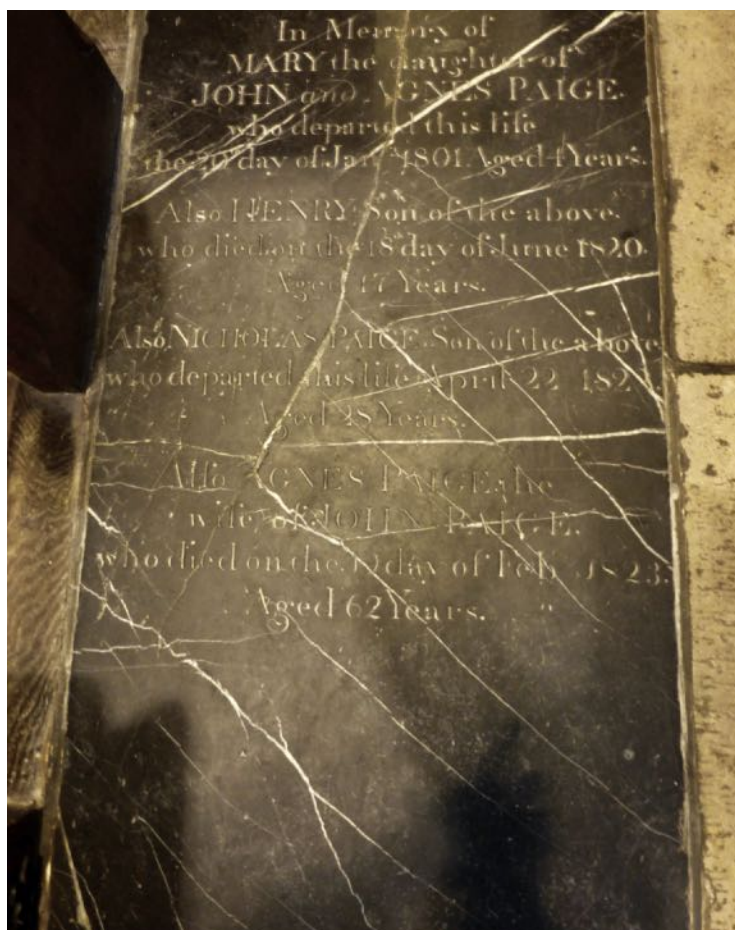
Regarding ownership of these three farms in the previous generation I would now like to add the following observation.. Nethway farm was farmed by Robert Paige 1747-1799 and Hoodown Farm, was farmed by John Paige 1743-1796 who, as one can see from the Paige family tree, were elder brothers of Agnes, mother of the three brothers mentioned above. Hence, the farms once farmed by Agnes's brothers were now being farmed by her sons.. I can also confirm that their grandmother was Agnes Lang before marriage.

To summarise, Richard Paige, Robert Lang Paige and William Paige were all the sons of John Paige and his wife Agnes who were married in 1783 and had eleven surviving children.

A memorial stone is set into the floor of St Mary's Church inscribed with the names of their daughter Mary who died aged four years and their sons Henry aged 17 and Nicholas aged 28 who died the same year as his mother. Agnes who passed away in 1823 aged 62. Their father John Paige married for a second time to Sarah Bridget Wills but they had no further children.



Inside Saint Mary's Church



The inscription on the Paige family memorial stone

In Memory of MARY the daughter of
 JOHN and AGNES PAIGE
 who departed this life
 the 20th day of Jan 1801 Aged 4 Years

Also HENRY Son of the above
 who died on the 18th day of June 1820
 Aged 17 Years

Also NICHOLAS PAIGE son of the
 above
 Who departed this life April 22nd 1823
 Aged 28 Years

Also AGNES PAIGE the
 wife of JOHN PAIGE
 who died on the 10th day of Feb 1823
 Aged 62 Years

Kingston Farm

The largest of all the farms Kingston Farm lies in the valley with farm buildings and farm cottages surrounding it. The farm of some 320 acres was owned by Thomas Parnell and his wife Mary. At the time of the 1861 census Thomas was 49 years old and his wife two years younger at 47 years old. A son, William aged 16 lived at home. Thomas employed 7 labourers and 4 boys, including Elizabeth Elliott a house servant, three ploughmen and a carter. An older couple described as a retired farmer and his wife also lived on the farm. They were Edward and Mary Rabbidge aged 73 and 70 respectively.

There were two labourers cottages, one occupied by the Gillard family of five (a different family to the Gillards of the Nut Tree Estate or Black House also in Brixham) and the other cottage occupied by the Langworthy family, of six, another cottage was unoccupied at the time.

Thomas Parnell came from Halwell and his wife from Plymstock this may explain why none his details appear in the St Mary's Church records. Their son was born in Sherford, a village near Slapton.



Kingston Farm and cottages



Views of the coast with Slapton in the distance



The extensive farmhouse as it stands today

The three cottages occupied by the farm Labourers were the families of William Pepperell and his wife Mary, along with their young son, Daniel Tolcher and his wife Elizabeth and family of five children ranging in age from 12 years to just 7 months, and John Wills and his wife Mary and a 10 month old daughter named Sarah. The barns in modern times have been refurbished by the National Trust and used by them on a regular basis.



The barns used by the National Trust

Brownstone Farm

Within view of the coast and beautiful sight of Slapton Sands, lies Brownstone Farm it is a little further away from the other farms already mentioned.

In 1861 the farm of 44 acres was farmed by John Nute and his wife Mary their son John Francis aged 22 and a daughter Elizabeth aged 24.

The household consisted of the following staff,

House Servant aged 13, called Hariret Langworthy, a young Carter named Philip Eales aged 17, a Ploughman aged 16 called Edward Pope, and two other servants, William Knapman and William Vittery. All of these names instantly recognisable as families living in Brixham.

John Nute had been born in Kingsbridge and in 1851 farmed 40 acres on the Brookhill Estate situated in Kingswear, but shown on the tithe map of Brixham with connections to Robert Holdsworth vicar of St Mary's Church Brixham.