

The Story of Marianne Pidsley

Founder of the Holy Trinity Church and the village of Woodbury Salterton

by Malcolm Randle



Pre Marianne Pidlsey

- Before Marianne Pidsley came to live at the nearby manor, Greendale House, at some time early in the 19th century, the village of Woodbury Salterton did not exist in the true sense. It had no church, school or village hall being just a collection of scattered farms and cottages and part of the parish of Woodbury. The pub, then called the Salterton Arms, was just a cider house, cider being the main source of income of many of the residents. Many cottages had a cider apple orchard attached. and remnants of these still exist.

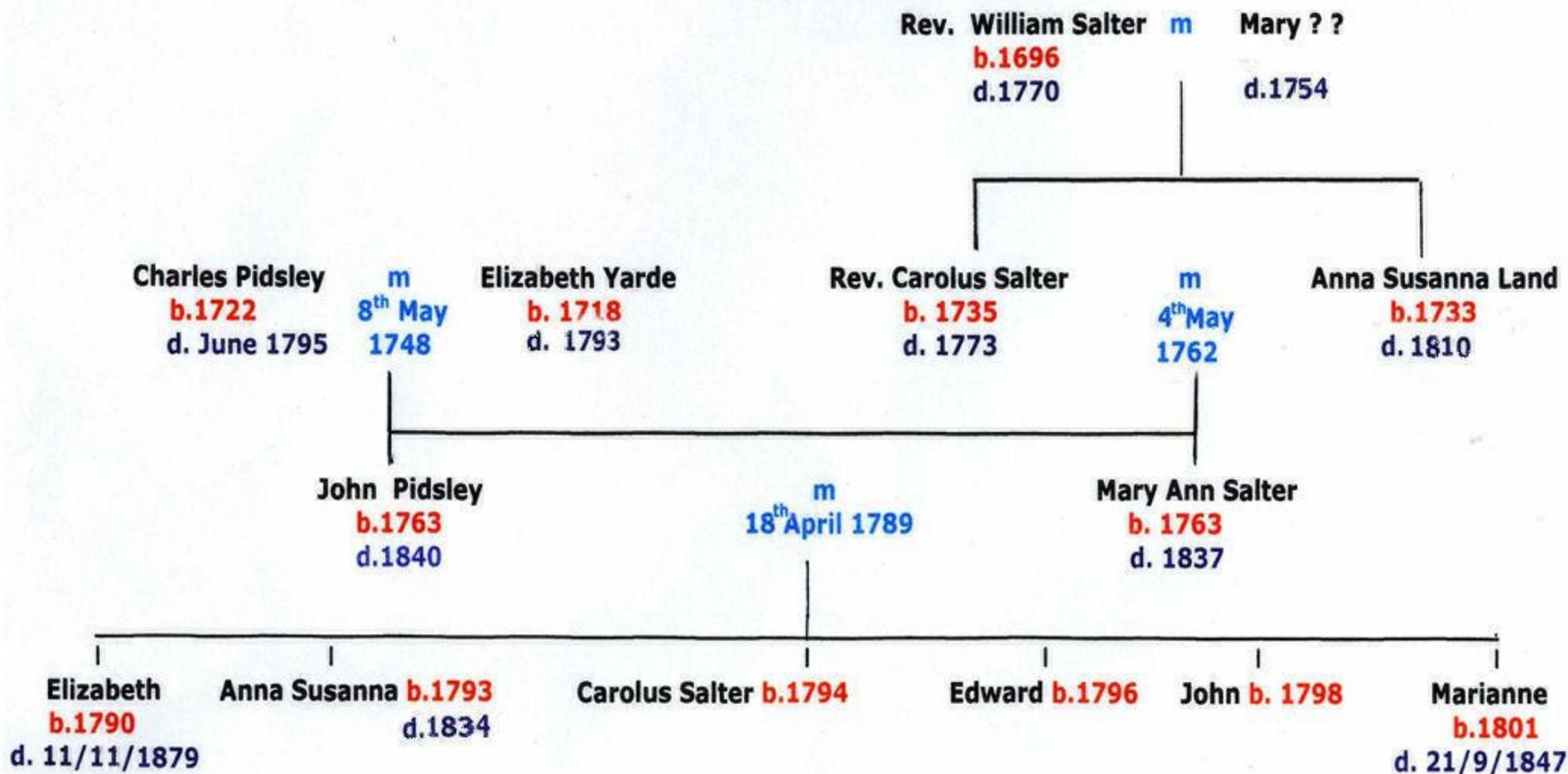
Some of the questions I set out to answer were:

- Who were the families of Marianne and her sister Elizabeth?
- Where did they come from before moving to Greendale House?
- How did they acquire their wealth?
- What motivated Marianne and, as she did not live in the parish, why did she favour Woodbury Salterton so much?
- Who was Marianne's so called 'adopted daughter', Blanche Swete and what part did she play?

How the story was researched

- Mostly I used records from the internet such as family research websites, the British History website, National Archives and British Newspaper archives
- Some information comes from books, such as “Woodbury – a View From The Beacon” by Ursula Brighthouse. Also from the church history booklet some of which is based on a 1907 letter from *John Walling* who was a contemporary of Marianne.
- Everything said in this story is based on supporting evidence or it is an opinion based on the most likely probability, in which case this I say so.
- Most of the locations in the story I have visited myself and taken photos where possible.

Family Tree of Marianne & Elizabeth



Wear Farm – Bishopsteignton a 17thc Grade II listed building

The home of the Pidsley family for over 350 years
and the birthplace of Charles, grandfather of Marianne.



St John the Baptist church, Bishopsteignton

where Charles Pidsley was baptised on 5th June 1722 and buried on 27th June 1795



St Michael's Church Kingsteigton

where Charles Pidsley married Elizabeth Yarde on 8th May 1748

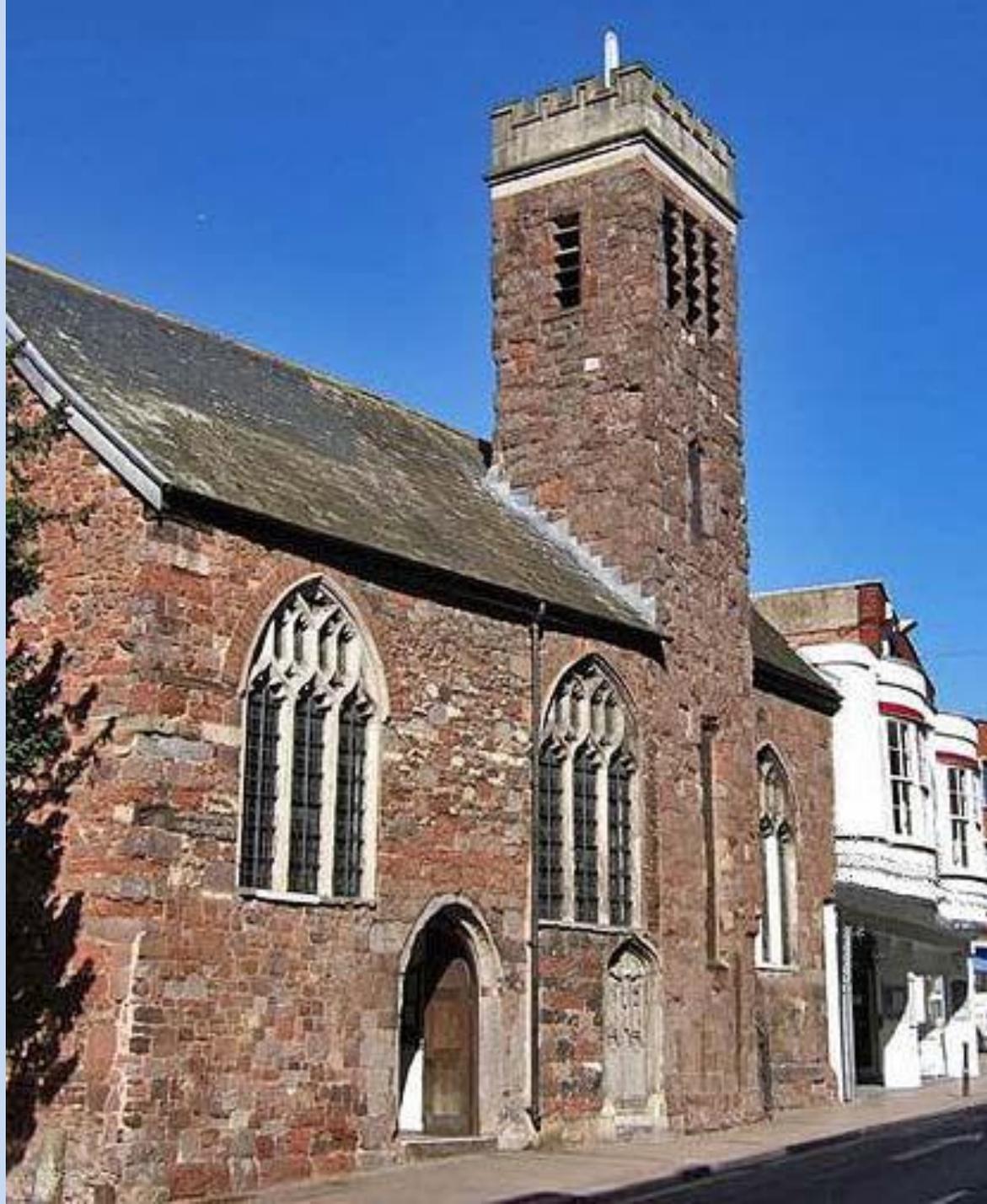


Charles had already moved to Exeter before he married Elizabeth. It is possible he may have worked in the legal profession but this is unconfirmed. Their parish church was almost certainly St Olave's in Fore Street (which is shown inset on this 1860 map) whilst their home would, no doubt, have been somewhere in the vicinity.



St Olave's Church

All six of Charles and Elizabeth's children were Christened here. Of these two died as infants two more in their teens, and one not traced. John, the father of Marianne and Elizabeth was christened on 10th November 1763. John went on to become a successful solicitor in Exeter. Charles died at Wear Farm in 1795 preceded by Elizabeth in 1793



St Michael's Church Musbury

Here, William Salter was the rector and his son, Carolus, was baptised



Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Silvertown
The venue of Anna Susanna Land's baptism on 7th February 1733



St Margaret's Church, Topsham

(where Carolus Salter married Anna Susanna Land on 4th May 1762
and their first child, Mary Ann Salter was baptised on 20th April 1763)



Parish church of St Gregory the Great, Harpford

At the time of his marriage to Anna Land, Carolus was the curate here.



St Mary's Church Aylesbeare

where Carolus Salter was the curate in 1765 and daughter Anna was baptised



St Andrew's Church - Clyst Hydon

Carolus Salter was the curate here in 1766 where two of his children were also baptised. He remained at Clyst Hydon until at least 1770 when his son William was baptised there. When Carolus died at the age of 38 he was buried on 5th March 1773 at Clyst St Mary where, maybe he was curate.



St Mary's Church, Clyst St Mary

(photo of a painting in the church)

The venue of John Pidsley and Mary Ann Salter's marriage on 18th April 1789



Marriage Register entry of John Pidsley and Mary Ann Salter
(note that Mary Ann has signed her name as "Marianne"
also that her mother, Anna Susanna Salter was a witness)
At the time of the marriage John Pidsley was living in "The Close" Exeter.

1789		N ^o 29
John Pidsley	of [the] City of Exeter, Gentleman	
	and Miss Mary Ann Salter	of [this]
Parish		were
Married in this [Church] by [License]		
this Eighteenth Day of April in the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred		
and Eighty Nine by me Geo: Cooke [Rector]		
This Marriage was solemnized between Us		
John Pidsley		
Marianne Salter		
In the Presence of		
Anna Susanna Salter		
John Burnard		

St Peter's Cathedral Exeter

The location of Elizabeth Pidsley's baptism on 25th February 1790



Paul Street Exeter in 1911

Around 1800 John Pidsley and his family moved into a substantial town house in Paul Street where he resided until he died in 1840. The house was probably on the north side in the vicinity of the merchant's house, seen on the right of the picture. This is close to where the Harlequin Centre is now situated. Also nearby on the south side, was St Paul's Church, from which the street takes its name. Marianne was baptised here on 22nd Feb 1801. John's wife Mary Ann (or Marianne as she preferred to be known) died in 1837.



St Paul's Church Exeter in 1926

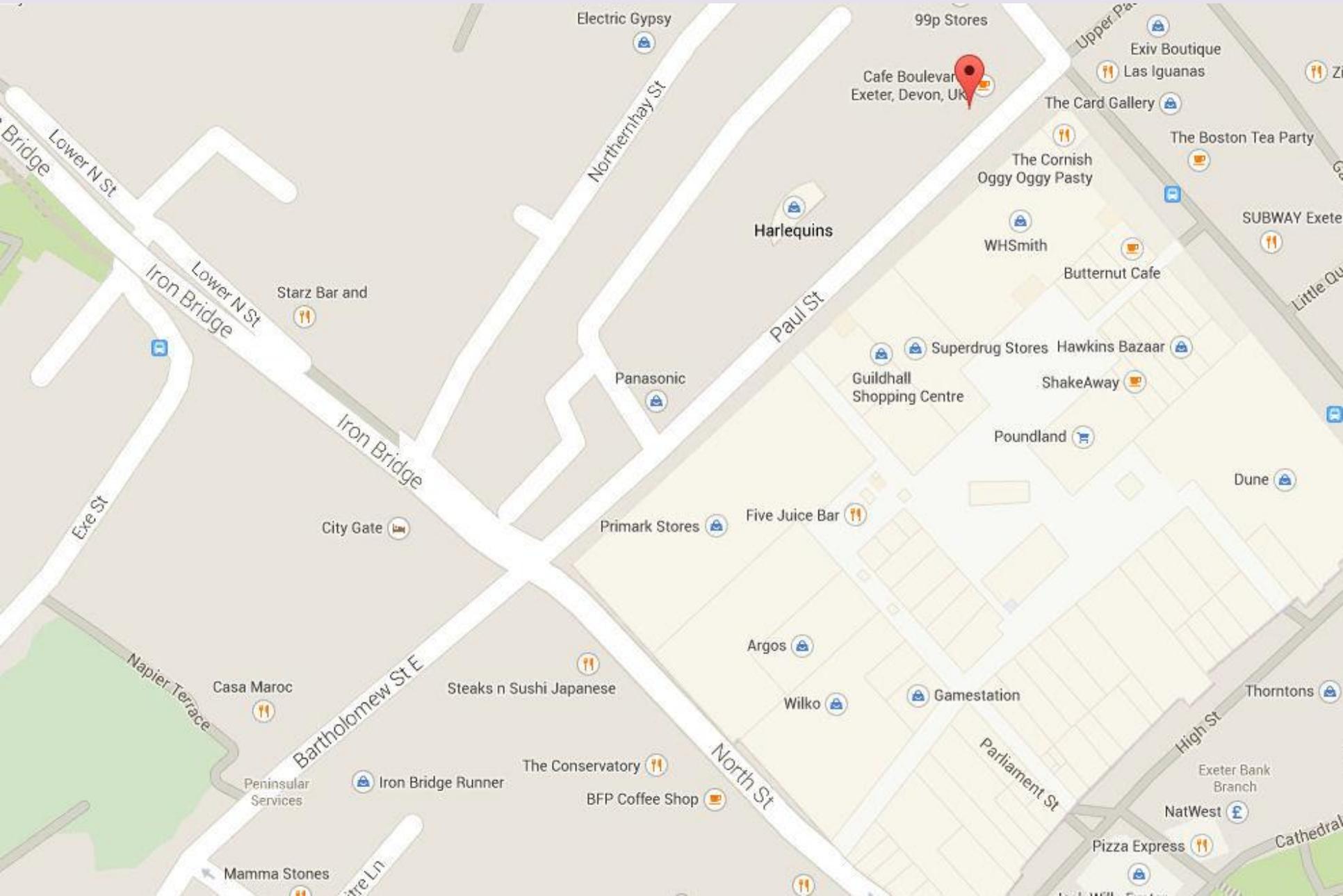
where Marianne Pidsley was baptised on 22nd August 1801

The church had stood on the corner of Paul Street and Goldsmith Street since the Saxon Period, around 1,000 years, but was demolished in 1936.

Archaeological excavations show that the street lies on top of the wall of the old Roman fortress.



Map of the current Paul Street, Exeter



Paul Street now – not a pretty sight

St Pauls Church would have been immediately on the left with Goldsmith Street just beyond



John Pidsley's Will

The will, although very neatly written, is not at all easy to read but after wading through it there seems little doubt that most of his substantial properties were divided between Elizabeth and Marianne. Wear farm went to Elizabeth whilst Marianne inherited various other properties in the Kingsteignton locality.

There is no mention in the will of any of his other children or of the Paul Street house, which implies that he had previously passed ownership to someone else before his death. Apart from Anna, who died aged 34, I have found no trace of Edward or Carolus and the strong possibility is that they had not survived.

The will is witnessed by a solicitor and a servant but the date is unclear. Reproduced below is the record of probate which was proved in London by Marianne and Elizabeth as his daughters and executors.

Proved at London 12th March 1840 before the Judge by the oaths of Elizabeth Pidsley and Marianne Pidsley daughters the daughters the Executors to whom admou was granted having been first sworn by Corion duly to admou.

Advert for sale of John Pidsley's Paul Street House

This advert appeared in the Woolmers Exeter Gazette on 15th July 1843, over three years after his death. At this time it was occupied by a John Pidsley Esq., solicitor. I believe this is probably his son John, born in 1798. It would be a very remarkable coincidence if it were not. The house included building sites behind it which fronted onto Queen Street towards New North Road. It was clearly a very fine house.

PAUL-STREET AND QUEEN STREET, EXETER,
*Valuable Fee-Simple PROPERTY for Sale, Land-Tax
Redeemed.*

TO be SOLD by Private Contract, that most desirable
FAMILY RESIDENCE.

For many years in the occupation of the late JOHN PIDSLY, Esq., and now of JOHN PIDSLY, Esq., Solicitor, together with the valuable SITES OF BUILDING GROUND behind the same, having frontages in Queen-street, towards the New North Road.

The House, which is substantially brick-built, and is now in the most perfect repair, comprises on the Entrance Floor, a good Dining-room, excellent Office, and Clerk's Office, with Store-room, Kitchen, and Offices. On the first floor are a spacious Drawing-room, small Sitting-room, with large Bed and Dressing-room; and on the second-floor are four good Bed-rooms, and a Dressing-room, also servant's-room over the kitchen. In the basement are excellent wine and beer Cellars, and a good Larder; also in the Court is a spacious Brew and Wash-house, with Laundry and Store-rooms over, with other domestic offices.

The Property, from its locality to the centre of the City, the Markets and Bankruptcy Courts, offers to a Professional Gentleman great advantages.

For a view, apply to Mr. CORNISH, 136, Fore-street-hill, Exeter; and for further particulars at the Office of Messrs. SMITH, Solicitors, Crediton. Dated 3rd July, 1843.

The story moves to Woodbury Salterton

Extract from East D D C Village Design Statement

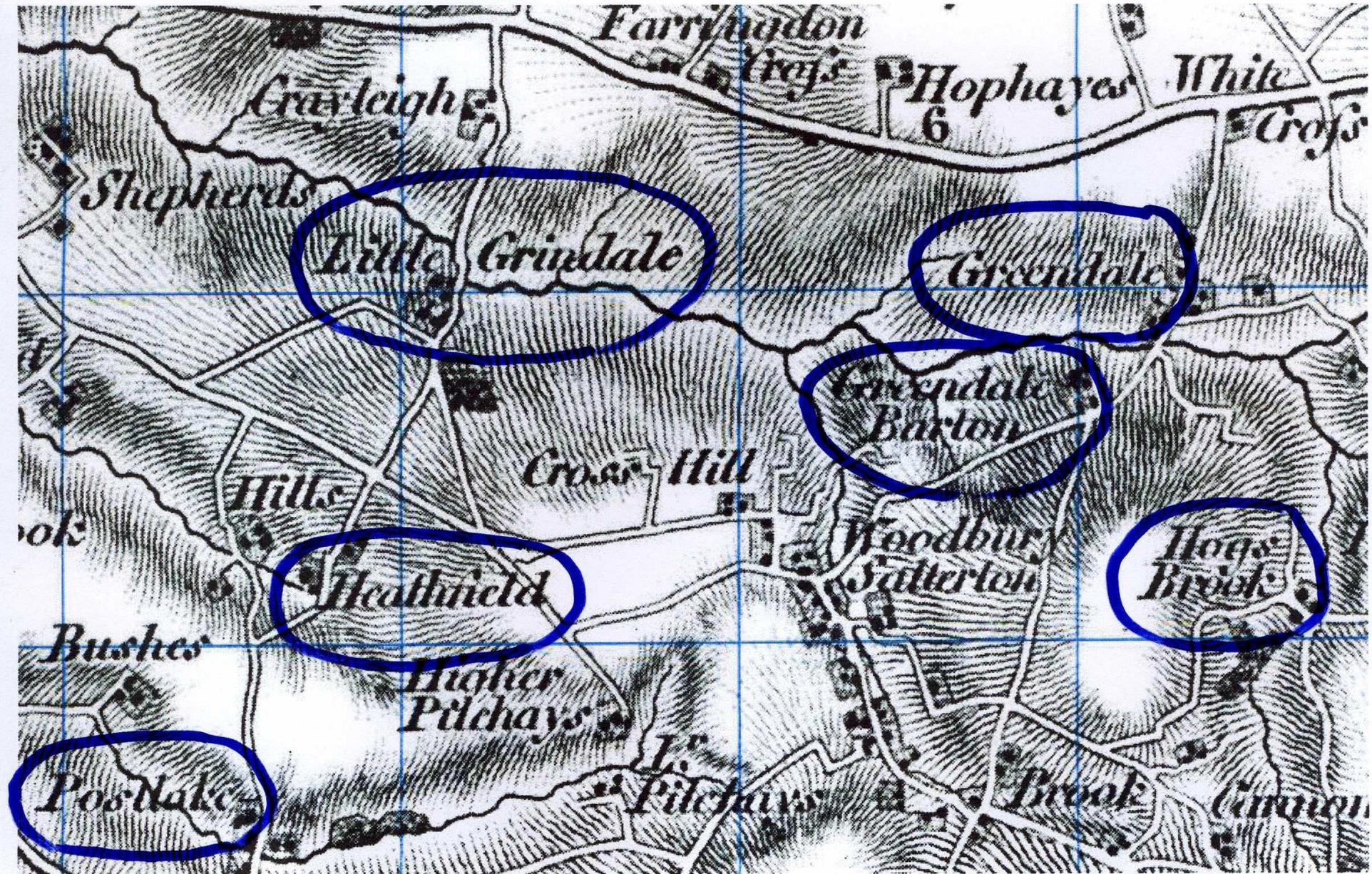
“Four distinguished families have shaped the history of the village and the surrounding hamlets of [Postlake](#), [Hogsbrook](#), [Grindle](#) and [Heathfield](#). Geoffrey Albemarle gave part of his manor to the Abbots of Torre in the 13th century which became known as the [Manor of Grindle and Salterton](#)* The Carys, who acquired the land after the Reformation, paid the penalty for supporting King Charles in the Civil War and sold to the Putts, who continued as Lords until the 20th century.

Miss Pidsley, a local benefactor, built the church, school, vicarage and the well beside the Village Road in the mid-19th century, using stone salvaged from the demolished St. Thebold's tithe barn in Woodbury.”

* The manor of [“Grindle and Salterton”](#) eventually became [Woodbury Salterton](#). The name ‘Salterton’ *may* be derived from the presence of salt deposits in White Cross Road but there is no evidence for this and there are other theories.

(The “Grindle” referred to here is what is now left of Greendale Barton)

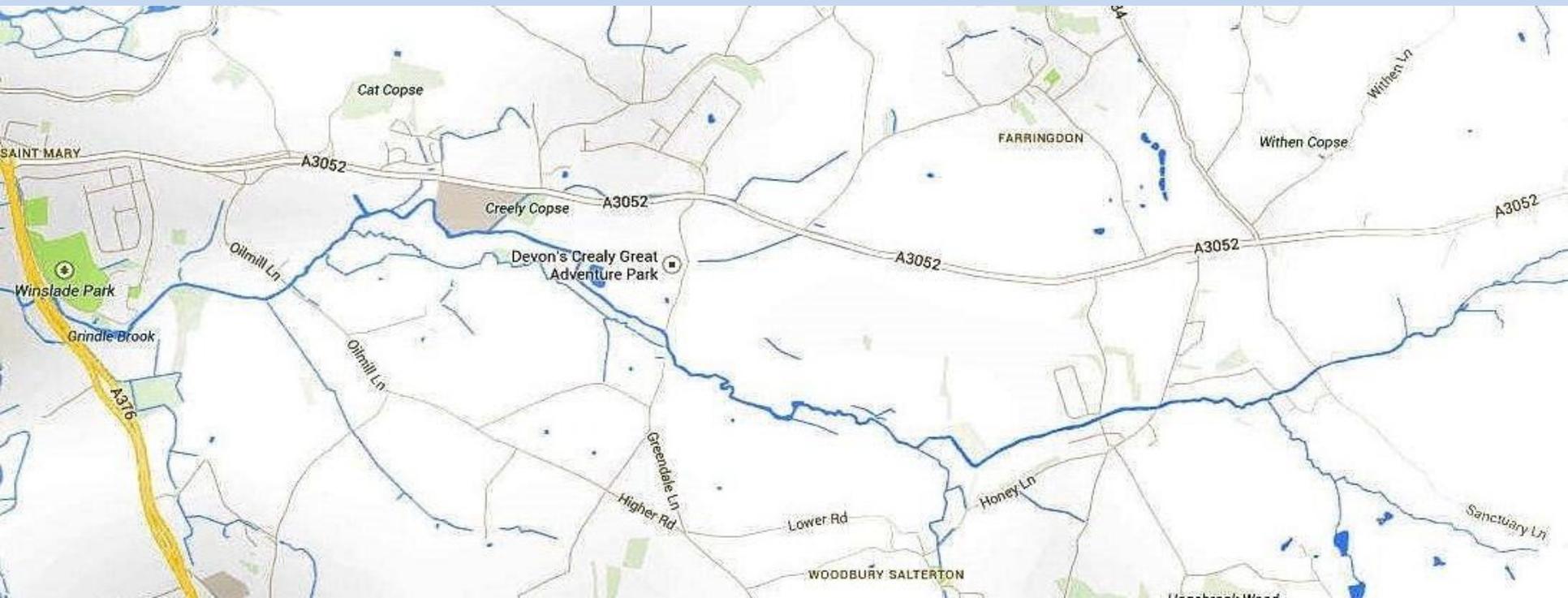
The 1809 OS map of Woodbury Salterton and relevant locations
“Little Grindale” is where Marianne’s home Greendale is located



The Grindle Brook & Greendale

The Grindle brook has influenced the name of several places along its length, from where it rises on the NW slopes of Woodbury Common to where it joins the River Clyst (then spelt 'Clist') at Clyst St Mary. It passes near to the church there and the old rectory at Clyst St Mary is also called 'Grindle House'.

There seems to be little doubt that the name Greendale has derived from Grindle. The existing house named 'Greendale' is very close to the brook and next to it is a derelict house named Greendale Farm. The 1841 census form shows this simply as 'Grindle' but in 1851 it is named 'Little Greendale', confirmed by the fact that the same family still lived there. In the 1891 census it is named 'Greendale Farm' but with a different family residing there.



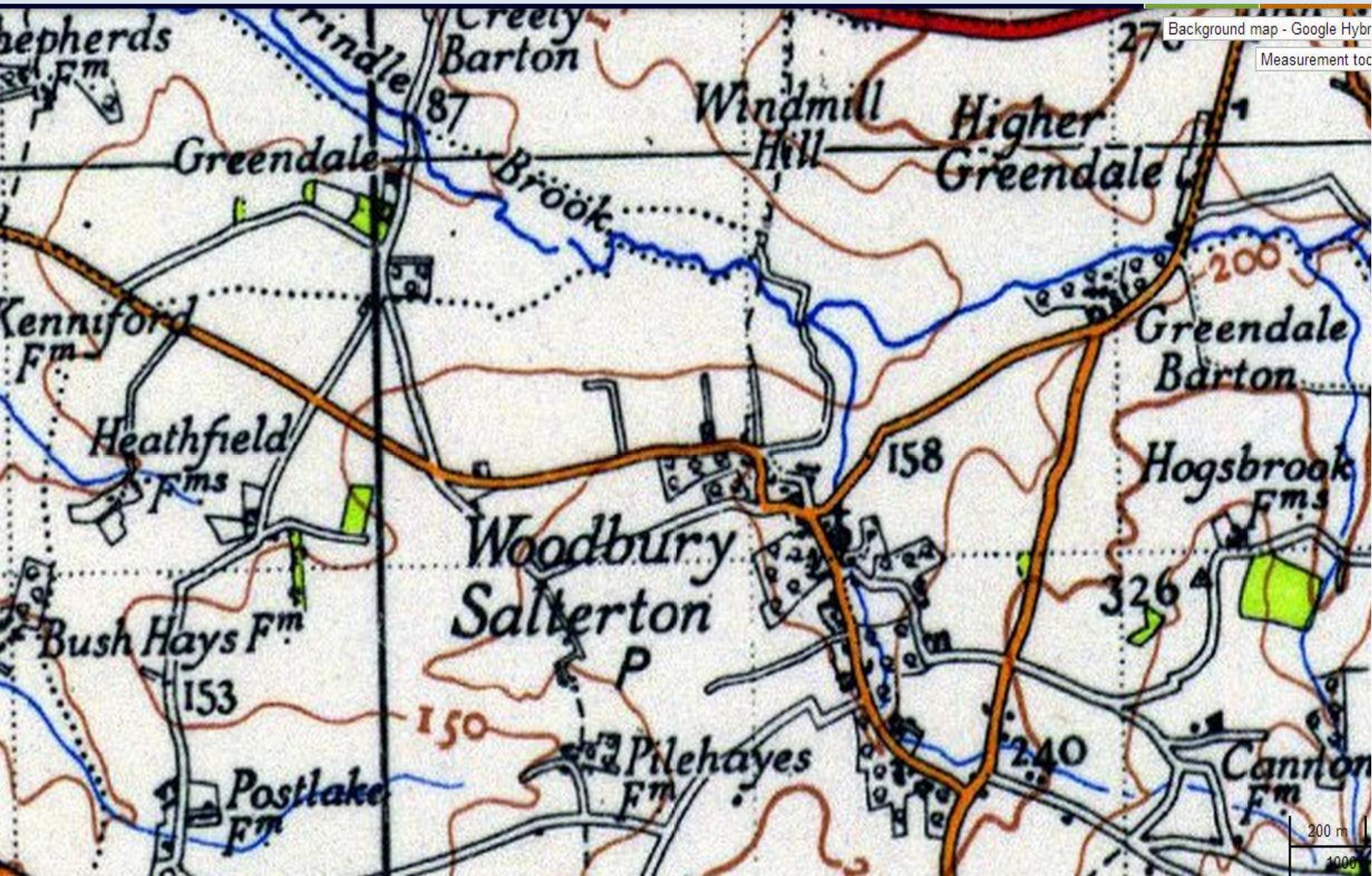
The Grindle Brook

looking towards Greendale from Oil Mill Lane



1820 – 1840 O/S map of Woodbury Salterton

Grindale House has now changed to Greendale House



Greendale House at the end of 19th century
from Ordnance Survey 6" map



Recent aerial view of Greendale and the old farmhouse

As can be seen there are quite a number of additions



Greendale as it is today

Marianne and Elizabeth were residing here by the late 1830s



'Greendale' – Some Facts

DETAILS FROM LISTED BUILDING INFORMATION

GRADE II Listed House

DATE LISTED: 11 November 1952

ENGLISH HERITAGE BUILDING ID: 86152

OS GRID REFERENCE: - SY0003789886

LOCALITY: Clyst St Mary

LOCAL AUTHORITY: East Devon District Council

Description: Early 19th century, possibly incorporating an earlier structure.

Evidence for an earlier house are two external end stacks; that to the right could indicate the existence of an older core to the house

Own enquiries made of the existing owner revealed that he had no information on the origins of the house.

Greendale Farm in 2015



'Greendale' – A supposition

The 1809 map is unclear about the number of houses at the location but it does look like at least two. The farm was clearly a working one and Carolus Salter was not a farmer. If he did reside there then it would have been in the house that was replaced by the existing 'Greendale'. Anna Salter, his wife died on 10th April 1810 and it was



probably at that time it came into the Pidsley's possession. Possibly John and Mary Pidsley had the new house built for their daughters sometime between then and 1830 and maybe also for themselves, although there is no evidence that they did live there. As Anna, Marianne's unmarried sister, was buried at Clyst St Mary when she died in 1834, she also could have been living there.

When Marianne first visited Woodbury Salterton it was just a scattering of farms and cottages. The main source of income was from cider production and rural crafts. The centre was the village pub, a cider house, at that time named the Salterton Inn. Although not in her own parish she was very concerned about its neglected state. Being a devout Christian and robust evangelist, she decided to do something. Many cottages had orchards the remnants of one is shown below.



St Mary's Church, Kingskerswell

The Reverend Aaron Neck was the rector here. He was Marianne's spiritual father.

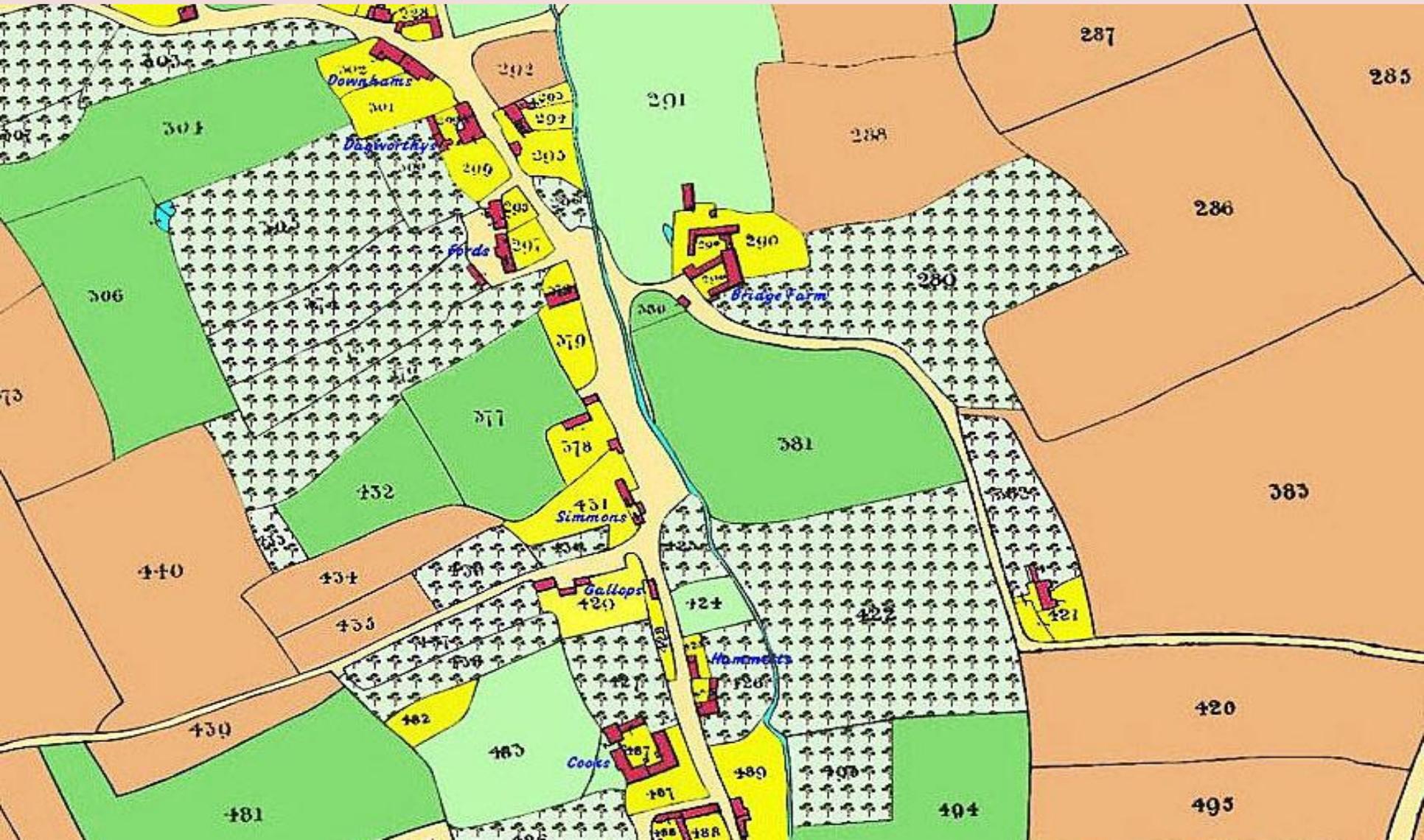
There is no doubt that he had a profound influence on her life and actions but how and why he became her spiritual father can only be guessed at. He was born at St Marychurch and spent all of his life in this locality which is not far from Kingskerswell.

Rev. Aaron Neck had built a new parsonage and he was the chief supporter of a new local national school where he also helped to clothe the poorer children. He suggested to Marianne that she should open a school which is in fact what she did.

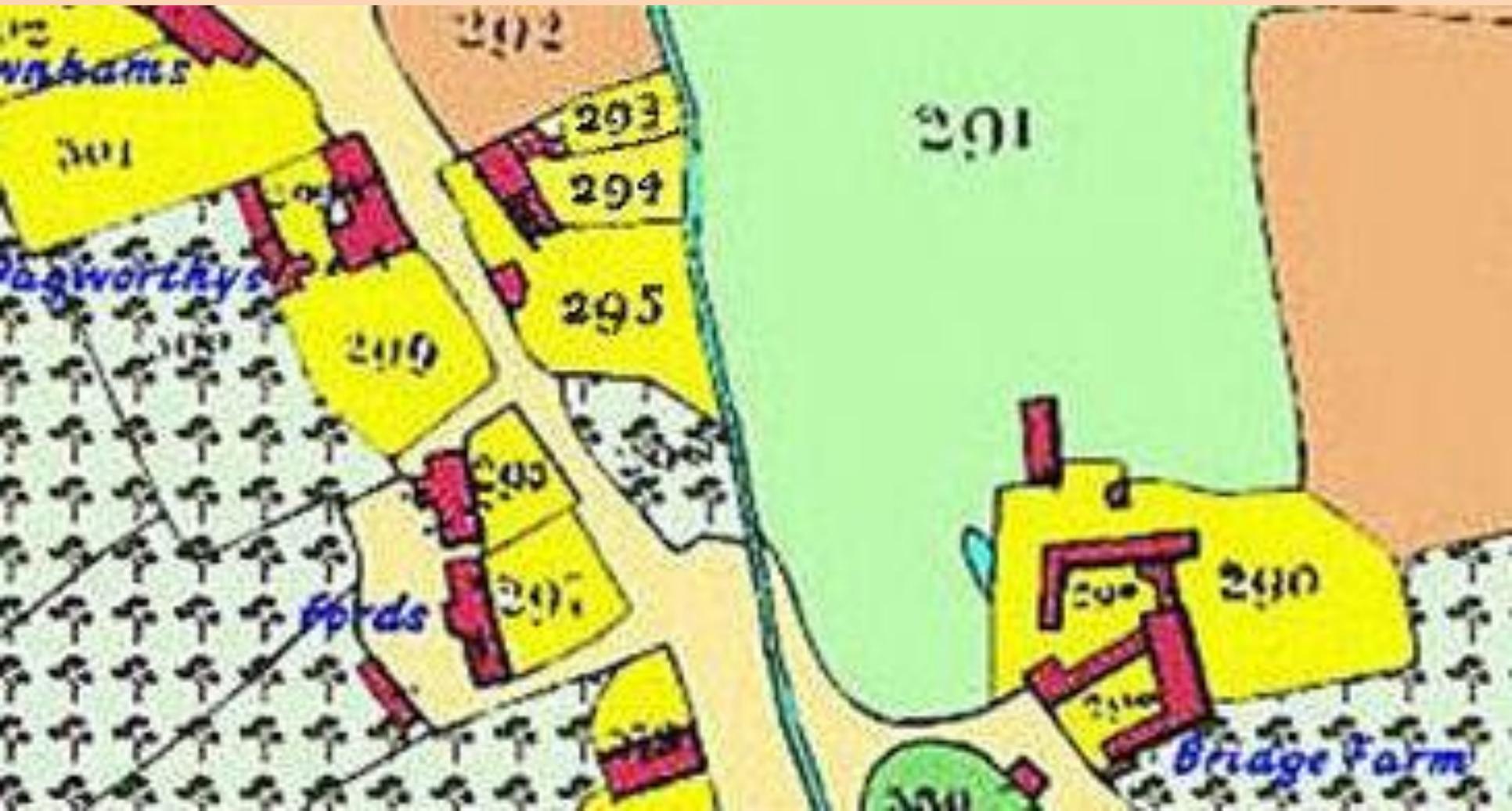


The First School

In 1839 Marianne and a woman named Ann Lang were renting a cottage which they were using as a school. This was located at tithes 293 & 294 as shown on the 1840 Tithe Map. It was soon found that the cottage was not large enough.



Marianne eventually purchased the land which included tithes 293 and 294, intending to build a school. At that time 130 children had to walk to Woodbury and back on Sundays (twice for the older ones) and she had already provided cloaks for 100 of them. She realised a church was more of a priority so decided to use the land for building the church. Bridge Farm, where the school now stands, is at the bottom right of the map.



Greendale House Census 1841

The Census of 1841 shows Marianne and Elizabeth living at Greendale with 10 servants.

Also living there was a 15 year old girl named as 'Blanche Sweet'. This is in fact Charlotte Blanche SWETE who is described in the church history booklet as Marianne's 'adopted daughter'. In her will Marianne refers to her as her 'adopted child' although in those days there was no precedence for legal adoption so it must have been an informal arrangement. Blanche (as she preferred to be known) was in fact a blood relative, a cousin, because Marianne's great grandfather (Gilbert Yarde) was also Blanche's great great grandfather. *(My thanks to Terrie Newman for bringing this connection to my notice)* Blanche went on to play a significant part in Marianne's life and work

Greendale House	1	Marianne Piddley	30	Ind: ✓	✓
		Eliza do	40	Ind: ✓	✓
		Blanche Sweet	15	Ind: ✓	✓
		Sophia Hoall	3		✓
		John Webber	35	M. S. ✓	✓
		John Nichols	25	M. S. ✓	✓
		John Phillips	20	M. S. ✓	✓
		Thomas Tredlake	15	M. S. ✓	✓
		Francis Webber	20	M. S. ✓	✓
		Wilnot-Huatable	25	M. S. ✓	✓
		Ann Frost	20	F. S. ✓	✓
		Ann Batten	15	F. S. ✓	✓
		Elizabeth Taylor	15	F. S. ✓	✓
		Jane Hellier	25	F. S. ✓	✓

Census From 1841 showing occupants of Greendale House

PLACE	HOUSES		NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE and SEX		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born		
	Uninhabited or Building	Inhabited		Males	Females		Whether Born in same County	Whether Born in Scotland, Ireland, or Foreign Parts	
Greendale House			George Goldworthy	14		+ Ag. lab: ✓	✓	✓	
			William do	12		+ Ag. lab ✓	✓	✓	
			Robert do	70		+ Ag. lab ✓	✓	✓	
		1	Marianna Piddley	30		} Ind: ✓	✓	✓	
			Eliza do	10		} Ind: ✓	✓	✓	
			Blanche Sweet	15		+ Ind: ✓	✓	✓	
			Sophia Small	3			✓	✓	
			John Webber	35		+ M. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			John Nichols	25		+ M. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			John Phillips	20		+ M. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			Thomas Frostake	18		+ M. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			Francis Webber	20		+ M. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			Wilmot Hualath	25		+ M. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			Ann Frost	20		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			Ann Batten	15		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓	
Grindle			Elizabeth Taylor	15		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			Jane Kellier	25		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓	
		1	Richard Moore	65		} Farmers	✓	✓	
			Sarah do	65			✓	✓	
			Jane do	25			✓	✓	
			Matthew do	6			✓	✓	
			Samuel Burton	20		+ M. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			Thomas Pyle	15		+ M. S. ✓	✓	✓	
	Oat Mills		1	William Matthew	25		} Millers	✓	✓
				Susanna do	25			✓	✓
TOTAL in Page 17			3	14	11				

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City of Birmingham
Parish or Township of *St. Mary Colist* Enumeration Schedule

PLACE	HOUSES		NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE and SEX		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born		
	Uninhabited or Building	Inhabited		Males	Females		Whether Born in same County	Whether Born in Scotland, Ireland, or Foreign Parts	
Rectory			Walter do	4			✓	✓	
			Jane Goldworthy	14		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓	
		1	Edmund Strong	35		} Clergyman	✓	✓	
			Sarah do	35			✓	✓	
			Thomas do	5			✓	✓	
			Mary Coulson	25		+ Ind: ✓	✓	✓	
			Elizabeth Ekers	70		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			Hester Paritton	40		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			Sophias Comey	40		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			Ann Tucker	20		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓	
			William Hart	40		+ M. S. ✓	✓	✓	
	Windlade House		1	Henry Porter	45		+ Ind: ✓	✓	✓
				Rose do	40			✓	✓
				Rose do	20			✓	✓
				Henry do	15			✓	✓
			Agnis do	10			✓	✓	
			Katharine do	6			✓	✓	
			Ludovic do	4			✓	✓	
			Gertrude do	1			✓	✓	
			Mary Edwards	60		+ Ind: ✓	✓	✓	
			Pauline Stahl	25		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓	
		Rebecca Edwards	20		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓		
		Frances Raper	30		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓		
		Mary Woodfine	30		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓		
		Elizabeth Edwards	20		+ F. S. ✓	✓	✓		
TOTAL in Page 18			10	7	10				

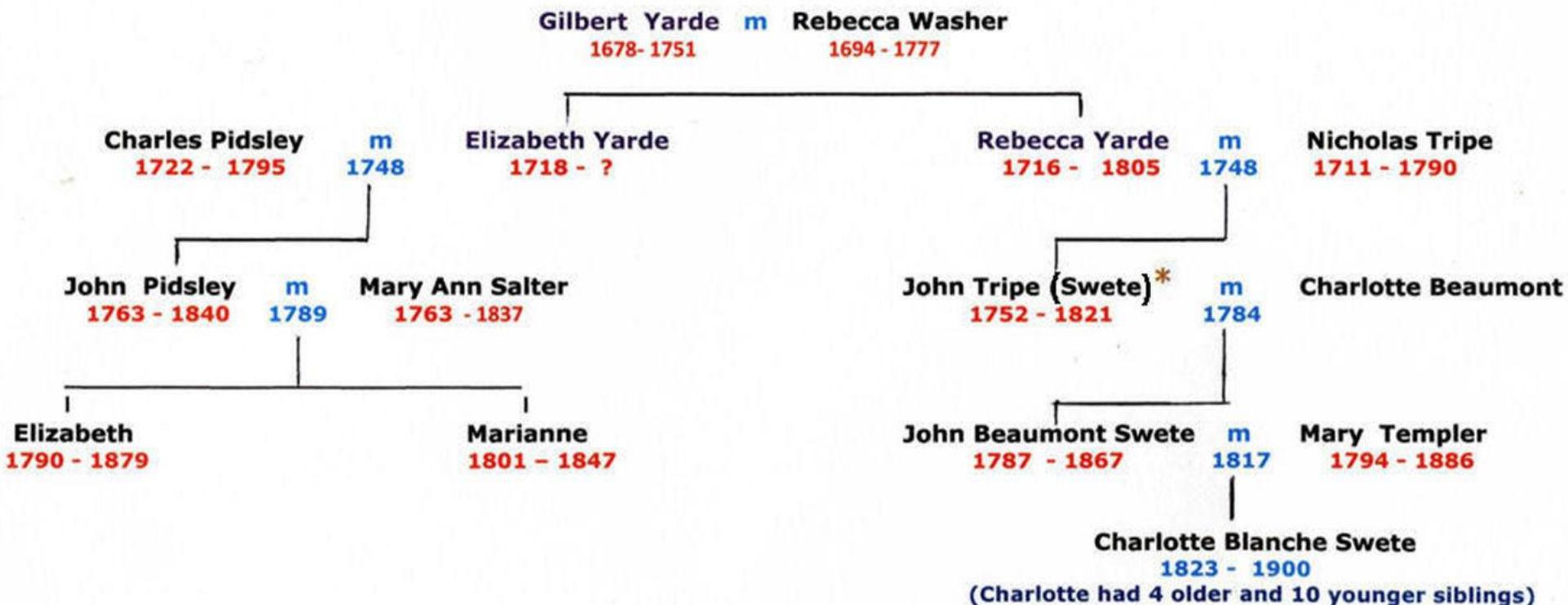
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Oxton House

Is a Grade II listed building at the head of a valley below the Haldon Hills near Kinton. The Swete family had resided here since at least 1780 and were still here in 1841 when Blanche was residing at Greendale with Marianne



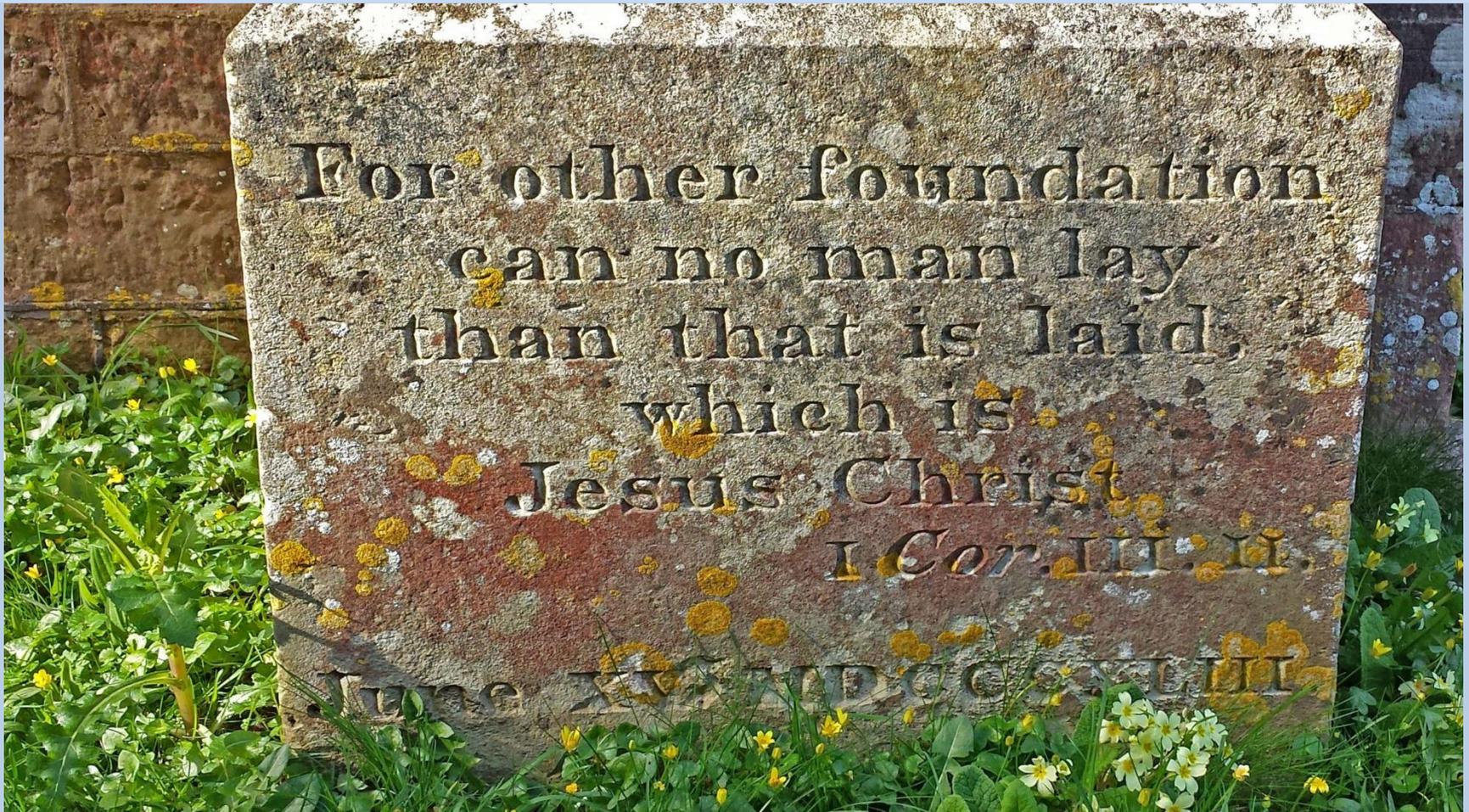
Family Tree of Marianne and Elizabeth Pidsley & Charlotte Blanche Swete (showing relationship between them)



* In 1780, by Act of Parliament, John Tripe changed his surname to Swete in order to inherit from Mrs. Esther Swete who was a relative on his father's side

The Church Foundation Stone

A two ton block of Caen stone, brought especially from Normandy, was laid at the south east corner on 15th June 1843 . It is inscribed on three sides with texts chosen by Marianne. The ceremony was conducted by Sir Trayton Drake of Nutwell in the presence of a large gathering of clergy, local dignitaries, parishioners and children. A silver trowel, a plan of the building in a glass case, some current coins and a newspaper published that day were placed in a cavity in the stone before it was laid.



Inscription on SW corner of Church

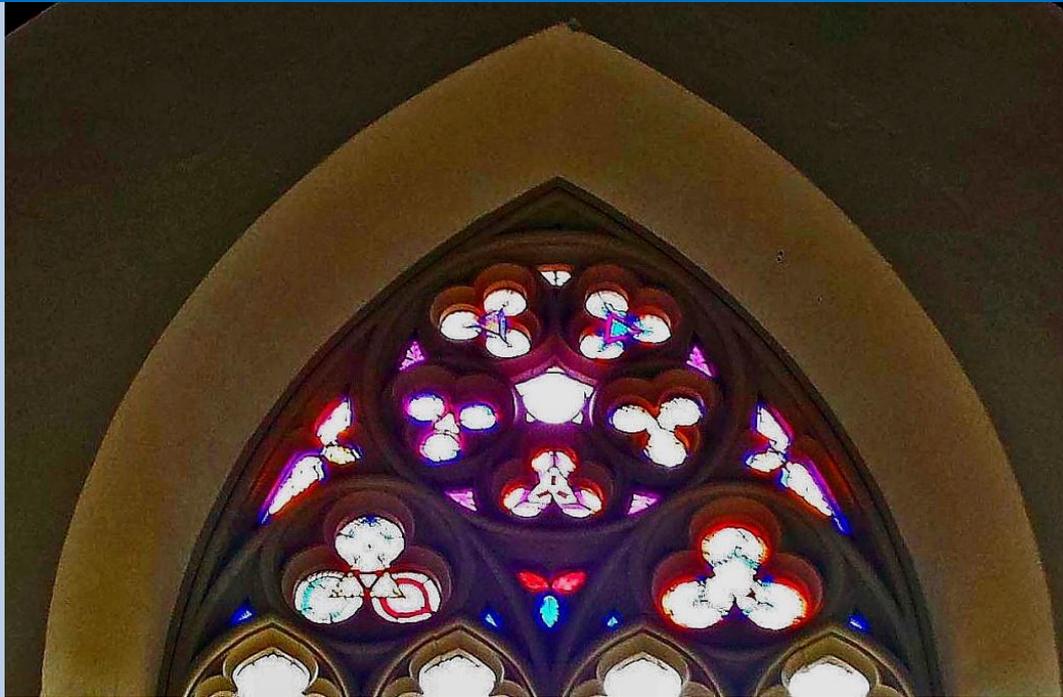
Marianne was very fond of biblical texts. This is one of 20 around the base of the church



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The Stained Glass



The stained glass was something that Marianne designed and created herself, along with assistance from Blanche Swete and a young man named John Walling. He became an invaluable assistant to Marianne and it is from a letter that he wrote in 1907 that her contribution to the village was known. All of the glass was hand painted prior to the fusing process which was done by a local glass stainer, Mr Beer. The windows were in the fashion of the 14th century “Decorated” style and all were based on various stories from the scriptures .They were described as “peculiarly appropriate and pleasing” in a newspaper report of the consecration. Apart from the apexes of the main windows and the porch, none of the original stained glass remains, all having been blown out by gales over the following century.

The stained glass in the church porch is original and the only place where the quality and colour can be seen



The Chancel Chair

with embroidery by Caroline Pearce before she married John Walling in April 1845, the first marriage to take place in the church



Detail of the Chancel Chair embroidery

Lady Rolle pointed out the fineness of the needlework to her brother Lord Clinton when she visited the church. It is still in excellent condition today



The Chancel Arch

Marianne made a big contribution to its design



The Church entrance showing similarity to Chancel Arch



The church was consecrated on 24th September 1844. It was a big day in the life of the village with a large number of senior and local clergy members, including the Rev Aaron Neck and other local dignitaries. The service was conducted by the Lord Bishop of Exeter following which they all retired to Greendale where *“an elegant entertainment was provided”* in a marquee.

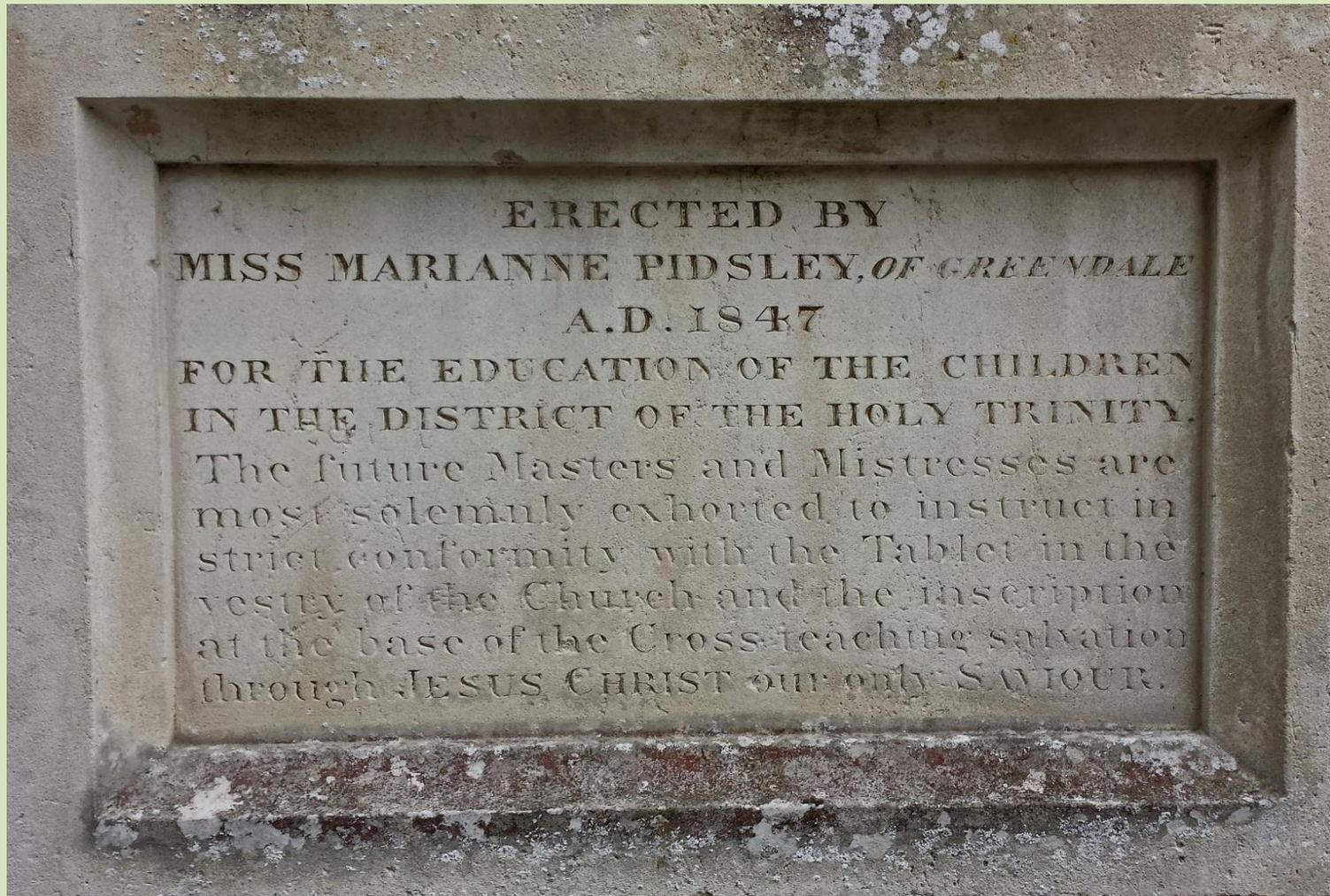
The Holy Trinity Church as it is today



The Vestry Tablet

This Church was built and endowed in 1844 by Marianne Pidsley, with the fervent prayer and strict injunction that within its walls should be always preached the full, free, and pure Gospel of our LORD and only SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST through the teaching of the HOLY SPIRIT, according to her humble, but fixed belief expressed on the Memorial in the Churchyard, and her name in painful repugnance to her own feelings is here affixed, that she may impress on all who may ever preach within its walls, to preach only CHRIST and Him crucified as the only Salvation for the whole world.

Following the completion of the church the building of the school commenced on land previously occupied by Bridge Farm. Marianne purchased the farm following a dispute with the owner about the chancel extending too far into the brook and causing flooding. This tablet on the school wall relates to the vestry tablet



Marianne took a great interest in the building of the school. Together with Blanche she created the stained glass windows but, as with the church, these have all long gone. John Walling was appointed as the first master of the school. It was officially opened in September 1847, not long after her death, so sadly she didn't get to see it

Woodbury Salterton School as it is today

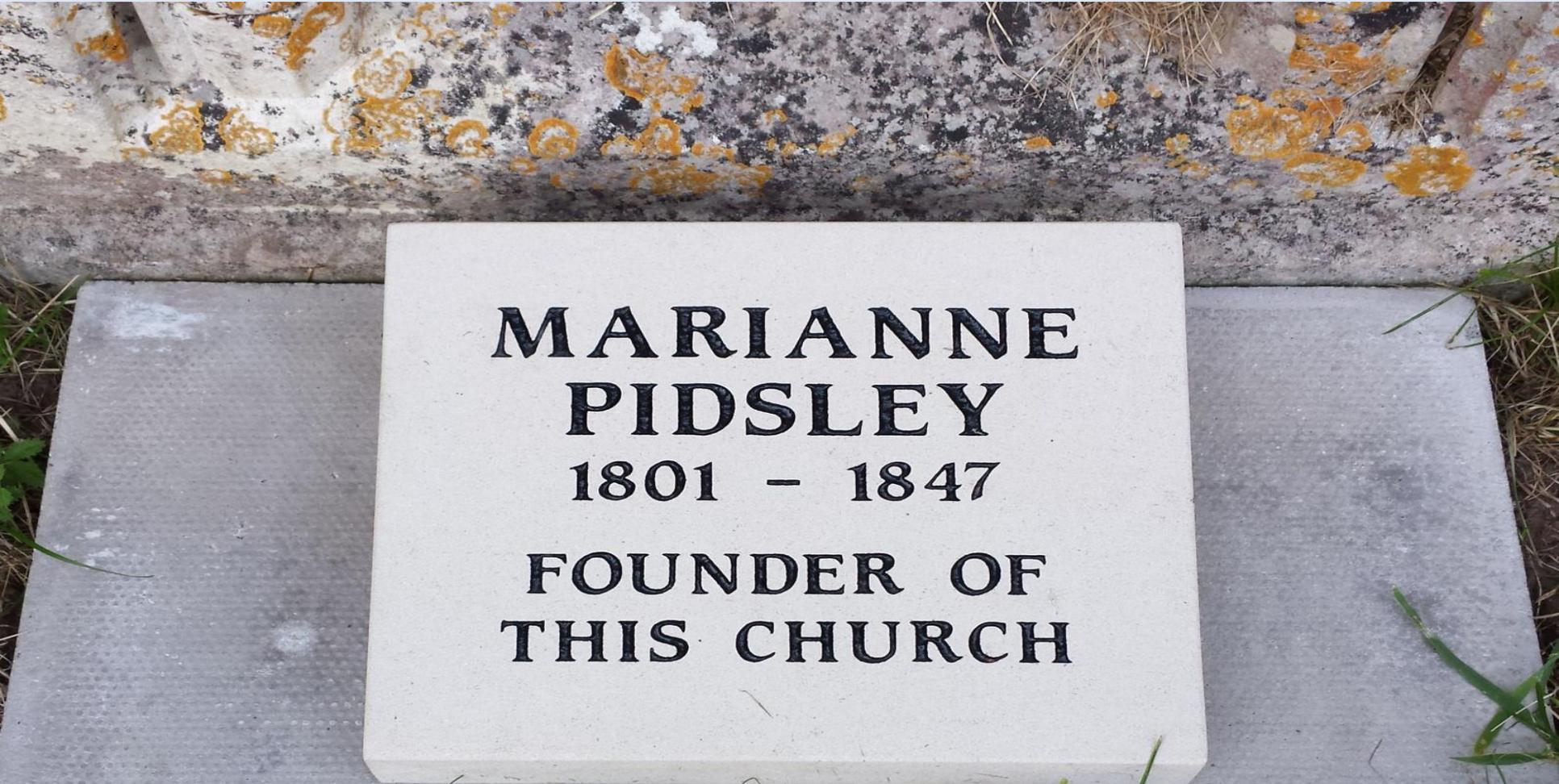


Marianne died on 21st September 1847 whilst staying at Tintagel with Elizabeth, having gone there to try and improve her ailing health. She had, it seems, always been frail, but her sheer determination kept her going. Her funeral took place on 29th September and was attended by senior members of the clergy and the local gentry, including Henry Swete, Blanche's elder brother. The Rev Aaron Neck read the service as her coffin was lowered.

Marianne's Memorial Headstone



Marianne was opposed to any kind of public recognition of her work and did not want any memorials erected. However, a memorial headstone *was* placed on her grave, as shown on the previous page, but as time and weather has made the inscription virtually unreadable, in July 2014 the PCC placed this simple plaque beneath the headstone in recognition of her unique contribution to the village.



**MARIANNE
PIDSLEY
1801 - 1847**

**FOUNDER OF
THIS CHURCH**

Marianne's Will

Below is just a short extract from her very complex and lengthy will which is six pages long and, as can be seen, not easy reading. It is in three parts one of which is a codicil in which she leaves her entire estate divided between Elizabeth and Blanche. The rest of the will deals with her wishes for the future of the school and the church. She clearly had much faith in Blanche as she entrusted a good deal of this to her including the appointment of Ministers.

This is the last Will and Testament
of mee Marianne Siddey of Greatbale in the Parish of Eliot
Diary in the County of Devon Spinster. I give devise and bequeath
All my real and personal estate and property of every description
unto and to the use of my dear Sister Elizabeth Siddey her
heirs Executors administrators and assigns Upon trust as to the use
servicent interest and income of one moiety or equal half part of
my personal estate for her own use and benefit during her life in
and as to the servicent interest and income of the other moiety
or equal half part of my personal estate and the whole of the
rents and profits of my real estate Upon trust for my dear relation
Blanche Siddey until she shall attain the age of twenty one years

The Vicarage

Was also initiated and paid for by Marianne although not built until 1851.

The front door is her favoured design, that of the chancel



The Fountain

Sometimes referred to as the well, was paid for by Marianne and provided drinking water from a spring for 100 years. Altogether she spent £13,000 on all of her four projects, a considerable sum for that time.



**The Church, Parsonage and Schoolhouse, Woodbury Salterton in
the late 1850s
(copy of a postcard artist not known)**



Marianne's Legacy

It wasn't just what she left behind in stone, wood and glass but it was also the people Marianne influenced and not just during her lifetime.

Some heard of her story and became motivated by it including ministers of the church, schoolteachers and even to this day her story is told in the village school.

Elizabeth continued to play an active role in the village life, in fact more so than before Marianne's demise, supporting both the church and the school. She had inherited Wear Farm, the home of her grandfather and may have lived there some of the time but her main residence continued to be Greendale. Elizabeth died on 11th November 1879 at Greendale aged 89.

John Walling remained as the headmaster of the school until he left the village to move north in 1864.

Blanche also left the area when in 1848 she married the Reverend John Thornycroft at the church she helped to create in Woodbury Salterton. She went to live at his home in Cheshire but she never forgot the village and her cousin Marianne.

Charlotte Blanche Swete and her family

The story of Blanche Swete's family is a complete story in itself and is only a small part of Marianne Pidsley's story so only a relatively brief reference is made here.

Blanche's mother, Mary, was a member of the Templer family of Stover. They owned the nearby ball clay quarries and built the granite tramway to Haytor where they had other quarries. This is known as the Templer Way and forms part of the Heritage Trail. Stover House, the family seat, is now a private school. The Rev. John Swete (who had changed his name from Tripe) was known to the Templers and possibly it was through him that John Beaumont Swete, Blanche's father met Mary. Blanche was the fifth eldest of fifteen children.



Stover House – once home of the Templer family

Blanche's Wedding

The Western Times 29th July 1848

The 22nd July 1848 must have been a very memorable day for the people of Woodbury Salterton. In the words of the newspaper report "the happy village was all alive with a quiet orderly joy on the bridal morn". The report goes on to give a full description of the day when Blanche married the Rev John Thornycroft. The description of Blanche given in the report is: "the lovely bride was attired in a white dress with deep flounces of Devonshire lace of Brussels Pattern". As well as most of Blanche's large family there was a large contingent of the local gentry and clergy present. The report goes on to describe the rest of the proceedings in much the same way.

FESTIVITIES AT WOODBURY SALTERTON.

The happy village was all alive with a quiet orderly joy on the bridal morn which saw the union cemented between Miss Blanche Swete, daughter of J. B. Swete, Esq., of Oxton, and the Rev. John Thornycroft of Thornycroft Hall, Cheshire. On the preceding Saturday the good people of the village had presented her with a very handsome Clock, (the best of the stock of Messrs. Ellis, of Exeter), as a token of their affectionate regard. This would serve to let her know that though the moments would fly for a while, yet, like all sublunary mortals, she would be amenable to time till called to eternity—and therefore she would have the means of knowing what o'clock it is. The school children gave her a handsome bible, or rather, we should say, the true book in a handsome cover. The poor lace makers of the village, whose humble work adorns the rich and the great through all the land, gave her some genuine specimens of Woodbury Salterton lace, wrought in ingenious devices. On the bridal morning the villagers erected triumphal arches, strewn flowers, and lined the path to the church with young white clad flower-dropping virgins, and happy school children—we only wish we had space to give scope to our correspondent's enthusiastic vein. Let him remember, however, that while he is glorifying the bride, and giving honour to the excellent and pious Miss Pidsley, and expanding, like a blowing aloe in freshness and odour, upon this great event in the small village, we have tidings of civil war coming in, great and stirring events to chronicle, and important trials to report. Let it suffice to say, that among the bridal party at the church, were—Miss Pidsley, Mr. and Mrs., and Mr. Henry Swete, Sir John and Lady Kennaway, Mr. and Mrs. Massie, Mrs. Parker, Mrs. and Mr. Henry Hamilton, Rev. Prebendary Johnson, Rev. B. W. Stannus, Col. Land, and Mr. Samuel Barnes.

The lovely bride was attired in a white dress, with deep flounces of Devonshire lace, of Brussels pattern; her bridesmaids were Miss and Miss Mary Swete, Miss Hamilton, Miss Kekewich, and Miss and Miss Eliza Johnstone—all worthy to figure as principals, and would do so, only they won't say "yes," in several cases, within our special knowledge. Let us proceed. The bridegroom's rev. brother-in-law read the service impressively—the bride's father gave her away tenderly—the bridegroom placed the ring extatically, and after due lurching, bore off the bride triumphantly—and "our Tucker" saw them drive through Exeter behind four spanking greys gloriously.

The villagers and other native people assembled at the School-house, and feasted happily, but orderly, under the guidance of the Rev. B. W. Stannus. Toasts were given loyally—the Lymphstone band played uproariously—Mr. Walling, the worthy schoolmaster, was praised for his good arrangements judiciously—and all departed cheerfully—high, middling, and lowly, young and old, having been duly feasted.

Thornycroft Hall Cheshire

(now Siddington Manor, a grade II listed building)

The Thornycroft family had roots going back to the reign of Henry III. However John Thornycroft descended from a family named Mytton but, in order to inherit the Thornycroft estate his father, Charles, had to change his name. In fact Charles was not related but was just a friend of Edward Thornycroft who was the last male heir.

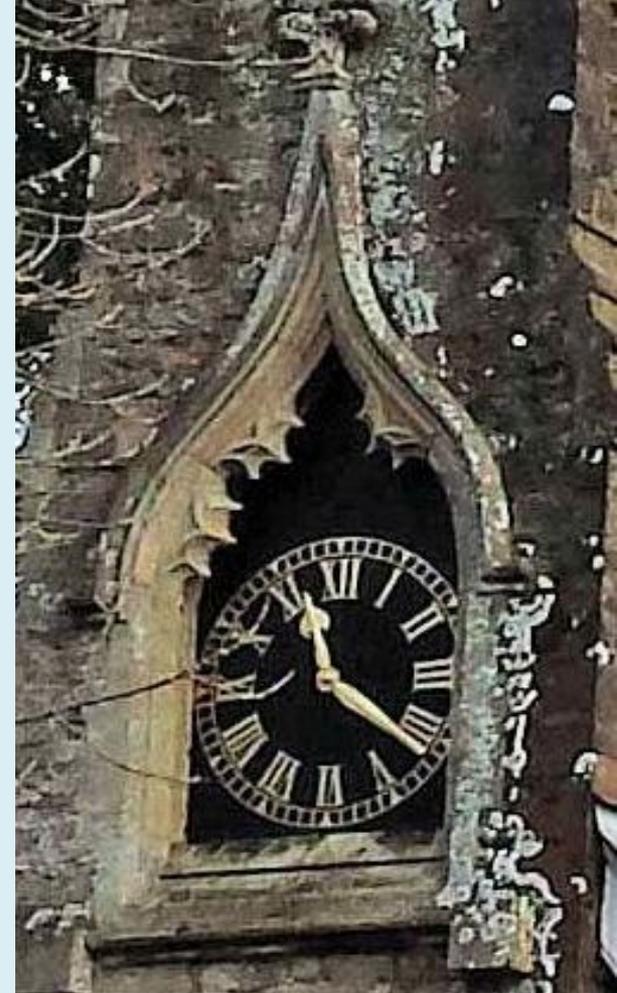
As Blanche's grandfather John Swete was also required to change his name in order to inherit then John and Blanche's children were neither Thornycrofts or Swetes. Blanche and John went on to have at least five children the first of whom was named Charles Edward.



After the Wedding

The Rev John Thornycroft does not appear to have been the rector of any particular church. He was very wealthy owning several properties, one at least being in Devon where they sometimes stayed. Blanche kept in touch with Woodbury Salterton and in 1853 sent a lengthy New Year's message to the villagers. Blanche and her husband made occasional visits to the school and in 1875 they provided the clock and chimes on the school. In 1881 they set up a trust with £2000 which kept it as a Church school. When Elizabeth Pidsley died in 1879 the patronage of the church had passed to John Thornycroft. When he died in 1884, leaving in his will

£113,377, his son Charles Edward moved into Thornycroft Hall. Whether Blanche stayed with him initially is unknown. Blanche died on 4th December 1900, whilst living in Lamberhurst, Kent. She left only £212 to her two spinster daughters, Henrietta and Agnes. They eventually moved to Bexhill on Sea, Sussex where they lived in a house named "Greendale". Perhaps they named it for Blanche?



Courtlands House - Lympstone (now *Lympstone Manor* a hotel)

(home of Charles Edward Thornycroft in early 1900s)



Charles continued to live at Thornycroft Hall until 1901 but by 1911 he was living at Courtlands House, Lympstone with his wife and unmarried daughter plus six servants. Charles together with Lord Rolle and Robert Marker of Honiton was one of the principal land owners in the area. He also held the patronage for the Woodbury Salterton church which had

passed to him from his father. In 1924 the patronage passed to the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral. Charles died in 1927, by which time he was living at Highfield House, Exmouth and left in his will £27,952 to his son Charles Mytton Thornycroft. The Thornycrofts moved away from Devon and Charles Mytton went on to have four sons, all of whom had the name Mytton as a second name.

Blanche's Descendants

Regrettably, no photos or portraits of any of the personalities from the early part of the story have been found. One photo that has been found from the later part shows, from left to right: Blanche's grandson Charles Mytton Thornycroft and his four sons: Nigel, John, Charles, and Guy. All had distinguished military careers and John died in battle in 1944



The final chapter – The Dunboynes

Following Elizabeth's death Greendale was bought by Baron Dunboyne and his wife Marion. The title, Baron Dunboyne is of Irish origin and one of the oldest in Great Britain. It goes back to St Thomas Botiler (or Butler) in the reign of Edward II. When not using his title he went by the name James FitzWalter Clifford-Butler having joined his wife's name, Clifford to his own. Probably inspired by the previous Greendale residents they supported the school and the church with children's summer outings organised by them each year. These were great events with a band, races games and a marquee. Baron Dunboyne died in 1899, aged 60 and with no male heir the title passed to his brother, Robert Butler. Marion Dunboyne lived on at Greendale and continued the annual school outings.



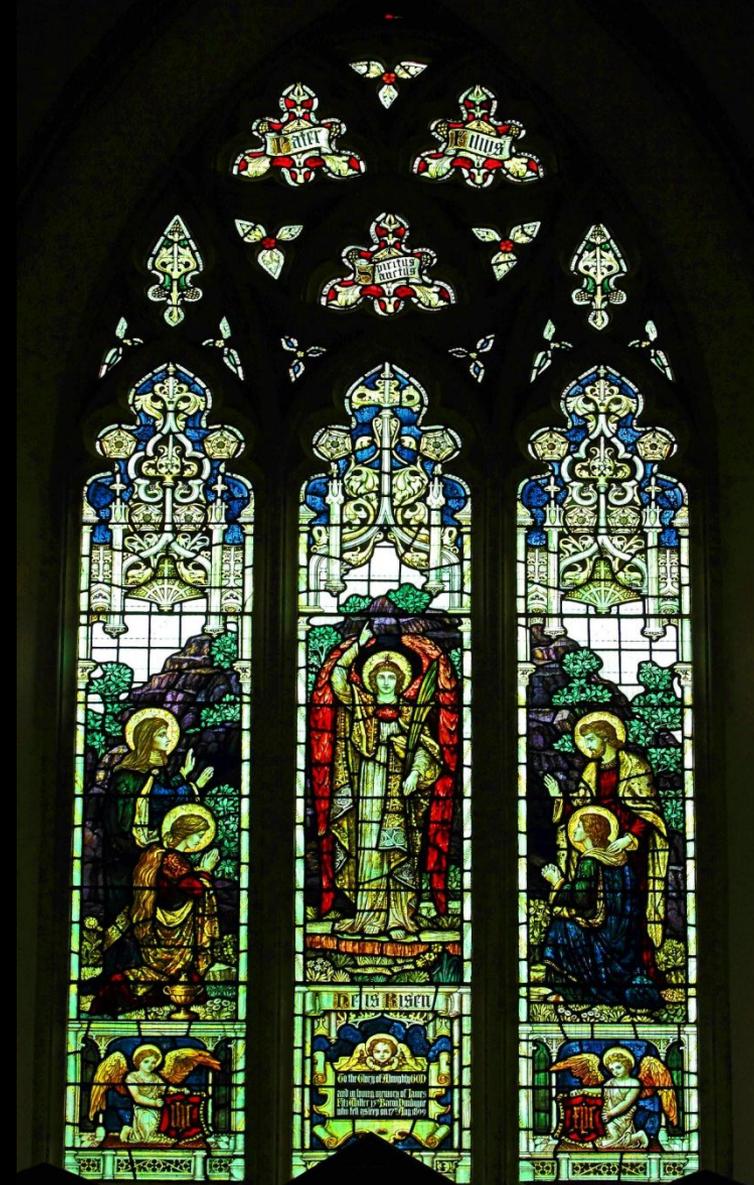
The coat of arms of the first baron

Marion Dunboyne's Legacies

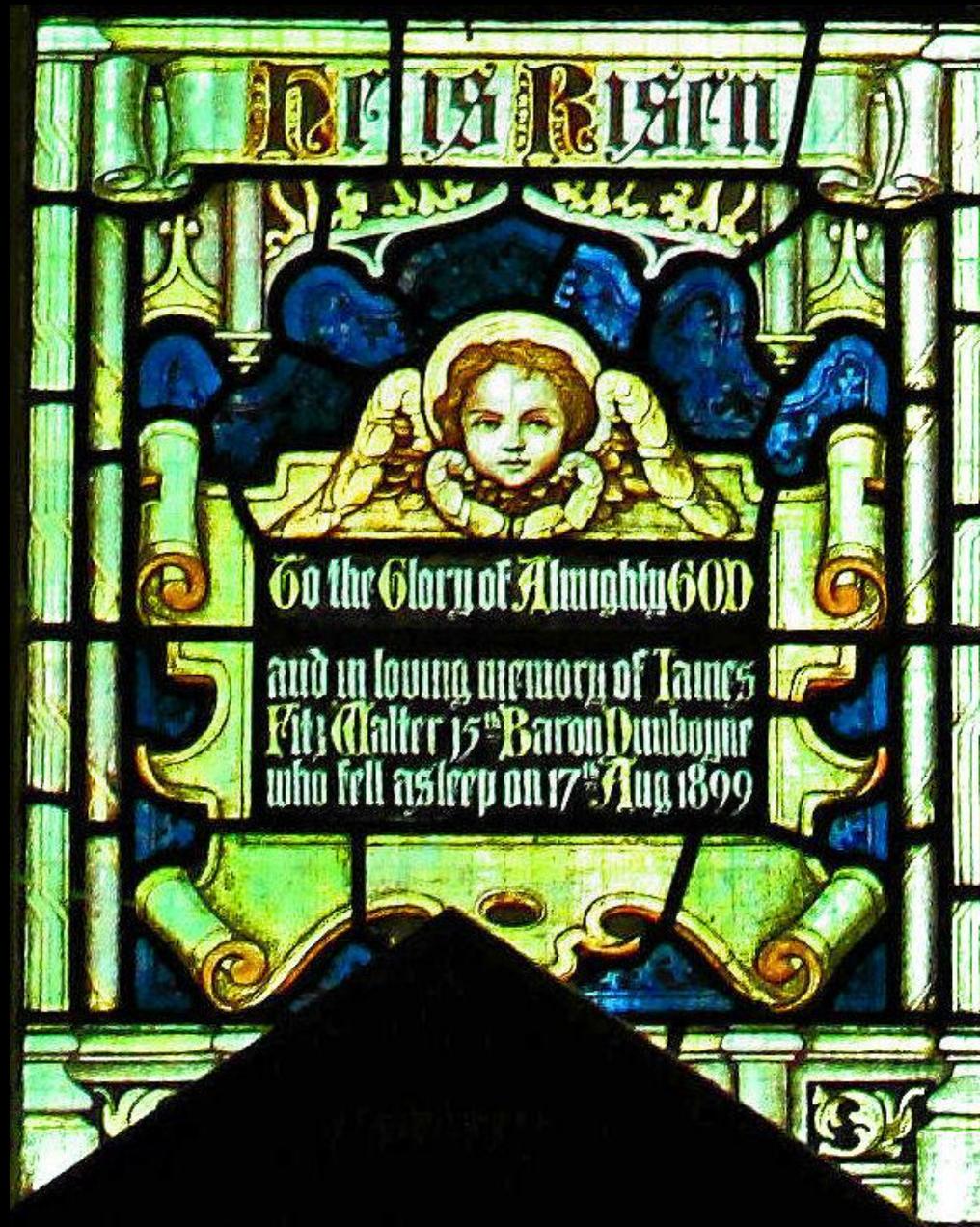
Marion went on to pay for the installation of a new east window in the church as a memorial to her husband. It still exists intact today. She also had the village hall built which is in current use and bears a memorial tablet dated December 1909. Although she continued to reside at Greendale she also resided in Exmouth. Both the 1901 and 1911 censuses show her living there as head of the household with a number of servants. She died on 17th June 1919.



The Baron Dunboyne Memorial Window



The Memorial Section



An Epitaph for Marianne

A quote from Ursula Brighthouse's book
"Woodbury – A View From the Beacon"

"It was not just farming methods that set Salterton apart from Woodbury. It was the vision of a frail woman with a joyous spirit who did not even live in the parish."

The rising tide of poverty had engulfed Salterton to a greater extent than the rest of the parish and it was the wretchedness of the people, particularly the children, and the utter neglect of the place that appealed to Marianne Pidsley's loving heart. Without a family of her own and with a great deal to give she took Salterton under her wing and adopted it as her family: It is probably true to say that she needed them as much as they needed her."

Miss Pidsley's approach to charitable works seems to have been markedly different from most of her contemporaries who were apt to scatter largesse ostentatiously about the place and lace their gifts with pious conditions about fearing God and keeping sober. Genuinely deeply religious, she was no humbug and her own life was simple and practical. Though not physically strong, she was filled with an infectious enthusiasm which swept all obstacles before her."