

## **Background information**

This History of Bownham Park was put together by Martin Clements when he was Association Secretary some years ago. (Probably during 1980s)

The information was based on a school project undertaken by David Barker. (Graham Barker senior still lives here). Martin used David's handwritten school project as a basis, typed it up and added a few more details to make it more up to date. This was offered to residents who were interested. It has remained dormant on Martin's hard drive until now when he offered it as a contribution to the website.

A few years after Martin's compilation Stan Newey (founder member of BPRRA and at least two times Association Secretary) did his own History of Bownham Park. Stan concentrated mostly on the post Buchanan era (Buchanan being a developer), corrected a few errors from the previous version and added more chapters. It is Stan Newey's history of Bownham Park that is offered to new residents as a small booklet when they move in.

I did wonder about photographs and I'm told by Stanley that he thinks there was a dispute between school children - David Barker and another girl (name uncertain) who lived on the estate at the time. She said he (David) stole the pictures from an album she lent to him - he said he only used copies! The result being that Martin wasn't able to include photographs.

**Judy Kelsey 2009**

## **History of Bownham Park Compiled by Martin Clements and based round a school project by David Barker**

### **1714 up to 1984**

#### **Chapter One**

##### **1714 - 1732**

Originally Bownham Park was a mixture of grazing land and pasture. It was owned by two different people, a Miss Elizabeth Butt of Minchinhampton and a Daniell Webb of Stroud. The land came into both the Parishes of Minchinhampton and Rodborough.

In the year of 1714, a man named John Barnfield, the eldest son of a Minchinhampton clothier, bought three acres of land from Miss. Butt. This land was to be used for pasture land for sheep. However, he found a more suitable piece of land elsewhere and so he sold the land for £38 to a Mr. & Mrs. Daniells. The Daniell's then gave the land to their son Thomas, a carrier travelling between Rodborough and London.

It was probably the Daniells who built the 'Road House'. It was possibly only a stable initially with an adjoining inn, as the road from Stroud passed nearby (the valley road was not in existence at that time).

In 1724, Thomas Daniells bought five and a half acres of land next to the original purchase from a Daniell Webb of Stroud. The indentures relating to the sale mention a gate on the border of his new land belonging to a Samuel Sheppard. This gate for some unknown reason was called the 'Nailsworth Gate'.

Later on in 1732, Thomas Daniells married Miss Deborah Day also of Minchinhampton. By this marriage, Daniells received £500 from Miss Days' family. In the same year, he bought some land at Box from a John Harborough and later on again that year he purchased yet a further parcel of land at Box. By this time, he was very wealthy and settled down in Minchinhampton.

But what about the land at Rodborough? Sadly there is little information available about the period between 1732 and 1782.

A document exists referring to purchases of the land mentioned above plus two other documents referring to the next owner of the land at Rodborough.

## Chapter Two

1732 - 1800

In the year 1750, a mercer named James Winchcombe (who owned all of Stratford Park) was living in Stroud. It was either this man or his brother, also named James Winchcombe, who bought Bownham Park and built the first mansion house there.

The first James Winchcombe died in 1761, aged 67 and his brother lived in the house for the next few years. Although his brother had been a mercer and he himself was a clothier, in the year 1777 he borrowed £1,000 from John Colbourne of Stroud. Around 1780, James Winchcombe died leaving the estate to his 'famous to be' nephew, Nathaniel Winchcombe.

At that time Nathaniel Winchcombe was 23. In 1782, he married Miss Mary Packer of Painswick, gaining £500 in the process. In partnership with John Hawker, a scarlet dyer, Nathaniel Winchcombe gradually collected and bought more land to add to that which he had inherited.

Finally Nathaniel Winchcombe and John Hawker produced a document in 1782 which contained a summary of everything that he owned. This statement was called a Trinity Term and contained the following :-

Nathaniel Winchcombe and John Hawker, owners of twelve messuages, thirty three cottages, one fulling mill, one water corn mill, one dye house, two matt houses, two barns, two stables, thirty gardens, fifteen orchards, 150 acres of land, 80 acres of meadow, 130 acres of pasture for all manner of cattle, with properties in the parishes of Stroud, Painswick, Rodborough, Minchinhampton and Frampton on Severn.

Winchcombe also had the task of unravelling all the petty crime in the neighbourhood; cases of assault and threatened murder, a man in unlawful possession of 'two guns and two dogs called pointers', the selling of unlicensed beer etc. Bownham Estate at that time was said to have 'An estimated sum of 48 acres plus all the tenant cottages and all the aforementioned mills'.

Either feeling that Bownham was too far from Stroud or that he just did not like it, Nathaniel Winchcombe sold Bownham Estate in 1785. The title then passed to another family - The Peach's.

## Chapter Three

1801 - 1821

After selling Bownham, Winchcombe moved to Stratford House near Stroud. In 1801, he changed his name to Clifford, by Royal Licence, for they were a wealthy family and the Winchcombe family arms already contained those of the Clifford family, since Cliffords death at 60. Nathaniel Winchcombe had however sold the Bownham Estate to the Peach's. William Peach came from Rooksmoor and he purchased Bownham for £3,500.

When William Cainsford Peach died, he left his wife the property. Julia Maria Peach was at that time living at Bradley in Somerset. His Brother-in-Law, Thomas Cooper, received all the income from the tenant cottages. His son, Nathaniel, inherited the estate when he reached twenty-one. Maria Peach lived in Bownham until her son was twenty-one, then moved back to Bradley, leaving Nathaniel in charge. At that time the estate was valued at £2,060/17/6. The Bownham Estate had only a small income compared to that from the other Peachestates, yet Nathaniel decided to live there.

During this period there was considerable correspondance between Nathaniel Peach and a Mr. Barnard about agreements and general advice. It seems that Julia Peach had another son, he being a lieutenant in His Majesties 8th. Regiment of Light Dragoons.

When Nathaniel died, it seems that a few members of his family lived in the house until 1813 when it was again sold.

The whole property was sold to John Clerk of Southampton for £1,298. It would appear that some of the land had been sold off to a Mr. Tanner, a land owner near to the Bownam Estate. It was from a release of this sale that a map was drawn of the estate. This map was dated 1813, and stated that a Mr. Baylis had purchased his tenant cottage. Also in this document were certain privileges and rights of land belonging to a Mr. Samuel Tanner. This land transfer was later disputed by Mr. John Clerk.

During 1814, no less than 14 legal documents were produced making claims on the various parts of Bownham, all of them concerning Mr. John Clerk. There were also arguments about the turnpike road around the Park. Another document mentions that Samuel Tanner lived in Beech Cottage, which still exists today. These arguments continued to until 1821 when the property was again sold.

## Chapter Four

1821 - 1859

In 1821, John Clerk sold Bownham Estate to a Mr. George Strachey of Wimpole, Middlesex for the sum of £5,825.

After all the arguments between John Clerk and Samuel Tanner, the latter decided to sell all of his land, consisting of two areas: 'Bear Ground' (because the Bear Inn was nearby) and 'Home Close' so called because that was the home of Tanner. These lands were sold for £900.

George Strachey pulled down the old house and erected a new mansion. This was built between 1839 and 1849. It was in 1849 that George Strachey died, leaving the Bownham Estate to his sister Harriet Stracey of Bognor in Sussex.

Harriet Strachey, either loved her nephew, Leonard Marquis Strachey, very much or he exerted a considerable influence over her, for, little by little, the whole of the Bownham Estate was transferred to him. Firstly, in 1853, Gravel Hill House, the Road House, Home Close, Beech Cottage and the Bear Ground were conveyed to him. Then in 1854, The House itself and the rest of Bownham was made his.

For some reason or other, Leonard Stracey borrowed £4,000 during 1854 but failed to pay it back within the agreed period of time. The lender of the money was a Mr. Henry Denton who took possession of the Estate and allowed a Miss. Lydia Bann Butt of Arle Villa, Cheltenham to use it. A local Justice of the Peace, Thomas Lancaster, was also a frequent visitor to the House. It seems that the money Henry Denton loaned to Strachey was obtained or borrowed from Miss. Butt and Lancaster.

Either Thomas Lancaster fell in love with the Bownham Estate or he just wanted a respectable home, but in 1859, the new Bownham Park House, as it was called by that time, and the Estate were bought by Thomas Lancaster for £7,250.

## Chapter Five

1859 - 1893

Thomas Lancaster seems to have lived in peace at Bownham, for no legal documents appear during his ownership. He had the East Lodge built in 1862, bearing a plaque with this date.

The only document, about Lancaster, was written in 1891, when he died. It only gives however details of land bought and sold by him. Below is a transcript:

" I, William Cox of Rodborough in the County of Gloucester, Gardener of the late Thomas Lancaster, do solemnly swear and sincerely declare the following:-

*1. I have lived in the neighbourhood of Bownham House, Rodborough aforesaid for 32 years last past and was in service of the late Mr. Thomas Lancaster of Bownham House aforesaid from the year 1861 down to the date of his death which happened in November 1891 and am now in the service of Miss Emma Molyneux, niece of the said Thomas Lancaster and owner of the Bownham Estate.*

*2. I remember the said Thomas Lancaster in or about the year 1863, purchasing a small piece of land called "The Cape of Good Hope" situated near Box in Minchinhampton containing 32 perches by estimation and also purchasing two other pieces of land summing up to 32 acres and 31 perches situate at some distance south of the Bownham House Estate separated by common land.*

*3. In the year 1863, the said Thomas Lancaster allowed the said piece of land "Cape of Good Hope" to become part of Minchinhampton Common and in consideration of which was allowed to enclose a said part of the common outside the Lodge gates containing 16 perches or thereabouts, the said land being shewn by posts and chains.*

*4. In the year 1865, Thomas Lancaster allowed the other said piece of land of 7 acres and 31 perches to be part of the said common and in consideration, allowed to enclose five and one half acres or thereabouts on the south-east of the Lodge to Bownham House and is now bounded by a stone wall."*

So by this means, Thomas Lancaster had cunningly enlarged Bownham Estate. When he died in 1891, the person who wrote the will of Lancaster states that, 'The said Thomas Lancaster died seized or otherwise possessed .....

The will also states that Bownham Park Estate was left to Miss Emma Molyneux, niece to the departed. Miss Molyneux erected a school in Burleigh, (the closest village to Bownham) which to this day carries a plaque to the memory

of her uncle. Miss Molyneux did not live in Bownham Park House perhaps because she did not wish to be reminded of her uncle who died insane.

In 1893 she put the house up for sale.

## Chapter Six

1893 - 1955

□ Meanwhile a young Englishman had been making a fortune in Valporiso. When he returned to England, he did not find his home in Kensington to his liking, so he toured England on a tandem with his wife, looking for a house. One day, when he was cycling over Minchinhampton Common, he saw a young man (who was later to become Sir Stanley Marling) and asked him if there was an estate for sale anywhere to which the young man responded, pointing out Bownham Park Estate. Richard Owen Paddison Paddison, bought Bownham Estate in 1895. He was made head of the RSPCA around 1915. He then undertook the task of converting the whole country to humane slaughtering and in this he was very successful.

This famous man then settled down in Bownham. He kept Spanish cattle, Irish sheep and other odd livestock but his main love was horses and dogs. He converted one of the old stables into a special gas chamber for the slaughter of animals and people from all around would come to have their dogs put down at Bownham. He also built many glass houses. Paddison also built a magnificent billiard room with a fine glass roof and balustrades.

In one corner of the Bownham Estate he erected a windmill which drove a pump to feed water to Bownham house. This water was also heated to provide warmth and heat to the House. Paddison also had a special stable and garage built at the edge of the garden.

Photography was also one of his hobbies and some of his photographs are held by a local resident Mr. Dadswell. In his album is a photograph of the wedding reception of the Ambassador of Spain being held at Bownham House. Bownham was at that time supposed to be haunted and one of Paddisons photographs showed a ghost drifting up the main stairs. The fun came to an end however in 1939 when Richard Owen P. Paddison died. The house remained in the family until 1949.

From then onwards the Bownham Estate gradually decayed. Like so many other old houses, the house was bought by Barnwoods, an asylum firm, but in 1950 they were prevented from keeping insane people in the house so they let it to the SSAFA who used it as a school. They changed the House a great deal but the cost of upkeep was too great so they left.

Barnwoods then applied for building permission but this was turned down by the local council. At that time the house was in a very sorry state. It had been standing empty for some time, the lead had been stolen from the roof and many of the windows and glasshouses had been broken.

## Chapter Seven 1955 - Present

In 1955, A.E. Chamberlains Ltd. bought the Bownham Estate and housed Polish refugees in the house itself. But the drainage was very bad and so Chamberlains applied for building permission three or four times, each time the application being refused. In 1960, a Mr. Thomas Cooper applied for building permission to which the Council agreed and a few houses were built. At the same time, a school for educationally sub-normal children was built nearby.

As more and more houses were built, a new drainage system was required. Half the cost was subscribed by the residents and the other half provided by the local Council. Plans were made for Bownham House to be converted into flats. The company at that time pulled down a few walls and undermined a space here and there. Unfortunately the company went into bankruptcy.

J.A. Venn's then bought Bownham Park and asked the Council for permission to build an estate on the land. Permission was granted. Bownham Park House by this time was in a real state and had to be pulled down. This operation was carried out by a contractor called Dart.

Some of the trees were sold, fetching a high price but the majority were protected under a tree preservation order. In 1970, a Mr. Buchanan arrived to develop the site and the Bownham Park as we know it today came into being. Bownham Park being built in three separate phases.

The only buildings remaining that were part of the original house are, the Brew House (Nupend and Cedar Cottages), the Clock House, the stables (Horseshoes) and the Lodge (Fairfax Lodge).

In 1971, a gold half sovereign was discovered in the grounds of the Park plus two dated stones, one 1742 and the other 1904. Even recently, in 1984, when the land between the Hollies and the Coppice was being cleared, several very rusty pistol parts were found, hidden in the trunk of one of the trees. (Were these hidden by a highwayman?)

Bownham Park is still an estate, although very different from that in 1714. Hardly any books mention Bownham, only some very old and brittle parchment documents have the story.