

SOME SNIPPETS ABOUT PILTON FROM THE NORTH DEVON JOURNAL

[extracts made by Reginald Norman
plus additional notes by Margaret Reed]

26th September 1827 - **Broadgate House** to let with furniture and **Broadgate Villa**, house nearly finished. Apply Mr. Scott, Longstone.

29th June, 1827 - To be sold - a **handsome well-built vessel** now on the stocks and ready to be launched. Calculated for either a smack or a schooner. Burthen by Register 58 tons, will carry 75 tons. For view and further particulars apply Mr Chappell, ship builder, Pilton.

6th July 1827 - to be sold **Fast sailing yacht GAZELLE** 18 ton burthen, copper fastened, 3 years old, all standing and running rigging @ Pilton Quay, 2 cabins, 8 berths. Apply James Payne, Bell Inn, Barnstaple.

18th April 1850 - To let - genteel house on the rise of Pilton Hill occupied lately by Mrs. Flexman, facing Pilton House. Large pew in Pilton Church belonging to the house. Apply William Flexman, surgeon, South Molton. **[33 Pilton Street]**
27th July 1922 - Sale of 33 Pilton Street by order of Miss Gribble.

1852 - Accident at **Pilton Workhouse** - an inmate - Elizabeth Lakeman, died after upsetting a pot of boiling water over herself.

1852 - **Pilton Revel** was held on 27th & 28th July [feast of St. James]. The attractions at the annual wake included a wrestling match.

1853 - [**re Sanitation in Pilton following cholera outbreak**] 357 houses in Pilton, 301 let at rents of less than £10 p.a. Of 163 houses surveyed in Pilton, only 25 drained to the common sewer, 4 to the river and 112 having no drains or connections between privies and cesspits and the common sewer.

February 1853 - The festival of their patron **Bishop Blaize** was observed by the **woolcombers of Pilton**. Dinner was provided at The Ring of Bells. Mr. Joseph Laramy, one of the principal wool merchants in the neighbourhood being in the chair.

23rd February 1854 - at **Bull Hill House**, death of Hannah Hiern aged 85, relict of Rev. Charles Hiern, rector of Stoke Rivers.

15th March 1855 - To let - **Bull Hill House**, for many years past occupied by Mrs. Hiern, deceased. Dining Room, Drawing Room, five good bedrooms, attics, kitchen, back kitchen, pantry, larder, spacious underground cellars, good supply of water, apply Mrs. Dalling, coal cellars, Pilton.

29th June 1854 - **Blakewell Mill**. J.B. Rock, having erected a new bone mill, offers bone dust and will grind bones at a moderate price.

November 1865 - To let - **Blakewell Mills** - 3 pair of stones, overshot wheel, also another pair driven by a portable steam engine if need arises. Also Bone Mill adjoining worked by water power.

1876 - Court case in Barnstaple. Thomas Woollacott of Pilton charged with wilfully breaking several windows at **the Unicorn** to the amount of 4 shillings. The wife of the landlord, Mrs. Vicary, proved the case.

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13th January 1859 - Inquest at **Windsor Hotel, Bradiford** on the death of John Steward. He was returning from Pilton towards his house on Sunday 1st January between 10 and 11 o'clock and fell near Underminnow. The coroner, Inledon Bencraft, suggested that public should be placed where the accident occurred, as well as at Bradiford.

May 1862 - Death of **Henry Desborough** at Pilton on 11th May, Secretary of the Atlas Fire & Life Insurance Company - he took a prominent part in founding the London Fire Engine Brigade. Retired in 1859.

1864 - **Pilton House** purchased from Sir William Fraser by William Williams of Tregallow, Cornwall. [Sir William Fraser won a seat in Parliament as MP for Barnstaple in 1852, but was afterwards unseated when a public inquiry found him guilty of gaining his seat by bribery. As a result he sold Pilton House and left the district]

14th January 1869 - Sale of **The Tan Yard** and other premises and properties relating to **Pilton Glove Works**, including **Ladywell & Lake Cottages**. Leasehold - 44 years unexpired.

29th June 1871 - **North Devon Herald** - **Bradiford Revel** will take place on Monday 10th July 1871 in a field near Bradiford. Wrestling will commence at 2 pm, when the sum of £4 will be divided among the best players. All good players will receive encouragement.

25th July 1878 - So much as is left of the ancient **Revel of Pilton** was celebrated on Monday last, but the affair passed off very tamely. The people quietly dispersed when the public houses closed, but one individual who had been distinguishing himself as an athlete, the notorious William Blackmore alias Wild Rabbit, managed to come into collision with the police before he got home, with the result that on the following morning he was allowed three months to ruminate in solitude upon the wisdom of assaulting the police.

13th January 1886 - Death of Lt. **Col. William Harding** aged 92. He was the third son of Robert Harding & Dionysia, daughter of the late Sir Bouchier Wrey, whom he married in 1780. William Harding was born in 1792 and succeeded his brother at Upcott in 1886. He was a lieutenant and ensign in the Peninsula War, and fought in most of the battles of 1812-13. Afterwards he

joined the North Devon Militia, where he was a Colonel. Upcott goes to Mr. Goldie Harding of Dawlish. [The Triumphal Arch in the Pilland valley was built by Col. Harding to commemorate his exploits when fighting in Spain in the Peninsula War.]

1887 - To let, garden, premises and front shop, formerly the **Unicorn Inn**, now in the possession of Williams and Balman, who carried on businesses of butcher and dairyman.

1898 - Sale of **Windsor Hotel, Bradiford**, also grocer's shop adjoining occupied by Sergeant Major Rice - bought by Starkey, Knight & Ford, brewers, for £705.

14th September 1899 - Sale of **18 & 19 Pilton Street**:-

Lot 1 - No:18 - Dwelling house, stable, loft & garden in rear let to Mr. J. N. Hancock @ £14 p.a.

Lot 2 - No:19 - dwelling house, workshop and garden let @ £18 p.a.

3rd September 1903 - **Rainbow & Co., bakers, Pilton** have patented a series of machines to be exhibited at a Bakers' Exhibition in London. They are a dough divider, a dough mixing machine, cake mixing machine, patent weigher and a flour sifting machine. The dough divider is already in use in America and South Africa, Ireland and Great Britain. A smaller machine will soon be on sale to meet the needs of smaller bakers. The machine is being produced by an American firm acting as an agent. The expanding business has resulted in the purchase of **23 Pilton Street**, which has been rebuilt to house the enterprise, including a smithy and carpenters shop.

1904 - Sale of **Pilton House** with 13 acres to Mr. Tom Sanders, auctioneer at £4,000. This included the kennels, 2 cottages for nicorn coachman and gardener etc. [at River View, Higher Raleigh Road]. Nos:65 to 68 The Rock sold to Mrs Mary Ashton of Littabourne for £280, whilst No:**82 Pilton Street**, where a grocery business was carried on and 7 cottages known as **Rendell's**

Cottages, sold to Mr. James Trace for £300. NO:81 and a freehold cottage adjoining were withdrawn.

27th July 1905 - **A nuisance at Bradiford** The Sanitary Committee met regarding a nuisance arising by reason of the sewage not being carried away in the stream at Bradiford. A report to estimate the cost of carrying it to a point below where the mill leat enters the stream. It was further resolved that an offer of Mr. John Hancock to flush and cleanse the stream and keep it clean of sewage during the summer for the payment of £1 be accepted. Also notice to be served on owners and tenants of properties in Bradiford re neglect in the use of earth closets and improper use thereof.

31st May 1906 - Part of the ground outside **Top Almshouses, Pilton** to be fenced, and the rest thrown into the highway at the head of Pilton Street. [This is the origin of the little garden there, not shown in earlier photographs]

31st May, 1906 - **Disposal of Pilton Street sewage** - It is proposed that it should be piped to Pathfields between Pilton Quay and Bradiford in 9" pipes and irrigated between April and October only.

16th August 1906 - death of John Davy Thomas, aged 83 on 25th July. He kept the **Post Office at 27 Pilton Street** for nearly 30 years. His estate to be sold as follows:-

Lot 1 - Medina House - in occupation of Dr. Manning at a rental of £26 p.a.

Lot 2 - 2 substantially built freehold private residences, stable, coach houses known as Nos. 1 & 2 Bull Hill. -

No:1 contains oak raftered hall, oak dining room, etc. in occupation of Mr. Crook @ £19 p.a.

No:2 contains entrance lobby, drawing room, etc. now in the occupation of Mr. John Thomas @ £19 p.a.

Strone built and slated coach house and loose box now in the occupation of Dr.Manning and used as two horse boxes at a rental of £5.10s. p.a.

Lot 3 - Dwelling house & business known as 27 Pilton Street - late in the occupation of Mr. John Davy Thomas

Lot 4 - All those stone built and slated dwelling houses Nos: 104 and 105 Pilton Street -held on a lease expiring at Lady Day 1921, ground rent £6.12 etc. in occupation of Mrs. Tanner and Mr. Laphorne at a rental of £20 p.a.

Lot 5 - No:77 Pilton Street - now in the occupation of Frederick Alfred Reed at £13 p.a.

Lot 6 - Nos: 50, 51 & 52 Rock Cottages, Pilton in occupation of Blake, Newcombe & Thomas @ £29. 0s. 8d p.a.

Lot 7 - Nos: 1 to 4 Priory Court - in occupation of Tossell & others @ £19. 4s. p.a.

Lot 8 - Nos: 19 & 20 Priory Gardens - occupied by Norman and Darch @ £17. 6s. 8d. p.a.

Lot 9 - Nos: 6 & 7 Priory Gardens - occupied by Mogridge & Tamlyn @ £17. 2s. 4d. p.a.

Lot 10 - Nos: 14 & 15 Ladywell - occupied by Milton & Baker @ £17. 11s. p.a.

Lot 11 - Nos: 11 to 13 Ladywell - occupied by Lethaby & others @ £15. 12s. p.a.

To view apply Mr. John Thomas, Bull Hill.

10TH November 1910 - 'Bells at Pilton rang in honour of Sir Vezey & Lady Strong - new Lord and Lady Mayoress of London - Lady Strong was a Miss Hartnoll of Pilton.'

So, what is the story of Miss Hartnoll of Pilton?

[1] Her great-grandfather was Thomas Hartnoll of Pilton, carpenter, born in 1775

[2] His son, Thomas Hartnoll of Pilton, was also a carpenter, born in July 1813.

[3] After six children born in Pilton between 1835 and 1848, Thomas and his wife Elizabeth moved to London c.1850, where his son James was born in 1853 in Newington

[4] James married in 1874 Elizabeth Elliot Hamblen in Chelsea, and became a wealthy property owner. There are Hartnoll blocks of flats all over central and south London, most of them with Devon-associated names. [see Google - James Hartnoll]

[5] James and Elizabeth had a son and two daughters, one of whom was Elizabeth Mary 'Lillie' Hartnoll, born 1875.

[6] Elizabeth 'Lillie' married Lord Thomas Vezey Strong in 1901.

[7] He became Lord Mayor of London in 1910.

24th October 1912 - **Weathercock on Pilton Church tower** taken down for examination. Was engraved with the message that it was made by J. Moon, 76 High Street, Barnstaple in 1845 and erected by order of W.B.Fisher and J. Laramy, Churchwardens.

17th October 1915 - Death of **William Thomas of the Waverley Hotel, Barnstaple**. Mr. Thomas was 66, son of John Davey Thomas. William was schoolmaster at Shirwell School, also at Swimbridge and Heanton, being the first master of the Board School at Heanton. He married Miss Pickard of Glebe Farm, Shirwell and later acquired the restaurant business of William Gaydon in Joy Street. In 1890 he rebuilt the block of premises now known as the Waverley Hotel & Restaurant. The business is carried on by William and Charles, his two sons.

18th July, 1918 - Sale of properties of Messrs. E. Petter & Son, brewers including the Anchor Brewery, ten public houses and other properties to close an estate [the following relate to Pilton]

Lot 19 - A block of 7 freehold cottages **Nos: 1 to 4 Reform Street & 4 to 6 Pilton Quay**, including a laundry let for £58, sold to Sidney Allen for £325.

Lot 20 - **Freehold malthouse** at Pilton Quay sold to Garnish & Lemon for £246. [now Pilton Auction premises]

11th August 1921 - Sale of **Upcott Estate**, Pilton by order of Sir Frederick Law Williams:-

Lot 1 - Upcott Mansion - for many years the home of Sir Ernest Soares, M.P. for Barnstaple, now occupied by Mr. Maxwell Thornton. NO BIDS.

Lot 2 - Pilland House - formerly occupied by Lady Williams, now occupied by Mrs. Pitfield. Withdrawn at £3,000, but later sold to J.B.Chamings of West Mead, Braunton.

Lot 3 - Beara - 51 acres 29 perches occupied by J. Brown and R. Isaac. Timber £110. Sold to Mr. Mc Craig at £3,050.

Lot 4 - Cladavin - 44 acres 1 rod 35 perches occupied by E. Isaac. Timber £90. Sold to J. B. Chamings, Braunton.

Lot 5 - Two fields called **The Gribbles** with sheds containing 25 acres 3 rods 17 perches occupied by R. Isaac. Timber £49. Sold to the tenant for £1450.

Lot 6 - Two fields near Ashford 8 acres 1 rod 3 perches occupied by R. Williams. Sold for £500 to the tenant.

Lot 7 - Three fields opposite Upcott Lodge 31 acres 3 rods 17 perches occupied by W. Alford. Timber £134. Sold to P. May for £1150.

Lot 8 - Beacon Close at the back of Upcott containing 10 acres 38 perches occupied by the representatives of the late W.J.May. Timber £5.10s. Sold to Mr. Cooper, Portsmouth Arms for £650.

Lot 9 - Arable field approx. 7 acres occupied by R. Williams. Timber £5. Sold to Mr. Cooper for £410.

Lot 10 - Two fields behind Upcott approximately 4 acres occupied by J. Ashton. Timber £2. Sold to the tenant for £400.

12th October 1922 - Sale of bungalow in **Northfield Lane** now occupied by F.H.Parsons [water by pump]. 2acres 1 rod 6 perches. [Charlie Parsons was born here.]

1st June 1923 - Death of Thomas Hogg aged 87 at **92 Pilton Street**. Born at Shirwell, he held the Kings Arms at Hartland. 5th July 1923 - Sale to close his estate:-

Lot 1 - 93 Pilton Street - sold to Sidney Allen @ £225

Lot 2 - 74 The Rock - sold to Sidney Allen @ £80

Lot 3 - 72 & 73 The Rock - sold to Mr. Pedler @ £70

A block of cottages at Raleigh was sold prior to the auction.

1937 - letter from Mr. Chamings of **Pilton Abbey** re passages under the house which he offers as air raid shelters.

30th December 1937 - death of John Kidwell of **36 Pilton Street** aged 89, native of Marwood employed by Sir Arthur Chichester of Shirwell for 22 years as a carter. He then worked as a Barnstaple Town Council gardener for 30 years, retiring in 1931. His uncle, the late James Kidwell laid out Pilton Park, retiring in 1908, when John became park-keeper there. On John's retirement in 1931, his son Frank Kidwell took over his post, making three generations in Pilton Park. [Frank Kidwell also lived at 36 Pilton Street.]