

SEYNCKLEY

FROM ABBESS TO ARTIST

Neville Crawford



SEYNCKLEY, 1989

SEYNCKLEY

The stone manor house, situated in a commanding position at Amberley, between Stroud and Nailsworth, stands on the slopes of a steep sided valley which penetrates the Gloucestershire Cotswolds. Even today, although there has been some development in the district, the outlook is one of great beauty, especially looking across to the hanging beech woods at Atcombe.

The original name of Sentodleag is recorded in an 8th century Anglo-Saxon charter. In a second document of 896 the name changes to Sengetleage and to Sengedleah, in a grant of land by King Ethelbald to the Church in Worcester.¹ There is a difference of opinion regarding the exact meaning of the Anglo-Saxon name but a majority seem to favour 'burnt clearing' or 'lea'. Was it a coincidence that just north of Seynckley, above the sunken lane formerly leading down to Little Britain Farm, was a Roman brickyard which naturally would have had a kiln? Here were baked roof tiles, bricks and tesserae for the important villa at Woodchester to which the lane led from Cirencester. Even today large fragments of tile and brick can be found at the brickyard site.²

THE EARLY HOME

When, in spite of Papal prohibition, William 1st married Matilda of Flanders, he decided as a penance to build two abbeys at Caen in Normandy, one each for nuns and monks. The abbey that interests us most, L'Abbaye aux Dames, also called Holy Trinity, was completed in 1066; a few years later, in 1082, the king and queen granted the nuns four English manors, one of them being Minchinhampton. Situated north-west of the settlement and endowed with eight hides of land on which the Abbess kept 1,700 sheep, it was under the control of a steward.³ The Manor had been in the possession of Countess Goda, sister of Edward the Confessor, but William confiscated most property and it was therefore in his hands to dispose of how he wished.

Under Minchinhampton were twelve lesser manors, some of which were purchased in the early 1200s, paying rent and providing ploughing, reaping and carrying services, of which the freeman of the six most important had to render special serjeanty or personal service to the Abbess of Caen. This involved journeying to Southampton twice a year escorting the Abbey steward with bacon and cheese and later the cash profits of the manors, the three more substantial freemen being allowed to travel on horseback. The serjeant from Seynckley was one of the other three who had to trudge all the way on foot; at the beginning of the 1300s Sir Miles de Rodborough of Seynckley was mentioned in connection with the journey. Previous to this the serjeanty service had been suspended due to Edward I's wars with France but these ended in 1303 and the service had to be resumed. Each of the serjeants had to come to the rendezvous with a bacon, or possibly a bean bag which had to be strong enough to carry the vast number of silver pennies. It has been suggested that a horse carried two bags each containing 2,400 coins, worth ten pounds.

The travelling expenses of the group were met by the seneschal on the outward journey but coming back the allowance for inns and other needs was 8d each and no more. This does not appear much as it is doubtful whether the journey could take less than three days. If a horse died on the outward journey there was an allowance of ten shillings but nothing if it died on the way back!⁴

Among those allowed to travel to Southampton on horseback were members of the Spillman family whose name is recalled today by a group of roads above the Bath road at Rodborough. Luckily they have left a series of deeds known as the Spillman Cartulary; an early example dated July 1221 reads:

To all faithful Christians, to whom these presents come, I, Joanna, humble Abbess and the Convent of the Holy Trinity of Caen, salutations. Be it known to all we have granted and given to John Spileman the whole of our land of Sanctleha, namely half a virgate ... the said John and his heirs providing a lamp to burn in the Chapel of St. Mary of Hampton night by night and at every celebration of the mass ... this year of grace MCCXXI.⁵

A virgate varied in area but half would be approximately 14 acres. So here we have recorded for the first time a tenant of Seynckley but do not know whether he did any building on the land. Previously, in about 1200, a survey of Minchinhampton manors had mentioned land at Seynckley and that a three year rotation was followed. There was also a meadow where expressly stated as being the Abbess's land for her own profit.⁶

THE SEYNCKLEY TENANTS

Other deeds follow and one of 28 January 1238 is of especial interest as one of the witnesses is Elias de Seynckley, the first mention of the family who were tenants under the Abbess until the turn of the century.⁷ A couple of years later John Spillman acquired a meadow called Hokedemed, which lay below Elias de Seynckley's house.

Elias' son, John, then started to be mentioned and by 1273 the manor was held by him. At the same time it was said that he paid 13d a year for a 3¼ acre clearing, reasonable compared with a figure quoted thirty years later. For the dwelling he occupied he reaped in the autumn and gave a fowl and eggs, too vague to give us any idea of the size of the house.

Evidence of others living at Seynckley was given in 1289 when Agnes de Seynckley, charged with making a fence out of her common wood, asked for an inspection and this was granted. The Minchinhampton Manor's officers were tenacious in safe-guarding the monopoly of the Abbess regarding fuel timber and unless the timber acquired was used specifically for the purpose for which it was demanded, trouble ensued; for example the right of making charcoal was jealously guarded. Any misdemeanours were settled at the Manor court at Minchinhampton which met every three weeks under the steward, or if he could not be present, the bailiff, and the fines collected went to the Abbess. She had in 1269 been granted a weekly market and yearly fair in Minchinhampton; she was already the owner of a gallows and tumbrel.

Returning to the Cartulary, the last mention of John of Seynckley was in 1294 when he offered an excuse for non-attendance at the manorial court. Four years previously William de Seynckley, a forester to the Abbess, had appeared in court for neglecting the forest, but he may not have been related to John.

The final deed noted William de Prestbury, rector, as having given John Spillman 'all lands and holdings in Rodeborne and Buri-Seynckley of houses, gardens, orchards, vineyards, dove-houses', and so on witnessed by Thomas Rodborough of Seynckley, son of Sir Miles. Buri-Seynckley included the lower levels of the valley above the stream.⁸

Mention of Sir Miles de Rodborough de Seynckley returns the history to the beginning of the 1300s as he took over the tenancy of the manor about 1308. Previously he had been steward in Ireland to Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, until the earl died in 1306. Sir Miles also had family interests in South Wales, being Lord of the Manor of Magor, and in 1310 was made a Justice of the Assize. Three years later he was admitted as a knight of the King's household.

He held a virgate and a half of land, about 40 acres, and for this he paid 16s 9d a year, with an additional 22d for 5½ acres he had cleared.⁹ It has been calculated that a freeman living on half a virgate could just manage and that a man with one virgate would live comfortably so Sir Miles would have been fairly wealthy.¹⁰ As a freehold tenant he had the two privileges of house-bote and hay-bote when he was allowed to take wood, mostly beech, from the common land, called the custom wood, to repair respectively his house and his fences. These privileges were valued at 13s 4d per annum.

ARISTOCRATIC MISDEMEANOURS

In 1313 Thomas and Maurice, the eldest sons of Lord Berkeley, together with over forty 'mid Gloucester broods', including Thomas de Rodborough of Seynckley with his brother Hugh, both sons of Sir Miles, Richard and Roger Mayel of Seynckley, Thomas de Rodborough, and several members of the Berkeley family, raided Painswick Park. Here they killed the deer and hunted other game, 'having a glorious hour or two of sport.'¹¹

The owner of the park was Aylmer de Valence, from whom the village of Moreton Valence is named, who was Earl of Pembroke and also related to Edward II. Naturally the Earl complained of this incident and a Committee of Enquiry found them guilty, the king the following year ordering that as many of the raiders as possible should be punished. To make matters worse Thomas and Maurice Berkeley set upon the four county coroners who would have outlawed them for the offence. Thomas and Hugh de Rodborough of Seynckley were fined £80 for the raid, while the other Thomas de Rodborough only had to pay twenty marks (approximately £13). Roger Mayel was outlawed but many obtained pardons from the king due to the fact that they were going to Gascony to fight in his service. As the premier landowners in the area, the raid must have been led by the two Berkeley brothers and it is interesting to note that they invited the Rodboroughs of Seynckley to join them. Soon after Sir Miles died; one source said he was murdered,¹² and was succeeded by his son Thomas, one of those who took part in the raid.

Some years later Edward II defeated a rebellion in the south-east and then, in 1321, marched west where there was another revolt in which the Berkeleys were involved. Reaching Cirencester in December, the king summoned all knights and esquires to assemble there and among those who came, under the Sheriff of Gloucester, were several of the Berkeleys, Thomas Miles and Roger Mayel of Seynckley. While the king was at Cirencester, Roger Mayel slipped away and seized his own home at Seynckley from which, as an outlaw, he had been ousted by the sheriff. Quite where the Mayel's home was in relation to the manor is not known but it is recorded that there were holdings here in the previous century.

The king moved on further west the following year and was unsuccessfully attacked by the Berkeleys, the group including Thomas Miles who afterwards had to forfeit the Seynckley estate.¹³ Thomas later received back his estate but Maurice, 3rd Lord Berkeley, was not so lucky as he was imprisoned in 1322 and died five years later in Wallingford Castle. Hugh Spenser the Elder held the castle during the imprisonment, but Queen Isabella, passing by Berkeley, restored the castle to Thomas, Maurice's eldest son and the senior of the raiders.

In 1327, the year in which Edward II was murdered at Berkeley Castle, Thomas Miles was made Sheriff of Gloucester. This was the most important office in the county and a position he held again in 1330, illustrating how influential the family were in the region. In the same year Thomas had a tax assessment of 2s 6d with his wife Joan being assessed separately at 9d. These figures show the relative importance of Seynckley as John Spillman with a large Rodborough estate was assessed at 4s and John Mautravers, Lord of the

Manor of Woodchester, at 4s.¹⁴

Thomas Miles died in 1334 leaving estate worth £59 13s 8¼d. His heir was Hugh, son of Hugh de Rodborough and a cousin of Thomas, but only aged thirteen, and therefore became a ward of the Crown.

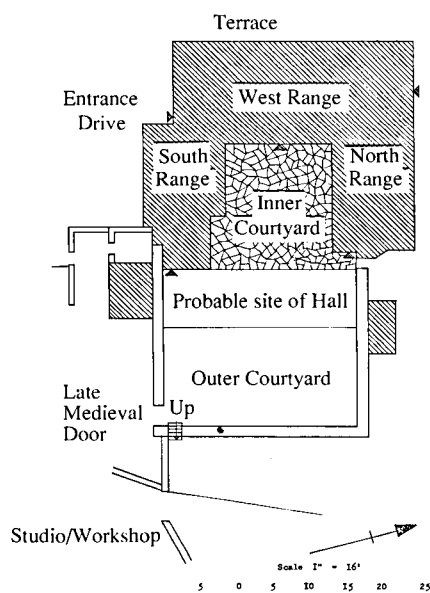
In 1334 an 'Inquisition Post-mortem' was held in Minchinhampton before John de Peyto the Younger, the King's Escheator, on the estate of Thomas Miles with a jury present. The interesting findings on Seynckley are set out in detail, including a house and garden; a newly built dovecote, not stocked, worth 2s a year; 40 acres of land, two parts of which can be sown yearly and when sown worth 3d per acre, totalling 4s, the third part worth nothing because it lies fallow and in common; 3 acres of meadow worth 12d per acre; there is no pasture. 'There is a certain profit worth 3s 4d yearly in the common wood of Minchinhampton from the tenants dwelling there, if they themselves stay, and if they do not dwell there, then it is worth nothing because it cannot be sold or given'. There were seven free tenants who paid 17s 10d a year, at the feasts of the Annunciation and St. Michael, in equal portions (end of March and September respectively). These tenements were held of the Abbess of Caen, all held in socage (free tenure without military service) by the service of paying 19s 7d yearly; three days ploughing a year, worth 9d at 3d a day; carrying the lady's corn in the autumn for one day, this carriage being worth 4d, and doing one bederipe with two men for one day worth 4d (this is reaping service).¹⁵

Also interesting at this date is an item on John Symond who for 2¼ acres at Seynckley, 'above the principal grange, pays 9½d a year and for the dwelling he occupies he reaps in the autumn and gives a fowl and eggs'. Probably he gave the Abbess a hen at Christmas and five eggs at Easter.

AN EARLY DESCRIPTION

The following year, 1335, there is a description of Seynckley Manor in the escheator's report made to Joan de Rodborough, regarding the widow's third part of her late husband's property, the escheator being a collector of revenue from those who had forfeited their estate. This mentions the chief house; a new cattle shed near the gate with chamber and stable adjoining; a house called the Musthouse (the fermenting room or malt-house); the courtyard with the great chamber and these other houses about it; the garden in the angle of the Musthouse and the great chamber and with a hedge on the other sides; the great gate and the dovecotes, and a little pond with an enclosure adjoining 'by the middle of the head as it is bounded.'¹⁶

PLAN OF SEYNCKLEY 1989



By the beginning of the 1300s there was a growing tendency for manorial buildings to be grouped in courtyard complexes, following monastic examples, with detached kitchens due to the fire risk. Read together with the Post-Mortem findings the two reports denote a substantial manor farm which, as indicated by the mention of new buildings, must have been built up by Joan's husband, Thomas, over the previous twenty years.

This large house would have been required to match the status of the occupier as the Rodboroughs of Seynckley, at this time, were one of the forty-seven resident 'gentry' of the county, thirty of whom were knights. The only other families of note in the district were the Rodboroughs of Rodborough and the Bisleys.

Skirmishes in France were now increasing and were later termed, from 1338, the Hundred Years War, resulting in the cutting off at times of rents for the Abbess, though Minchinhampton Manor was not fully confiscated by the king until 1415.

During the war members of the Berkeley family made numerous journeys into France and in 1346 Maurice 3rd's second son, also Maurice, included Hugh de Rodborough in his retinue. Hugh was still at Seynckley and remained there until he died about 1394.

Thomas 3rd possessed a vast number of manors, including Seynckley, obtained through judicious family marriages and numerous purchases. When he married for the second time his wife brought with her still more property. Here name is still recalled by Katherine Lady Berkeley's School which she founded at Wotton-under-Edge in 1384. It was just after this marriage that the Black Death reached the district, about December 1348, and one effect was that the Berkeleys had to hire outside labour for their harvest.

Thomas, as governor of Gascony and Aquitaine, in 1356, was at the battle of Poitiers. Head of the family for 35 years he died in 1361 after having made bequests during his lifetime, which included one less common than usual, requesting five quarters of beans to be distributed yearly amongst his poorer bonded servants.

Thomas's son, Maurice 4th, in 1338 had married Elizabeth, daughter of Hugh Spencer, when both were eight years old and an enquiry in 1368, when there was nominal peace in France, showed that Maurice held a house and one virgate of land at Seynckley from the Abbess by ploughing her land and reaping her corn for one day, carrying it with one cart and attending her manorial court; worth 40s a year.¹⁷ It was reckoned that three or four pairs of oxen should plough 3 acres a day and a tenant ploughman at Minchinhampton had previously been taken to court for only ploughing 1½ acres.

Again in France, Maurice 4th, was himself attending the Black Prince, was wounded and taken prisoner at the Battle of Poitiers, having to pay six thousand nobles, approximately £1080, for his ransom. He was never properly cured of the wounds he received but this did not seem to depress his wife

as in the last year of his illness she had a new gown of cloth 'furred throughout with coney-skins from the kitchen'!

On the death of her husband in 1368, Lady Elizabeth had given to her for dower several manors and 'a messuage and 1 virgate of land in Saynloe worth 42s a year'.¹⁸ Her son, another Thomas, was only 15½ when her husband died so he had to wait until 1373 before inheriting the remaining land, which in the meanwhile came under the Crown. Thomas had already married Margaret, daughter of Lord de Lisle, when she was seven but it was arranged for her to stay with her father until the marriage was consummated four years later. They had three daughters, the eldest being Elizabeth.

Thomas 4th, as a warden of the Welsh marches, spent time harrying Owen Glendower and was also a commissioner of the parliament which deposed Richard II. He seemed to have often inspected his manors and, with his wife, went from one to another, perhaps because he kept hounds and greyhounds at most of them. In 1389 his mother died and Thomas took over the remainder of the estate including one 'Messuage and yard land in Saintly'.¹⁹

EARLY CONSTRUCTIONAL DETAILS

It is considered that dating from this period is the north range of Seynckley, with its carved roof trusses which originally had arch braces, and the stone spiral staircase with fine ogee arched lintels to the doorways. The upper door indicates a first floor and this could have been the Chamber if one assumes that the Hall was in a central position, splitting the present large courtyard in two. This would make the plan similar to Haddon Hall in Derbyshire, though on a smaller scale of course, where the inner court was for the lord of the manor's family and the outer included buildings for servants and agricultural purposes. Contemporary with the north range are the courtyard walls, including the large late medieval archway on the south side.²⁰

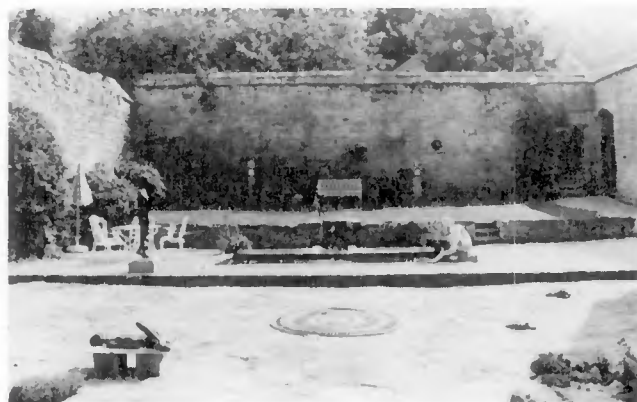
THE BERKELEY CONNECTION AGAIN

Thomas Berkeley's daughter, Elizabeth, married Richard, 13th Earl of Warwick and became one of the wealthiest landowners in the country. When her father died in 1417 Elizabeth and her husband seized the castle and manors, including Seynckley,²¹ the estate being no longer under the Abbess of Caen.

Another Berkeley with a strong claim to the family holdings was Thomas's nephew James who was about twenty-three when his uncle died. Writs started to be issued on both sides but it was eventually decided that James was the rightful owner of the castle and twelve manors, with Elizabeth having everything else. A document shows that James 'was seized of 1 messuage and 1 yard in parish of Hampton called Seynckles and 1 water mill together with the waterway that goes with it';²¹ this is the first mention of a mill connected with the estate and is no doubt an early reference to Frogmarsh Mill well-known later for its circular wool drying store and



North range with studio windows



Upper Courtyard with site of probable Hall across centre

the garden room removed to Bodnant. It is not known whether this was a corn mill or used in the wool trade.

John Smyth commented that the family was now rent asunder. For the next forty-five years the two families were often at each others' throats for, after Elizabeth died in 1422, her three daughters continued the battle. Of these the eldest, Margaret, who married the Earl of Shrewsbury, was the ringleader and in 1434 her son, Lord Lisle, entered the castle and imprisoned James for eleven weeks.

During this period the manors began to deteriorate due to lack of attention and funds. About 1451 Edmund 2nd, and last of the Rodboroughs of Seynckley, died ending approximately 150 years of occupation by the same family. After two centuries the connection between Seynckley and the Spillman family was resumed when Edmund 2nd married Maude Spillman, the daughter of John Spillman 3rd. There was no male heir but Edmund's daughter Margery de Rodborough married William Playne 1st and took over the manor of Spillmanscourt.

Robert Kynne of an ancient local family next became the occupier of Seynckley; the family built Kynes Court which resulted in an area to the west of Amberley being called Kingscourt. Previously in about 1300 Richard Kynne had one of the twelve Minchinhampton manors mentioned earlier, farming about one hundred acres but was not one of the six who journeyed to Southampton.

Returning to the Berkeley family, in 1463 peace was agreed between James and the Countess of Shrewsbury when it was accepted that they should 'enjoy' the manors they then held. Unfortunately James did not live long to benefit from this respite as he died the same year, to be succeeded by William 1st and it is stated that Seynckley and the water-mill descended to him.²³

AN ARISTOCRATIC BATTLE

In spite of the agreement enmity continued and when the countess died in 1468, her grandson and heir, Viscount Lisle, continued the battle. And battle it proved to be for in the following year Lord Lisle and William Lord Berkeley fought what turned out to be the last private battle between feudal lords on English soil. At Nibley Green, about two miles west of Dursley, and the Tyndale Monument, Lisle was killed and William took possession of the manors and lands which had been the inheritance of his father James.²⁴ Actually this part of Gloucestershire suffered little from the Wars of the Roses probably because the Berkeleys owned so much of this area.

William Lord Berkeley collected titles. Within seven years he was created viscount, earl, earl marshal and finally marquis, the latter being the most expensive as he had to give Henry VII twelve Gloucestershire manors in return for the title. Probably Seynckley was included but even if it was not William shortly afterwards gave all his estates, including the castle and barony, to the king and his male heirs. This was due to a row with his brother, Maurice, who, on William's death, therefore succeeded to nothing. It was not until the death of King Edward VI in 1553 that the family got back the barony and castle but meanwhile the Crown would no doubt have filled its coffers by selling many of the manors, though Maurice did gradually recover about fifty of them.

The next owners of Seynckley to be recorded were the Stephens, a large family one member of whom, Thomas Stephen, had been Attorney-General to the Princes Henry and Charles, sons of James I. In the seventeenth century Thomas bought the Over Lypiatt manor from the Wye family who were associated with Seynckley as in 1573 Anthony Wye was connected with the house, together with Guy Hill and his wife Susan.²⁵

Records show that in 1605 James Dunning owned the manor, cottages, barn, fulling mill, dovecote, gardens, orchards, land and common pasture for all his stock in Minchinhampton.²⁶ This is the earliest definite date connect-

ing Seynckley and Frogmarsh with the wool industry. Six years later James was joined by Giles Dunning and his wife Anne, as well as Robert Tayloe Junior, this time the estate being listed as a manor, water-mill, fulling-mill, land and common in Minchinhampton; the separate mention of the water mill appears to indicate corn grinding. Robert Tayloe and his son, also Robert, were Stroud clothiers who were the owners of Seynckley in the 1630s, and a survey of manors noted that the Tayloe family owned 40 acres. This same survey recorded that John Newarke, a clergyman, had a house and 28 acres of land at Seynckley.²⁷

It was about the early 1600s that a new range, incorporating some old material, was built on the south side of the lower court, and a fine fireplace of this date was probably added while James Dunning owned the manor. The south elevation, compared with the north and west facades, lacks unity and whereas the central gable has stone copings on the roof verges corresponding with copings on the courtyard side, the gable at the west corner has none. The latter gable has several indications of blocked-in openings. Possibly this central gable block through to the courtyard was rebuilt on the site of the original manor; if so this would account for the awkward junction with the west range.

The end of the 1600s marked the completion of approximately five hundred years of domestic occupation, with many families involved. The next section reveals a very different usage during the following two centuries.

ST. LOE'S SCHOOL

Towards the end of the 1600s Nathaniel Cambridge, a Hamburg merchant, deposited a thousand pounds with Benjamin Cambridge of Theescombe and Giles Nash the Elder of Stonehouse, both clothiers, to purchase land and buildings for the establishment and support of a free school in the county.²⁸ Nathaniel however died in 1697 and his chest tomb can be seen in Woodchester old churchyard; unfortunately he did not live long enough to see a school founded with his endowment.



Oil painting of Nathaniel Cambridge

A member of a family who later married into the Cambridges, Nathaniel Ridler, acquired Seynckley. Then in 1698 the two trustees mentioned above discovered that Nathaniel Ridler was willing to sell Seynckley, and so acquired the manor estate with the bequest.²⁹

A trust of predominantly eleven clothiers was formed and in 1699 Benjamin Cambridge and Giles Nash transferred Seynckley to this group.³⁰ The deed stated that the sale was for the 'Manor of Saintloe or Seinckley, also Seinckley Farm,' outhouses, barns, stables, dovecotes, etc. and the 44 acre estate included Conygree, Orchard and Culver Hills,

Broad and Little Meades, Rack and Barley Closes and Long Meade, the latter lying near a brook, close to a mill which belonged to Clutterbuck Deane.

The school foundation was formed in 1699 and the deed said that Seynckley should be created a free school for boys born in Woodchester or the tithing of Rodborough between six and sixteen, 'not being idiots, but having first learnt to read English.'³¹

It was at this time that small charity schools started in the valleys and these later became the National Schools. There were, however, commercially minded middle-class parents who wished to have their children educated at other than the classical grammar schools which were run down and ineffective. There were a few 'Academies' which included subjects such as practical mathematics and one started in Nailsworth in 1719 but only remained five years. St. Loe's appeared to be the solution for these parents, as well as having scholarships for the cleverer poor children.

As soon as money could be raised from rents and profits, the Trustees could rebuild or alter as much of the house as they should think suitable for a school. In fact a major rebuilding did take place, especially of the west range, used as accommodation for the boarders, which had a new façade, floors and roof, the latter incorporating the main timbers of its medieval predecessor. About the same time a new staircase was constructed where the west and south wings met.



Lower Courtyard with North Range (Studio) on right

In addition it was no doubt then that the elegant white bell cupola, with its gilt weather vane, was constructed over the east gable of the north range. Contemporary with the cupola and overlooking the courtyard is a dormer enclosing a diamond-shaped clock face, a 1984 replica replacement of the original which is preserved in the house. The large turret clock mechanism is situated in the roof space and drives a single hand, the mechanism being fully restored by Michael Maltin, also in 1984. The bell itself is dated 1699, cast by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester and it is interesting to note that inscribed on it is the name MR. GILES NASH, the owner of St. Loe just before the school started.³²

In 1685 Rev. Richard Bond, appointed curate of the village of Rodborough, taught in the 'free school' of Stroud to supplement his income. He was the nominee of the founder to become the first master of St. Loe's Free and Endowed school, as Seynckley was to be named, and this he did in 1699. Nathaniel Cambridge had directed that the new master 'should be a learned, honest person of the communion of the Church of England'. He also requested that the master, after paying for all taxes and repairs, should take the balance as salary, a decision which did not tend to keep the premises in the best of repair and led to serious disagreements later.

Other bequests were made, one in 1698 of £100 by John Yeats was specifically for apprenticeships and was joined to another £100 given by Benjamin Cambridge and by £2 provided by the Ursula Tooke Charity. Nathaniel Cambridge

wrote to the latter as his 'Honord Aunte Tooke'; at the siege of Gloucester this redoubtable lady had a husband ransacking Royalists' houses and her father entertaining the King at the family home, Matson House.³³ Yet another member of the Cambridge family, Richard, also left a £100 but the sum was greatly reduced due to several bankruptcies.³⁴

The Trustees appointed were men of some importance and naturally many were becoming elderly, so it is no surprise to find that there were sometimes only six surviving, the minimum allowed before a new deed had to be drawn up naming a new eleven.

FAMOUS PUPILS

About this time it has been said that one of the pupils was John Canton who became quite famous for inventing an electroscope and electrometer and whose career gained him a couple of inches print in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Thirty years later another probable pupil was Rear Admiral Sir Alexander John Ball who served at the Battle of Aboukir Bay with Nelson, becoming a friend of his following an incident in which Ball rendered assistance to Nelson's ship in heavy weather.

A series of old account books still exist showing how the local charities spent their income and the pages for John Yeats were always headed 'To Saintloe School'. Names were given of the apprentices with their masters and a debit of £5 against each. There were between one and three new apprentices each year so, with expenditure being under income, the balance gradually accumulated and later the £5 limit was raised.³⁵

Payments for St. Loe of 11s 7½d twice a year by Mr. Bond is recorded in the Rodborough rental book from 1744 to 1749. Compared with most other rentals the figure seems high.³⁶ Like his father before him Nathaniel Bond served Rodborough Church and then went on to succeed him as master at St. Loe,³⁷ but died in 1758. The new master was Joseph Hort who had an incredibly long spell in charge. It was during his period as head that a tithe survey recorded that a Richard Hill farmed the six fields of the estate. The 28 acres of pasture were valued at 3s 6d an acre, except for 4 acres of tithe land only worth 8d an acre and the 7 acres of arable were noted as 3s an acre.³⁸

Another group of trustees was appointed in 1757 and this time a strong contingent from Woodchester included Lord Ducie and Onesiphorus Paul. In 1750 the latter showed Frederick, Prince of Wales and father of George III, over Southfield Mill at Woodchester while the Prince was staying with Lord Ducie.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Up to this time the main way of travelling from Nailsworth to Dudbridge near Stroud was to journey along narrow roads on the west side of the valley, the valley bottom being marshy. This was to be radically altered in 1781, when a new turnpike road was constructed on the valley floor 'from Tiltup Barn through St. Chloe's grounds to Dudbridge', Tiltup Barn being up the Bath Road out of Nailsworth. Later a number of branch roads were also constructed.

The chairman of this important work was Sir George Onesiphorus Paul, who was a School Trustee by 1782, and luckily the minute books and many documents survive to give a fairly complete picture of its construction through St. Loe's grounds.³⁹ In 1788 George III himself used this road to visit Woodchester Mill and Spring Park, the residence of Lord Ducie.

From this it might appear that all was progressing well in the district but 1784 was a bad year for Minchinhampton. Together with many deaths from fever in the summer, there was a mass of poverty and misery resulting from much unemployment caused by the poor state of the cloth trade because of a fall in exports and the wool being spun elsewhere; the workers had to sell or pawn many of their

possessions to stay alive.⁴⁰

The first recorded meeting of the Trustees was in 1794 when it was decided that the head, Joseph Hort, contrary to the donor's intention, was taking on too many fee-paying boarders to supplement his income and he was asked to gradually reduce the number.⁴¹

It was also reported that the fences on the estate were 'in a ruinous state particularly that bordering the Turnpike road'. Shortly after 1800 the Dudbridge-Nailsworth turnpike was widened and straightened, a process which sliced off two acres of the school land. The Trustees made constant requests to the Chancery Courts and forced the Turnpike Commissioners to pay compensation. The Trustees were invaluable to the school as they provided continuity of supervision and did their duty towards the Trust faithfully. Fences were a continual worry for them and trees on the estate were often cut down to provide posts and rails which were augmented by quick hedging to prevent trespassing.⁴²

Sir George Onesiphorus Paul promised to repair the estate fencing if he were allowed to become the tenant of the fields on a long lease, paying £70 a year and this was granted. However he did not intend to farm them himself as he was in the middle of his important prison reform programme.

Only the third headmaster since the school opened, Joseph Hort died in 1813 after fifty-five years in charge. It was the fault of the system that Seynckley had become dilapidated as the head had to pay for all repairs out of his income. The Trustees now resolved that in future the number of boarders be limited to twenty and also that pupils be taught by monitors.

The Trustees also resolved that the next headmaster 'be capable of not only giving instruction in writing and arithmetic but also in Trigonometry, mensuration and other useful branches of practical mathematics'. For the next head the Trustees chose Edward Wall, aged thirty two, who was master at the Red School in Stroud, so called from their uniforms.

From the time he was appointed Mr. Wall seemed to have adopted a rather belligerent attitude towards the Trustees and he started off by refusing to pay rates or taxes in advance. He also refused to have any repairs done to the buildings which were certainly getting in a bad state. The minutes reported 'The old arched gateway had been thrown down and the greater part of the stable roof is uncovered and the tiles wasted or carried away'. Some trees had been cut down for repairs in 1813, prior to his headship, particularly for the schoolroom flooring and for desks and benches and Edward Wall felt the work should have been carried out then. Nevertheless the Trustees considered it astonishing that they should have to compel the Master to repair the premises, especially as his boarders had principally caused the dilapidations. They thought it was 'hardly credible that parents who pay for school should send their children to a schoolroom in ruins'.⁴³

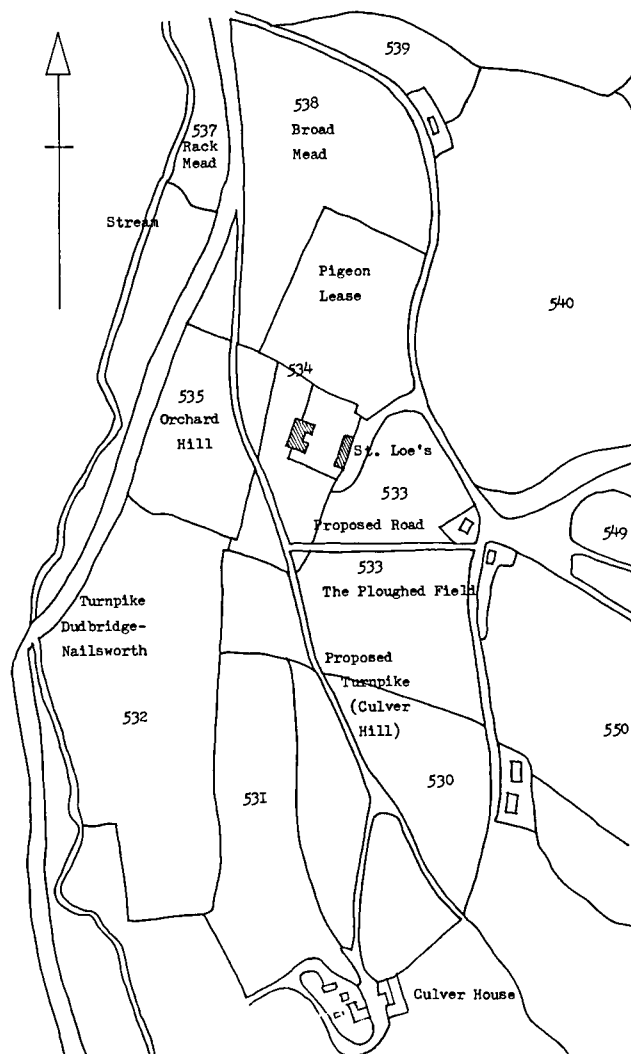
William Alloway, a carpenter, was asked to rebuild the stable independent of the old stone gateway, the latter to be re-erected as a new entrance to the repositioned driveway from a proposed turnpike. From the timber cut down Alloway repaired the schoolroom floors and furniture. Wall remarked that it would have been better to remove the upper school floor and put two storeys into one as the height was so restricted.

THE TURNPIKE ROAD

The same meeting in 1815 considered the effect of a turnpike road proposed fifteen years previously but which had only recently passed through parliament; a great many projects had been in the doldrums during the Napoleonic Wars. The Trustees considered that the road would be of benefit to the school as the existing access to St. Loes was off a narrow and deep track, starting along the Bath Road at Little Britain Farm and described as impassable for carriages and carts further up. The new road was to be a branch off the

Dudbridge-Nailsworth turnpike turning off just south of Little Britain and running up the slope at an angle, between St. Loes and The Culver House, to Amberley Bank, the route being drawn on Samuel Keene's survey of 1803 and now known as Culver Hill (see Keene's map, 1803).

SAMUEL KEENE'S SURVEY 1803



This new road when constructed did however cut through several of the school fields, leaving awkward small areas on either side of the turnpike, and in addition another new road led steeply up to St. Chloe Green, cutting up the fields still further. When the property was re-organised Seynckley house was valued at £15 in 1841.⁴⁴

The animosity between Edward Wall and the Trustees really came to a head next year, 1816, when Wall presented a petition to the Lord Chancellor, complaining of the Trustees for breach of Trust generally and particularly for granting the land lease to Robert Snow, a landowner. The latter complaint was rather belated as Snow had been given the sub-tenancy twenty-two years previously.

A meeting decided that this petition was 'a most abusive libel on the Trustees'; however both parties had to wait a year and a half before the judgement was received. It must have come as a bitter blow to the pride of the Trustees, who included many of the most important men of the district, to find that they were ordered to carry out many of the items asked for by Mr. Wall.⁴⁵

The most important matter was that instead of the present cosy agreement between the Trustees, the estate was to be put out to the highest bidder with the rents approved by the headmaster. There was also a ground rent of £2 from a

dyehouse, wheelright's shop and garden occupied by Joseph Boulton of South Woodchester. During this century documents often referred to the change of tenants and rentals as well as listing types of trees to be felled and new ones planted.

Education locally improved in the 1830s as both Amberley and Woodchester had new schoolrooms, in 1836 and 1835 respectively, but pupils had to leave at the age of ten, very different from St. Loe's where there were about thirty boys up to sixteen years. According to the 1841 census Mr. Wall had an assistant, as well as a servant, to provide help.⁴⁶

The Master was mentioned as occupying the school house rent free, together with about three acres taken to enlarge the school. His income included £2 9s interest on the money the Turnpike Trust owed, 18s from the Samuel Heavens Trustees and £107 rent of the fields, totalling £110 7s but out of that he had to pay about £10 in taxes and the cost of repairs.

The schedule to the Tithe Apportionment Map of 1839 shows Edward Wall looking after three closes, totalling thirteen acres when St. Loe's was the third largest estate in Amberley.

A surveyor's report of 1843 listed all the repairs required to be carried out at St. Loe's with the cost estimated at £51, as once more the school had become dilapidated due to the head refusing to spend much of his income on repairs; these were authorised and Mr. Wall was allowed to remove the cellar stairs so as to create three sitting rooms en-suite.⁴⁷

The Trustees decided in 1844 on an experiment regarding the examinations which previously were mechanical rather than mental; they took a chapter of the Bible and asked questions on it but at first the boys 'were shy and timid', so a progress report was deferred. The Trustees considered that 'the course of instruction pursued here should not be the system pursued in Parochial Schools but of a much higher character'.⁴⁸

SCHOOL LIFE

School rules were issued by Edward Wall in the following year. Hours at this time were from nine to twelve and two to five, except for a holiday on Wednesday afternoon and a month off at Midsummer and Christmas. Rules on discipline and attendance were also included as several boys had been irregular in going to school and their relatives were asked to attend a Trustees' Meeting. The latter believed this would improve the boys' attendance. Some relatives came but no one appeared for William, Nathaniel and Jeremiah Ratcliffe, nor Henry Harrison, so they were all suspended. Asked again, Mr. William Ratcliffe came and said that he wished to send his sons when it was convenient for him to spare them from farm work at Bown Hill, Woodchester; he could not give any advance notice when he wanted them. This was not considered satisfactory so they were all expelled, as was Henry Harrison for whom no one appeared. (William Ratcliffe was well-known for having ridden up the scaffolding around Stroud Subscription Rooms on horseback after visiting the Swan Inn!).

In 1849 Edward Wall died, after being head for thirty-six years, and his widow was asked to carry on for three months. Advertisements asked for a 'gentleman of real piety' with a good classical education; a salary of £80 a year with a house capable of accommodating many boarders on terms to be agreed by the Trustees.⁴⁹

A month later they appointed Douglas Henry Campbell, previously an assistant master at the Bedford Public Schools. The course of instruction was to include Latin, Greek, French, English language radically taught, geography and mapping, writing, arithmetic and elementary portions of practical and theoretical Mathematics, natural philosophy and mechanics, and one or two elementary branches of Natural History. No wonder a Trustee later remarked that Mr. Campbell attempted 'to make it a higher class school but he did not meet the necessities of the working classes'.

Another set of rules was issued when costs were given: Private boarders, under 12 £35 p.a. above 12 £40.

Day boarders having dinner at school £20.

Day pupils £10.

Each boy must provide his own books and boarders pay 2 guineas for washing.

The next census, in 1851, reveals that Douglas Campbell and his wife Marianne had a cook and waiting maid to help in the house. Interestingly the names are given of six boarders, ranging in age from eleven to seventeen.

NEW HEADMASTERS

Only four years later and still comparatively young Mr. Campbell ceased to be head. It is not revealed why but at a public enquiry later a remark was made that he flogged all the free boys away as he did not want them there. It appears that Mr. Campbell made enemies in the six years he was head and it was also said that the school went down.

Edward Berry from Norfolk was appointed master in his place; he was a considerably older man, and by the 1861 census was fifty-three. In addition to his wife he had a young Minchinhampton teacher to help him, as well as one servant.

Once again the lower fields of St. Loe were divided into two when the Stonehouse-Nailsworth railway, after nearly three years in construction, was opened in 1867 both for goods and passenger traffic. There was great dissatisfaction that there was no station at Woodchester, so one was hastily built five months later, opposite Little Britain Farm.⁵⁰

In this year also James Cross became head and the subjects to be studied shows a swing away from the classical to a commercial education but only two years later Mr. Cross resigned, no doubt because it was anticipated that the constitution of the school would be affected by the Endowed Schools Act due out the following year. St. Loe's did close for sixteen months during which time the inhabitants of Woodchester 'bestirred' themselves to get the school reopened.

An advertisement asked for a master to give a commercial English education to about twenty-five boys, the income being above £90 a year, with a large roomy house rent free near Woodchester Station. He must be a member of the Church of England and preferably between thirty and forty but the man appointed, George Davis, was approximately fifty and had been running the Cainscross Academy near Stroud for about the last six years.⁵¹

Just after he had taken up his post the census return showed that besides his wife he had four children, two local boarders aged eight and thirteen, and a general servant. Mr. Davis started the school with about forty pupils of whom thirty 'were on the foundation', so it was hoped that this would prove to be a good point when the Commissioner of Endowed Schools came to evaluate the school for continuation or closure. It was to be another thirteen years before the enquiry actually started.

An American emigrant who returned to visit his old school recounted that on one occasion Mr. Davis sent all the boys out to the pump in the corner of the courtyard, because one of the pupils had told a lie. While he pumped the Master made a schoolmate scrub out the pupil's mouth with cold water 'for you have fouled your mouth with that lie' he said.⁵²

SCHOOL REORGANISATION

At last, in early 1884, the Charity Commissioners produced a draft scheme for the re-organisation of St. Loe, a scheme that resulted in a public enquiry the following year held under an assistant Charity Commissioner, Mr. C.H. Stanton. Surely he must have been specially selected as his uncle, Mr. W.H. Stanton, M.P., was educated there.⁵³

The first part of the proposed scheme concerned the duties of nine Governors, six of whom were to be specifically appointed by local bodies and the other three co-opted. Those

present at the enquiry did not agree and wanted the Governors elected by ratepayers, as otherwise no non-conformist stood a chance of being chosen.

The remainder of the scheme dealt with the school itself, starting with the head whose salary was to be £70 a year, plus a small sum for each pupil, which ended a very poor system. A 'Repair and Improvement Fund' was to be started with £9 a year so it was to be hoped that no major repairs would be required. An important difference from previously was that the parents of all boys now had to pay six pounds towards the cost of tuition, though there were to be six scholarships. It came out at the enquiry that of forty-eight boys then attending, fifteen were already paying fees. The scheme was also widened to cover those boys living, though not necessarily born, in Amberley and Woodchester.

One of the Governors present at the enquiry, Jehu Shipway, said that some local people were interested in buying St. Loe's, which would result in new schools being built elsewhere, and the Commissioner agreed that this was a possibility.

The enquiry ended and the final approved scheme kept to the draft principles, only differing in details; for example the number of scholarships was increased to ten, five each for Amberley and Woodchester.⁵⁴ Thomas Stone, a Cambridge M.A. and a master at a Norfolk grammar school, was appointed head in 1887 to implement the scheme. In this year too Queen Victoria's Jubilee Celebrations took place when Amberley pupils processed to Whitefield's Tump, on Minchinhampton Common, led by the Amberley and Littleworth Brass Bands.

THE SCHOOL PROSPECTUS 1887

ST. ✦ LOE'S ✦ SCHOOL,

AMBERLEY, NEAR STROUD.


Governors.

ARTHUR T. PLAYNE, Esq., Chairman.	CHARLES PLAYNE, Esq., Vice-chairman.
Rev. W. BRYAN-BROWN.	A. E. SMITH, Esq.
Major C. HAWKINS FISHER.	Rev. FREDERIC SMITH.
JEHU SHIPWAY, Esq.	General SIR ED. STANTON, K.C.M.G.
J. T. WOOLRIGHT, Esq.	

Head Master.

MR. T. STONE, M.A., CANTAB.,

Late Foundation Scholar of St. John's College, Senior Optime in the Mathematical Tripos, 1880; and late 2nd Master in the Paston Grammar School, North Walsham, Norfolk.



HIS Ancient School has been re-organised by the Endowed Schools Commissioners, and is now open for the reception of Boarders and Day-Scholars.

The object of the Head Master will be to impart a sound moral, mental, and physical training to his Pupils, to encourage the love of study and the practice of virtue.

The Teaching will be adapted to the requirements of the present day, so as to fit Boys for professional or commercial life.

The School Buildings are very pleasantly and healthily situated, and there is ample accommodation for a large number of Boarders.

A prospectus was issued by the Governors under their Chairman, Arthur T. Playne. Included were the house and school hours:

First Bell	7.00	Prayers	8.00
Breakfast		School	9.00 - 12.00
Dinner	1.00	School	2.30 - 4.30
Tea	6.00	Prep.	7.00 - 9.00
Supper		Prayers	
Bed	9.15		

It all sounds rather monastic! Every Sunday morning Bible classes were to be held by the head and the boys

attended Amberley Parish Church. Within a few years seventy boys were on the roll and a gymnasium was constructed in the courtyard, built of unpleasant corrugated iron sheeting, according to an old photograph.

CHANGING FORTUNES

As a contrast to the first 150 years of the school when there were only four heads, the last period had new headmasters every few years. About 1894 Walter Haines, this time an Oxford M.A., was in charge. At the turn of the century the foundation was called the Nathaniel Cambridge Exhibition with about forty on the roll. During the seventeen years from 1888 the Amberley Parochial School log-book contains several references to the selection by the managers of boys to be recommended for St. Loe's School. One not qualified by residence was accepted as a paying scholar. Besides its educational attainments, the school at this period had considerable interest in sports and many cricket and soccer matches were played on the common.

In 1900 George Timms became head and only six years later he left taking his boarders with him. As the income without these boarders was insufficient the school had to finally close, some boys being sent to Marling School. The Amberley School log contains rather sad references to three scholarship boys who had returned from St. Loe's to the Parish School.

The Board of Education said in 1904 that St. Loe's was both from its situation and character unsuitable for any educational institution, an interesting statement after two hundred years of schooling. The Board also said that the interior was in a bad state of repair; the exterior looked equally poor judged by old photographs.⁵⁵



North Range and Gymnasium c. 1909 from a contemporary photograph

Permission was given to sell the estate and house in 1908, the income to be used for apprenticeships and the maintenance of libraries, with the bulk for scholarships at local schools.⁵⁶ Prior to the sale the property could be let at the highest rent possible.

THE HOME RESTORED

St. Loe became once again a private house in 1909 but the connection with the former school was not entirely lost, as the money from the building and land rents was used to create the

St. Loe's School Exhibition Fund. In that year the Governors drew up a twenty-one year lease with Henry Payne, a stained glass artist from Warwickshire, who stayed in Painswick until the house was ready. A field of just over 5 acres was included and £600 was to be spent on repairs during the first three years; the house was also to be insured for £1,500.⁵⁷

Henry Payne would have known the area as Charles March Gere, a fellow lecturer, great friend and half-brother of his wife, had already settled at 'Stamages' in Painswick in 1904, with his sister Margaret.⁵⁸ Henry's son, Edward, thought that the well-known architect and furniture designer, Sidney Bamsley, found Seynckley for the Paynes.

ARTISTIC CONNECTIONS

Teaching drawing and painting at the Birmingham School of Art since 1889, followed by an absorbing interest in stained glass, a period when he received many commissions for large church windows, Henry Payne had eventually become dissatisfied with teaching and life in Birmingham. His love of landscape is shown in his work and the move with his family to peaceful Seynckley should have been ideal, especially as several of his students came with him and stayed for two years. Unfortunately 'commissions now fell off for stained glass and his designs became somewhat stereotyped and his figures took on a stiffer quality.'⁵⁹ Was he missing the advice and criticism of fellow artists in the design studios?



Edward Payne with painting of his father, Henry

Examples of work he carried out in his Seynckley studios for Gloucestershire churches included:⁶⁰

Chipping Campden, St. James east window c. 1920.

Turkdean, All Saints south aisle, Ruth and Boaz window 1924.

Elkston, St. John east window, Madonna and Child 1929.
Box, Chapel of St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher (R.C.) south Sanctuary 1937.

Prestbury, St. Mary east window, Adoration of the Shepherds 1933.

Rodborough Tabernacle, Little Chapel, Nativity.

Berkeley, St. Mary south aisle War Memorial painted reredos c. 1919.

Rodborough St. Mary Magdalene, War Memorial window.

In addition, while at Seynckley, he designed and executed windows for approximately ten further churches outside the county, including a large commission for St. Martin's, Kensal Rise in London.

PARLIAMENTARY CONNECTIONS

One of Payne's more important works was a colourful mural, decorating part of the east corridor wall in the Houses of Parliament. Titled 'The Plucking of the Red and White Roses in the Temple Garden' it was painted at Seynckley using the walled courtyard, pointed gateway and flowers beds as a background to the Earl of Somerset on the right and Richard of York on the left, the latter thrusting forward a white rose. Payne's subject was the supposed origin of the Wars of the Roses and was based on Henry VI, Part I (Act II Scene 4) when Richard cried out:

... if he suppose that I have pleaded truth,
From off this briar pluck a white rose with me.

And the Lancastrian answered:

Let him that is no coward nor no flatterer,
But dare maintain the party of the truth,
Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me.⁶¹

The mural was completed in the Studio but unfortunately it was too large to get through the door so the stone transom of the tall corner window had to be removed. Today the window still remains without its transom.

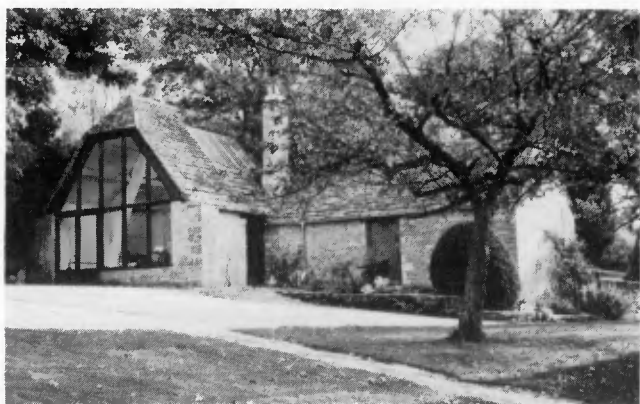


Mural in Houses of Parliament showing Seynckley

Living locally in Sapperton since 1903 were three important members of the Arts and Crafts Movement, Ernest Gimson and Ernest and Sidney Barnsley. It was the latter whom Henry Payne asked to change the school back again into a house, as well as designing a separate workshop suitable for his stained glass work. Dated 1911, Sidney Barnsley's drawing for this building still exists and shows a room with the north wall totally glazed, unusual for a building of that date, and two cruck frames internally.⁶² This room was constructed of stone and windows from a demolished classroom on the south side and added on to an existing store. The latter was formed into a kiln area, the whole workshop being used for the actual production of windows where the fired stained glass was fitted into grooves in the lead cames. The workshop has recently been restored by Ralph Brown and now appears very similar to the original.

Like Henry Payne, Sidney Barnsley had connections with the midlands as he was the son of a partner in John Barnsley

& Sons, the builders of Birmingham Town Hall. Norman Jewson said he was extremely conscientious and also kind and generous, always willing to help anyone who came to him for advice.



Studio/Workshop designed by Sidney Barnsley

During the period 1903 to 1919, Barnsley was mainly interested in designing and making furniture and therefore Henry was fortunate in securing his professional services. Barnsley's major work in the house was to create a full height studio in the north range on the north side. The restoration in this part revealed an original staircase and a probable garderobe (W.C.). Elsewhere in the house, the architect added simple stone fireplaces and outside in the grounds it is considered that Barnsley created much of the landscaping, including forming the terrace wall below the west wing. Certainly an old photograph showing the garden gate to the front door depicts exactly the same design as the gate at Barnsley's own house in Sapperton where the Payne family used to cycle for tennis and tea.⁶³ Alfred Bucknell, the smith, supplied ironmongery for some of the gates and doors.



Entrance Gate by Sidney Barnsley

Henry Payne used the studio to draw full size cartoons which were hung on the west wall; to give an adequate plain surface the large fireplace was filled in, to be found again and uncovered in 1989. Against the north wall was a tortoise stove with a small chimney stack, which appears on old photographs but was taken down c.1970. Also in the studio was a special fixture to keep paint, made by Sidney Barnsley. Hanging on a wall was 'The Enchanted Sea', a fine oil painting by Henry Payne in different tones of brown and exhibited in London in 1989.

THE ST. LOE'S GUILD

Modelled on the Arts and Crafts Movement, Henry Payne founded the St. Loe's Guild in 1912, to promote numerous crafts, and three years later started a triennial exhibition of Cotswold Arts and Crafts held in the house. There are details of the exhibition in 1933, and a photograph showing the

cartoons by Payne for the stained glass windows presented by the British Government to the French National Memorial at Notre Dame de Lorette, Vimy Ridge. The catalogue of the next exhibition in 1936 illustrates how many famous people in the world of art contributed their works of art for sale.

Back in 1901 Henry Payne had married Edith Gere, a fellow artist at the Birmingham School who specialised in painting wild flowers and creating decorative frames for the paintings of her tutor, Joseph Southall. Together with a few other artists, including Edith's half-brother and sister, they were the leaders of the influential Birmingham Group of Artist-Craftsmen. Edith was the daughter of an American naturalist, Edward William Gere, who married twice with two children, Charles and Margaret, from his second marriage to Miss March of Brunswick Square, Gloucester. Charles Gere was born in Gloucester and a memorial exhibition of his painting was held there in 1963.⁶⁴



Henry and Edith Payne and family

Henry and Edith Payne had three sons, Robert, Edward and Geoffrey. Robert made furniture with Peter Waals at Chalford, worked with the Rural Industries Bureau in London designing furniture that could be made by redundant wheel-rights, then studied carving with William Simmonds. Later he became editor of 'Gloucestershire Countryside', and finally was a publisher in Leamington Spa. Geoffrey was an amateur artist who became well-known as a forward with Stroud Rugby Club. Edward continued his father's profession as a stained glass artist, helping his father with his later works. He continues to work in his studio at Box near Minchinhampton and has left his mark at Seynckley by creating a two light window of stained glass near the main entrance, showing a part factual and part fictional history of the house.



Window showing history of Seynckley by Edward Payne



North range roof truss and courtyard clock mechanism

His father, said Edward Payne, was of a rather retiring disposition and did not mix much socially but in spite of that many well-known visitors came to Seynckley. W.H. Davies often arrived, living locally at Nailsworth, as did John Drinkwater who had a cottage at Far Oakridge. It was Sir Fabian Ware, Chairman of the War Graves Commission, who brought over Bernard Shaw and Edward remembers him for his greenish-grey clothes and knee breeches. Another friend was Frederick Griggs, the architect and etcher from Chipping Campden.

The house lease ran out in 1930 and the Governors negotiated a seven year extension, Henry having to pay rent for the house of £60 and for the five acres £14. There was a considerable increase in the insurance value, this time it was £4,000. Once again the contract was re-negotiated from 1937 on the same terms but Henry Payne did not live to the end of this lease, dying in 1940. However the stained glass tradition was continued not only by his son, Edward, but also by his grand-daughter Caroline who became secretary of the British Society for Master Glass Painters.

During the Second World War the house was first used for evacuees from Bristol and then requisitioned by the Government and used for the very secret and most important work of code-breaking. Fourteen people slept in Seynckley for this purpose but it is doubtful whether any details of the work carried out will be released.⁶⁵

Just after the end of the war, in 1946, John Harvey and his wife took over the lease of Seynckley at a rent of £146. On the same day Edith Payne leased the workshop, now called the Studio Cottage, from the Governors and moved in together with her youngest son, Geoffrey. The Studio must have seemed very cramped after the many rooms of Seynckley but perhaps Edith liked confined spaces as she used to paint in a narrow corridor in the house. Edith lived here another thirteen years, dying at the age of seventy four, and the Harveys then bought the Studio from the Governors, leasing it to Geoffrey. He never married and died painting at his easel in the Studio; it was then turned into a garage.

It was not until 1961 that the Ministry of Education issued an order to the Governors that 'St. Loe's House' and 'The Studio', together with 5 acres, could be sold for £7,000. It had taken the Governors over fifty years to actually sell the site. Mrs. Harvey then bought Seynckley in 1961, and lived there until 1965 when the house was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Swatton.

The Stroud Festival in 1979 held an exhibition of Henry Payne's stained glass cartoons, paintings and drawings in the Subscription Rooms and, at its opening, the artist Harvey Adams said it was 'the Year of the Paynes' as a memorial exhibition to Edith's work was at that moment being held in the Birmingham City Art Gallery.⁶⁶

Today another artist lives at Seynckley, this time the sculptor, Ralph Brown, and appropriately the Studio and Workshop are once again being used for creative work. Luckily the owner and his wife are keen to restore original features, such as opening up a blocked window in the north

range, which reveals how attractive and fascinating Seynckley has been in the past and it is to be hoped that it will always continue under such sympathetic stewardship.

The St. Loe's School Exhibition Fund continues until the present day, now being used to provide school uniforms, apprenticeship tools, school prizes and grants towards further education.



Interior North Range, now Studio

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