

### **Peter LUDWELL - a story behind a gravestone**

In the old churchyard at High Littleton is a grave, over which there is a stone inscribed to the memory of Katherine Stickler died 3 Apr 1809 aged 73, husband John died 15 Mar 1820 aged 83, Joanna wife of Peter Ludwell died 8 Nov 1849 aged 62, husband Peter Ludwell died 8 Jul 1851 aged 60 & their daughter Anna Maria Ludwell died 27 Nov 1838 aged 14. What was the connection between the Sticklers and the Ludwells?

Until 1829, there was a farmhouse in Hallatrow, where Hornbeam House now stands, with its garden and yard sprawling across the present day Wells Road. The farm, like most properties at that time, didn't have a name and was known by the owner's or previous owner's name, in this case Hill's. In the 1820s the turnpike road from High Littleton turned sharply left after Hallatrow Bridge, passed the Grange, then looped round the bottom of Montvale before resuming its present line at the end of Hart's Lane, onwards to White Cross. In 1829 the turnpike trustees ironed out the kink by building a new piece of road directly between the end of Hart's Lane and Hallatrow Bridge. With the old road left undisturbed, a triangle of land was left in between the two roads. In the road improvements, Hill's Farm lost its yard and garden and the occupants of the 4 cottages (Woodview) now had to cross the road to get to their gardens, which were left high and dry as part of the Triangle.

In 1823 the farm and 10 acres of land was owned by Daniel Hill but it was then sold to Richard Langford, solicitor of Montvale. The tenant was Peter Ludwell, who farmed some 33 acres altogether, including other land rented from Richard Langford and Thomas James.

Peter Ludwell was born at Farrington Gurney c.1791 but moved to Bristol, where he married at St. James in 1811 Charlotte Mathlin. They lived in St. Philip & Jacob parish and had a son James and daughter Charlotte, who married William Weeks many years later. Peter's wife died after Charlotte's birth and Peter and children went to live in Bedminster, where he worked as a skinner.

In July 1820 Peter Ludwell married secondly Joanna, the widow of John Stickler, yeoman of Hallatrow, who had died only 4 months previously. Peter and Joanna subsequently had two children Harriet born 1823, who married Francis Weeks and Anna Maria born 1825, who died in 1838.

Peter, Joanna and family lived at Hill's Farm until the disruption in 1829, when Peter was offered Hallatrow Downs Farm at £100 per annum by the two Miss Langfords, who had inherited their father's estate. Downs was a better farm, of nearly 80 acres and was located on the Farrington Road going out of Paulton. This was still part of Hallatrow in those days. The Ludwell family duly moved to Downs but young James did not get on with his stepmother and left home in 1831 to seek employment in South Wales, working at different iron works on the hills. Peter and Joanna spent the rest of their lives at Downs, where Joanna died in 1849 and Peter died in 1851. In his will Peter left everything to his married daughters Charlotte Weeks and Harriet Weeks. The daughters had different mothers but their husbands were brothers. Peter employed his son in law Francis Weeks at Downs Farm and, after Peter's death, Francis took it on.

But what brought Peter Ludwell to Hallatrow? The answer was Joanna. Joanna Maggs was born in High Littleton in 1784 and married there in 1810 John Stickler, a 74 year old widower. Unsurprisingly they had no children. John Stickler was born c.1736 and married his first wife Catherine Quarman at Cameley in 1757, claiming to be "of High Littleton". They had at least 8 children (one of whom, Catherine junior, married William Weeks) in Cameley and High Littleton, before Catherine died in 1809, aged 73. A year later John married 25 year old Joanna and died in 1820 aged 83. In his will John Stickler left legacies totalling £290 to his 7 surviving children and everything else, including his cattle and sheep, to his wife Joanna. During his lifetime John's name appeared in records under various spellings. He married his first wife as Stickland, had his later children baptised in High Littleton as Strickland and Stickler, married his second wife as Stickler, was buried as Strickland but his gravestone was inscribed as Stickler.

It is not clear when John Stickler first occupied Hill's Farm. He had certainly moved from Cameley to High Littleton parish by 1773 and the earliest surviving Land Tax Assessments showing occupiers' names, finds him already occupying Richmond Hill's property in 1781. John was appointed an Overseer of the Poor for 1794/5 by virtue of being the occupier of the house and estate, late John Hill's. In 1807 he was shown as occupier of Hill's farmhouse, owner Daniel Hill. John was appointed Overseer again for 1808/9 and 1817/8 in respect of John Richmond Hill's house and estate.

Joanna Stickler carried on the farming business for a few months after John's death but then met up with Peter Ludwell. The speed with which they married suggested that they already knew each other. Joanna must have

been a good catch for Peter Ludwell - being a farmer was a step up the social ladder from being a skinner. Joanna also did well from the union, exchanging a husband 48 years older than her for one 6 years her junior, who could give her children.

It is worth contemplating that Joanna had a child by her second husband, nearly 90 years after her first husband was born! It is also worth contemplating that Joanna's daughter Harriet Ludwell (born 1823) and step-daughter Charlotte Ludwell married two of the grandsons of Joanna's step-daughter Catherine Stickler (born 1764)!!

What a story of extraordinary relationships emerges from looking at a simple gravestone.

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