

## THE LOST ROAD TO TEMPLE CLOUD

Following the extension to the Nursing Home, which was once Rosewell Farm, the wide entrance to the track from Church Hill to Stephen's Wood has disappeared and the footpath has been diverted. Prior to that, what looked as though it was once part of a road, ran a few yards into the field there and then petered out.

C. Harcourt MASTERS' Turnpike map of 1787 shows in splendid detail all the fields & buildings (with owners' names), side roads, entrances and even trees adjacent to the turnpike road that ran through High Littleton and Hallatrow. Whilst the mapmakers did not concern themselves with anything more than about 50 yards off the turnpike road, a road marked "To Temple Cloud" is clearly shown below Rosewell Farm. DAY & MASTERS produced a detailed map of Somerset in 1782. This shows the same road going across the fields from near Rosewell, crossing the river Cam and eventually meeting Marsh Lane on the Clutton side of Eastcourt Road. It is a pity that the scale of the map is such that one cannot deduce the exact line of the road through Stephen's and Highbury Woods.

When William SMITH surveyed High Littleton in 1793 he showed the road running just inside the south-west boundary of Stephen's Wood, down where there is a wide gully today. Once inside the woods, SMITH's bounded road changes to an unfenced track. Unfortunately, the river forms the boundary between High Littleton and Clutton and SMITH wasn't paid to concern himself with Clutton matters. However it seems reasonable to suppose that the road must have crossed the river inside Stephen's Wood, near where the bridge is today, turned sharp left at the top of the incline and into the "lane" with stone lined banks at the bottom of Highbury Wood. From the gate at the end of this "lane" it is not difficult to make out the slightly raised line of what was surely the continuation of the old road across the field to Marsh Lane.

Outside the bottom entrance to Stephen's Wood, near the footpath from Hallatrow, there once stood a tenement and garden, divided into 3 dwellings, occupying a half acre plot. The cottages themselves were about 50 yards up on the High Littleton side of the footpath and adjoined the "Temple Cloud Road". When they were built I have not discovered but in 1793 the property belonged to Lady JONES, who leased it in 1800 to William SKEY, who lived at what is now The Grange in Hallatrow. He in turn sublet it. By 1825 SKEY's daughter Jane, the wife of Dr SCOBELL, owned the cottages, which were then occupied by John WYATT and James SAGE. When the property became increasingly more dilapidated, Jane SCOBELL rented the cottages to the Parish, to use as one of their poor houses but following the erection of Clutton Workhouse in 1836, the parishes in the Union gave up their own poor houses. In 1839 Benjamin GOVERD was living in one of the cottages as Mrs SCOBELL's tenant. The cottages subsequently became uninhabitable and are believed to have been demolished within the next 10 years or so.

In a deed of Lease & Release between Wm. Jones BURDETT Esq. and Mrs Martha MOGG dated 25<sup>th</sup> March 1829 there is a long list of closes of land, including land around Lower Common and Dancing Hills etc. From the descriptions it is clear that the "Temple Cloud Road" was called Read's Lane.

Rev. John SKINNER of Camerton was no stranger to Hallatrow and High Littleton and it seems likely that he would have used Read's Lane. Entries in his diary read:

Aug 6 1817 *"We rode to Hallatrow in order to visit the British encampment on Highbury, and returned home to Timsbury."*

May 24 1822 *"As we had agreed over night to visit Stanton Drew, I drove to Radstock to breakfast; we afterwards proceeded on our way in the car and BOODLE's gig, taking cold provision with us. Passing beyond Hallatrow, we stopped to visit the Cascade, and make sketches. Thence we proceeded through Temple Cloud to Clutton....."*

Highbury Hill, Stephen's Wood and the Waterfall are still favourite places for a walk today.

G.P. MASTERS map of 1827 marks a road to Temple Cloud but it had probably been largely abandoned by wheeled traffic then. The Tithe map of 1839 fails to show even part of a road there.

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