

Children's Treat & 19th Century Wills

During the second half of the 19th century, with schooling firmly in place for children, there would often be treats given which allowed them an opportunity to run riot, but under supervision. Some of these treats were written up by the local correspondent and sent into the Swindon Advertiser office. The treats tended to involve the children from Shrivenham and Watchfield. Some were more spectacular than others and were held in the grounds of Beckett Park. (See Beckett Chronicle). Others were held in the Vicarage grounds. The newspaper of 13 August 1892, reported, *'Through the kindness of the Rev E.F. Hill and Mrs Hill, the children attending the schools at Shrivenham and Watchfield numbering nearly two hundred, were entertained at the Vicarage on Saturday afternoon. The children met at the schoolroom at three o'clock and marched, preceded by the Watchfield Temperance Brass Band, to the field fronting the Vicarage, when general hilarity prevailed. At five o'clock a bounteous repast of tea, cake, bread and butter, etc, was set before them, after enjoying which, games of various kinds, including cricket, etc, commenced in earnest, continuing until dusk. In addition to the band-the first occasion-the Vicar kindly provided swing-boats, cocoa nut shying, running for prizes etc, so that there was no lack of amusements for the youngsters, whose interests were well cared for by the Rev E.F. and Mrs Hill and Rev E.A. and Mrs Ferguson, Mr and Mrs Olliver, Mrs and Miss Pitt, Miss A. Honeybone, Miss Cox, etc. Numerous friends visited the field and witnessed with delight the frolicsome nature of the proceedings.'*

Swindon Advertiser 31 August 1874. Sunday School Festival. It starts; *'Last Thursday week was a day to be long remembered.'* It continued; *'A marquee was erected in Mr Freeman's field and a Mother's Meeting held in it, with lovely weather. Another tent of smaller dimensions was erected on the Parsonage lawn.'* It continues; *'In the evening young and old assembled under the ancient Elm tree on the lawn, and the members of the Shrivenham and Watchfield choir sang several glees, the village boys taking a very creditable part. The Sunday School having been established only six months, this was the first gathering of the kind ever held in Watchfield and the whole of the arrangements were superintended by the Rev E.F. Hill & Mrs Lipscomb.'* And it notes; *'One very pleasing feature of the gathering was that every farmer in the parish was either present or represented by some members of his family, the entire party numbering over 200, all ranks mingling together. Such occasional gatherings as this cannot but be the productive of much good feeling between the different classes.'*

Four years later a similar event was recorded in the edition dated 8 August 1896, *'On Saturday afternoon last, the whole of the children attending the Shrivenham and Watchfield Sunday school, had their annual treat. The teachers and children met at the school at three o'clock, and formed a procession and marched to the Parish Church, where a short address was given by the Vicar. The service ended, they returned to the school, where (on account of the rain) tea was provided. A capital tea waited them there instead of in the Vicarage grounds. Before partaking of tea the Vicar distributed prizes for regular attendance, etc. Among the prize winners were two who daily had to journey from Watchfield to Shrivenham and had made 406 attendances each, out of a possible attendance*

of 408. The children dispersed to their homes after giving cheers for the donors. The teachers were entertained at the Vicarage by Mrs Hill.'



Above. The Parsonage lawn in the centre of the picture. The 'Ancient Elm Tree' sadly no longer there.

19th Century Wills

Benjamin Stone, Cordwainer. 1815. PROB 11/1569

Beneficiaries: His wife, Hannah. Son Benjamin; 'A Silver Watch, 6 Silver Tea Spoons, a pair of Silver Table Spoons and a pair of Silver Tea Tongs, marked respectively B.S.' Son Joseph. His Brother Thomas. Executors, John Roseblade, his Wife's Brother, and John Gearing of Watchfield. Witnesses to the will were Henry Gearing of Watchfield and James Haines of Faringdon.

John Green, Yeoman. 1818. PROB 11/1616

He left a Cottager tenement in Little Coxwell for the use of his wife Ann (Executor), and the same to John Anger, otherwise, Green; 'The infant son of me the said John Green and Ann my wife born before our intermarriage.' He included that; 'Uses of a fine by me and my said wife of certain Freehold premises at Watchfield aforesaid which uses are declared by Indenture of and dated

20th May last and made between me and my said wife of the one part and Thomas Angell, Builder, of the other part.'

Edward Fairthorn, Gentleman. 1819. PROB 11/1615

He notes that he's of West Mill. His wife is Elizabeth. Beneficiaries: Sons, Edward (Eldest & Executor), John and Henry (youngest). Daughter Charlotte the wife of John Bradford. His Son John's boys, Henry and John and Grand Daughter Elizabeth. His Son Henry's boys, Benjamin, Henry and daughter Mary Ann. Daughter Charlotte's Son Richard. His brother Amariah and his Son John.

Charles Blagrove 1828. PROB 11/1741

He left to his wife, Elizabeth Goldwyot Blagrove the sum of £1000 (Executor). He also left legacies to his God Daughters, Frances Blagrove and Charlotte Sophia Blagrove and also to his Nephew Charles Blagrove the 4th son of Joan Blagrove.

William Giles 1840. PROB 11/1925

He left all his estate to his wife Hannah (Executor), then after her demise it all goes to his children, Elizabeth, William, Mary, Henry, Ann and Anna Maria, to be equally divided. Witnesses were Thomas Wilson and Robert Cook.

Charles Rickards, Gentleman. 1841. PROB 11/1947

He left lands in Longcot to his wife Elizabeth. Beneficiaries: Sons William, Charles and Richard (Executor). Daughters; Ann, Mary and Eleanor, Cordelia, the wife of Richard Linty, Catherine, the wife of Thomas Street and Agnes the wife of Richard Plummer. Grand Sons John and Benjamin. Also Grand Sons Charles & William Kent who are the children of his deceased daughter Elizabeth who was the late wife of John Kent. To the children of his daughter Sarah, the Widow of William Kent, Elizabeth, Sarah, Martha, William & Charles. Son Richard was the sole executor. Witnesses were James Haines, Solicitor, Faringdon and George James Haines, his Clerk.

William Holder, a Yeoman. 1844. PROB 11/1996

He left all his property to his only surviving Son John (Executor). He left £10 to his Housekeeper, Mary New, who lived with him. The Will was witnessed by R. Rickards and William Addison both of Watchfield.