

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF NYNEHEAD COURT

**By Margaret Ruth Whitaker
29/7/1885 to 19/12/1992**

Written in 1979

**Dedicated, with compliments, by permission of his parents,
to
Edward Samuel Ayshford Sanford, of Chipley Park
born December 7th 1978**

NYNEHEAD COURT
Wellington, Somerset
1979

Anyone fortunate enough to live, even briefly, in a house of some beauty in itself and its setting, with associations stretching back somewhere in the region of 1,000 years, must surely wish to see the past in as much detail as possible.

Who lived here? What did he (or, especially, she) do? And wear? Who were his friends? Why did he build just that? And when?

These are not questions I am qualified to answer with any authority. And age and lack of transport make it impossible for me to visit the Record Office, which stores quantities of documents possibly containing some of the answers. But others before me have attempted the task with more or less authority. Outstanding among these is a paper on "Points of Interest in the history of Nynehead", undated and unsigned, but attributed by the record Office to Mr William Ayshford Sanford, writing about in 1870.

A list of other publications consulted is given at the end of this paper. Two of the writers, Miss Francis and Mr Bothamley, do not seem to have had access to Burke or the Sanford papers, on both of which I have drawn much. For the latter I am indebted to the recent work of the Nynehead Local History Society, whose members have been transcribing Sanford papers which they have most generously put at my disposal. I have also made use of local tradition and my own observations. But there remains in the Record Office a large quantity of documents as yet unexamined and untranscribed. Much of it is no doubt trivial and uninteresting, but there are also probably some worth daylight. I am well aware of the defects and possible inaccuracies in my account, in spite of every effort to check and re-check.

Without the informed interest, encouragement, and hard sustained work of Mr Bye (ex-Chairman of the Nynehead Local History Society) these notes would not have seen daylight. To Mr Price (Chairman) a similar debt is owed for the skilled precision of the plan of the Court, and to Mr Anderson for his photography. May I offer them all the warmest possible thanks.

The cover illustration of Nynehead Court is reproduced from an 18th century drawing in the possession of Mr W.A. Sanford, of Chipley Park, to whom I also offer special thanks.

Dim figures of the Bronze Age people (1200-1000 B.C.) move across the background. In the 1800's a torque was found near the river, on the Court property, on Clavinger's farm. Torques are decorated bars of pliable metal, bronze or gold, about 4ft. long and are believed to have been worn as necklets. Since they were clearly of some value, it is probable that this one, which was broken, belonged to a chief who lost it and his life in battle. In 1889 it was in the possession of Mr Sanford (Humphreys).

Bronze axes have also been found and the Romans, with their usual nonchalance, dropped cash about. A Saxon hoard was also discovered but has disappeared.

A.D. 737 is the first date at which Nynehead is mentioned in historic records when the Manor was granted to the Bishop of Winchester. In 890 there must have been a church at Nynehead for at that date the Bishop granted land to Wolfher Giddings on condition that the tenant shall be a follower of the Lord of the church. And if there was a church, where did those who served it live? In the first building on the site adjoining the church, one might surmise i.e. the Court. What that building was, or even whether there was one, we do not know.

By 1091 the Count of Mortain, founder of Montacute, possessed a Manor at Nynehead and granted it to the Montacute Monks. Part of the parish is still sometimes called Monk's Nynehead or Nynehead Monks.

But there is reason to believe that the Fleuri family was established here about 1068 and the Manor was in the hands of their family in the time of Henry 1 (1100 – 1135). Probably they were adherents of the Conqueror, coming with him from France, where the family still exists. I have had correspondence with Mr Michel Fleuri, who is President of a Section of the Sciences Historiques et Philologiques of the University of Paris, in the hope of establishing the connection, but unfortunately his branch of the family settled in Picardy before 1189. The Fleuris seem to have become considerable landowners in Somerset, with the name surviving not only in Nynehead Fleuri, as it was called in 1581 (Humphreys) but in Combe Florey, Withiel Florey etc.

We may take it that, at the outset of the period, the house lay, as now, north-south, the living area, or hall, covering what is now the hall and dining room, and consisting of one large room with a central hearth and a louver in the roof to let out the smoke. The kitchen was probably detached from the hall, to lessen fire risks, and may have been on the site of the present one. The one-storey timber building would have had stone foundations; an earth floor laid with rushes; and a thatched roof. Certainly these de Fleuris would have housed themselves well by the standards of the day and no doubt the house changed much during the 2½ centuries of their ownership.

Rebuilding in stone is hardly likely before the de Wyke's day, but a low dias with a table and benches for use of the lord's family, and wooden screens behind it cutting off the doorway to the kitchen would have been an early addition and it is thought that the curious variations in the height of the floors leading out of the hall may be thus accounted for. Only the present hall and dining room are on the same level. All members of the household lived, ate and slept in the hall, until the solar was added. Washing and sanitary provision was practically non-existent.

Life in the Manor was largely self-supporting. Feudal obligations, hunting and farm work occupied the men. The traditional cooking, spinning, dyeing in the bright colours used for garments and wall-hangings, weaving and embroidery filled the women's days. If the lady of the household needed goods which her own establishment could not produce, her horse took her to Taunton, escorted perhaps by one of her husband's men, more easily than the present writer can make the journey! The marriages between families at a distance, like the Bonvilles of Devon and the Rolles of Stevenstone indicate comparatively free intercourse unhampered by the lack of roads.

The solar, or gallery over part of the hall, appeared about now and was used by the lord and his family to provide some privacy for sleeping.

The de Fleuris remained in possession until 1214 when Ralph and Thomas granted the advowson of the church to Taunton Priory, but during the reign of Edward 1 (1272-1307) John de Wyke had become by marriage Lord of the Manor. His travels took him far north, to Scotland with his King "the scourge of the Scots" (Collinson). The list of incumbents of the church begins in 1315. Between 1347 and 1350 there are 3 entries, one in each year. Those were the years when the Black Death was raging, sweeping away ½ of the country's population. We may suppose 2 faithful priests were caught in the fulfilment of their duties. The de Wyke pedigree gives no indication of similar deaths. Perhaps Nynehead village, like many others, suffered depopulation and the wooden, earth and thatch houses left empty vanished and were never fully replaced, accounting for the small size of the village.

Authorities date the noble front door, complete with its iron knocker and bar, at 1380, which seems to suggest a clue to the rebuilding of the house in stone. There is that intriguing half of a built up window visible on the outside of the porch, forcefully suggesting that it lit a spiral staircase to the solar, a stair still buried in the immense thickness of the wall. Another relic of this rebuilding is the curve of a roof beam over the solar, still visible in a cupboard behind the lift.

The greater peace and security of the country encouraged Tudor building and not only houses like the Court, but Forde Abbey, Montacute and many more in the district were going up or being rebuilt. At Nynehead, the present card room as well as the cottages which form one side of the Court, and the great fireplace in the dining room are evidence. It is thought that the card room, standing then apart from the main hall, may have been a dower house, "a hall" complete in itself, and certainly its shape, strong and simple, with its mullion window, gable roof, and great fireplace, give the impression of independent importance.

The Wykes seem to have prospered during the next reigns, for the Manor of Withiel Florey had become theirs by the time of Edward II (Collinson) and by 1451 they also held Uphill and Old Mixon (Collinson). In 1483 the property came to John de Wyke, who is said to have attended the marriage of Prince Arthur, son of Henry VII to the sad Catherine of Aragon (Collinson), in 1501, and was made a Knight of the Order of the Bath.

Earlier, in 1410, another John de Wyke had left money to build a south aisle to the church, while, about 1412, yet another Wyke built the chancel arch (Bligh Bond).

Bligh Bond dates the screen, which carries their arms, at 1480, and in 1529 Alice Wykes gave to the church land in Wellington. This gift brought in rent from which, in 1821, an organ was bought for £87. The land was later sold and the money invested by the churchwardens, bringing in a useful income today;£215.28 in 1977.

But it was not until after Richard de Wyke died, in 1590, and the property was sold to the Sanfords, that the phase of great building really began. Yet Richard, whose stone memorial is let into the north wall of the sanctuary of the church, had 17 children and might have been expected to need more accommodation. The inscription has become almost illegible with time and damp, but fortunately copies are extant.

“Here lieth interred Richard Wike of Ninhead in the County of Somerset Esquier who died the 10 of June 1590 being then the age of 65 years. And Margaret his wife daughter of George Role of Stevenston in the County of Devon Esquier who died the 12 of August 1578 being then of the age of 41 years parents of 17 children vic 6 sons and 11 daughters.”

Gerard, writing in 1633, severely criticises the way in which the sale came about “the heire male of theirs in our time having only daughters striving to continue his name settled his estate on his brother and lived to see it by him sold over his head to strangers. This may serve as an example to those that strivinge to eternise their names thinke they may by intailes prevent God’s decree in determining families”. Poor Richard!

Martin Sanford (1575-1643) married Susanna Sydenham (1577-1661). Susanna was a daughter of John Sydenham of Dulverton and the Sanford family had long been established in that area. They had widespread and distinguished forebears. There was a Gilbert Sanford whose name and arms appear in the Temple Church, London, Gilbert having given land to the Knights Templar Order. And another Gilbert was Chamberlain to Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry III (Burke) In Henry IV’s reign property in Dulverton, Exton and Winsford was in the Sanford possession.

Martin and Susanna had 8 children and many grandchildren. One of the latter became a London merchant and another was a Fellow of Balliol. Martin was High Sheriff of Somerset in 1641, 2 years before he died. (Burke).

A large stone, now in the Memorial Chapel commemorates Martin and Susanna. At the head are some fine decorative engravings and his arms and an inscription now partly illegible. It is followed by an Epitaph.

“Under this polished stone
Inhum’d doth rest
The Countries patriot
Hud’led up in dust
Had worth and wisdom
Had true religion sealed
Prov’d soveraigne antidote
Against death ‘ll
Hee had not died

Noe proviledge we see
The Law immortal bee
Yet in despight of fate
His virtues shall
To future times
Survive his funerale
Vivit post funere virtus”

“Heare also lyeth Susanna his
wife who dyed the 17th of march
Auno dom 1661”

Henry (1612-1644) = Mary Ayshford (1607-1662)

Henry’s marriage to Mary Ayshford brought with it large estates in Burlescombe, just over the Devon border and ever since then the heir has carried the Christian name of Ayshford.

Martin seems to have celebrated the increased family prosperity with an outburst of building, possibly in order to accommodate the newly married couple as well as his own large family, for the beautiful nuptial chamber (now rooms 5 and 6) over the present dining room has a lovely little plaster bridal wreath in the ceiling and the typically ornate fireplace bears the Sanford arms and the date 1633. This fireplace is part of the large chimney of the (present) dining room and was part of an external wall. The present fireplace of the dining room is much smaller than the open chimney breast would have been and is probably of a much later date, though the charming graceful swags of fruit and foliage carved into it still carry the Tudor rose.

Certainly a bride of 1633 would have welcomed the grand wide staircase with its “dog-leg” angles and shallow steps as a substitute for the narrow winding spiral which must have been deleterious to the enormously wide farthingale skirts Elizabeth made fashionable.

The Jacobean style panelling of the hall and present dining room probably accompanied the replacement of earth and rush covered floors by the use of stone and wood. Henry and Mary probably slept on one of the performed beds which appear in the inventory of their son John’s possessions at the time of his death.

Henry only held the property for a year after his father’s death, and it has been surmised that he died as a result of wounds received in the war. The Sanfords, like Taunton, supported Parliament and Henry is said to have taken over the command of the militia during his father’s illness. Martin was thanked by Parliament for Henry’s searches of Royalist households for hidden arms (*Humfreys*) and Mr Sanford refers to his action having averted a Royalist rising and the consequent damage to life and property. (*“Points in Nynhead history”*)

Naturally the miseries of the Civil War and the uncertainties before the Commonwealth put an end to building. Little more seems to have been attempted. Windows were still small, like the mullion lighting the lavatory on the first floor, which must have been part of the solar reached by the spiral stair. Sanitation was

almost non-existent. There is no evidence of a garderobe remaining in the Court. Pails and close-stools were still in general use.

We know only of two children, Martin and John. Martin married Margaret Putt, of Gittisham, thus linking the Sanfords with yet another beautiful old house and church. All his children died in infancy, and it was his brother John, the builder, who with his wife Elizabeth, of Hackney and Northampton, is responsible for much of the Court as we see it today.

The punning epitaph on Henry and Mary, based on the similarity of the two surnames, is still legible on the wall of the Memorial Chapel in the church.

Henry Sanford – buried Feb. 9th 1644 – Mary Ayshford, his wife d. of Henry Ayshford of Devon, buried Sept. 3rd 1662.

“Two fords conjoined incorporate
A husband and his spoused wife
Make one fine streame whose very name
Might give to healdry a theme
But as propense all rivers runne
Into the ocean whence they come
Soe they to earth their tending have
Both here concented to the grave” (*Collinson*)

John (1638-1711) and Elizabeth Knightley

There seems to have been a double connection with the Knightleys of “Hackney and Northampton”, for Susanna, also daughter of Lucy Knightley of London, married John Ayshford, born 1670 “2nd sonne of John Ayshford” according to an Ayshford genealogy (*Andrew Bye*).

The initials of John and Elizabeth, with the date 1675, are deeply incised into the stone over the doorway connecting his new building with the original hall. On the other side, in the hall, hung a wooden shield, bearing his arms. This is now in the possession of the present Mr Edward William Ayshford Sanford of Chipley.

Two documents recently transcribed by members of the Nynhead Local History Society are illuminating:

One, “the inventory and appraisement of all and singular of goods and chattels of John Sanford, Esq. deceased”.

This is undated, but is ascribed by the Record Office to the John who died in 1711. It mentions many items of interest, especially some which appear to fix the date of the building.

The other is the list of “indentures. The Manor of Nynhead”. It also is undated, but again the record Office attributes it to “the late 17th or early 18th century” i.e. John. 27 tenants are listed, holding small quantities of land and tenements and paying annual rents of from £30 p.a. to 10/-, bringing in a total of £350.10s. 0d. In addition there is a “church house” paying 12d. This house has entirely disappeared, in common with many of its kind. They were built near churches and used for church

business, junkettings and for stabling the horses on which worshippers travelled to church.

In addition to rent all tenants annually contributed a capon to the landlord.

It is interesting to consider the circumstances in which John worked. Inigo Jones (1573-1652) is acknowledged as the first English architect as distinct from master mason.

John's grandmother, Mary Ayshford, had died in 1661 and his inheritance from her made possible the rebuilding; and his 11 children demanded accommodation! (*Burke*). Robert Adam (1728-92) was not to begin his best work until 1762. Yet authorities like Pevsner consider the Court as a "remarkably early example of the classical style in Somerset". He describes the wide segmented door with a pediment leading from the hall as "a new feature and neo-classical".

So John seems to have been well ahead of his time!

His work includes the main block looking roughly east, the block to the west with the drawing-room – a "double cube" room; and the east projecting block.

That the east-west block which forms the north side of the Court is a later addition is proved by several factors. It is absent from the 18th century drawing referred to later; the inventory made when John died refers to none of its rooms; and the clumsy junctions on the first floor are entirely unlike his work.

Whether he had an architect or not, his master-mason may have been a man with knowledge of the growing influence of the Palladian style and the general effect of the east front and its roof suggest that this was the case.

It is difficult to identify all the rooms mentioned in the inventory, but the hall, with which it begins, is interesting, because clearly it is still one large room, not yet divided into hall and dining room. The fire on the floor, with the smoke going through the roof, had probably been replaced earlier by the large fireplace with an external chimney in the east wall of the present dining room.

The items listed in the inventory are here spelt as in the original.

- 1 John's hall contained a long table, 2 forms, 2 oval tables, one sideboard, four turkey chairs, one dozen leather chairs, one pair of Iron Doggs, one fine pair tongs, one pair of bellows, two window curtains, one screen.

The "Middle parlour" is thought to be the room now used by senior staff, with its beautiful fireplace and fine panelling. It contained 1 oval table, 4 Turkey chairs, one sideboard, 6 leather chairs, 1 pair of Doggs, tongs, bellows, looking glass, 8 pictures.

The "Little parlour" could be the room on the other side of the passage, now floored in parquet. It held 1 oval table, 4 leather chairs, 2 Turkey chairs, Doggs, tongs, 4 boxes, irons, 1 picture.

The "passage". One clock and one table.

The “Best Parlour”. –containing-
16 cane chairs and cushions, one large looking glass, one table, one tea-table, tongs,
fire shovel, one pair of stands, one Turkey carpet, a pair of s-on-es. 11 pictures.

“In the Passage”. 2 pair of tables.

“In the Gallery”. This is a puzzler. The name “Gallery” appears several times. Could this have been the area behind the drawing-room, now a passage? There was then no connection with the (non-existent) garden room, or with the card room. It contained a cane squab with cushions, 9 old chairs, 2 tables and 15 pictures.

The inventory passes now to the bedrooms and begins with another puzzler.

- 2 “The Pantry Chamber”. One feather bed performed, 3 stools, 1 chair, a little table, one picture, one chest of drawers (the only one mentioned) Doggs and tongs, 1 window curtain, 3 hangings, one close stool.

Clearly an important room. But which?

“Closet”. 2 Secretaires, 2 tables, 2 cupboards, the books (valued at £10).

“The Wrought Chamber”. Now 5 and 6). 1 feather bed performed, 5 cushions, 2 looking glasses, 5 cane chairs, 2 tables, shovel, irons, tongs, bellows, brush, 4 window curtains and hangings, 1 picture.

“The Kitching Chamber”. One bed performed, 1 weather glass, 1 clock and 4 stools, 2 cane chairs and 1 picture.

The “Purple Chamber” and the “Little Chamber” seem to have rooms in the east facing block nos. 10-12. The first had a bed performed, 5 small chairs and stools, 8 (?) window curtains, a glass, a table, 1 close stool. The others had 1 bed performed, 3 chairs, a looking glass.

The “Nursery Chamber”. Traditionally, 20 was the nursery. It had 2 beds performed, 1 stand for sweet meats (what did this hold?) one old chest, fire dogs, 2 old chairs. This room has, most unusually, a door opening outwards to the passage and 2 communicating doors, one to No 21 and one to No 19 in the east-west block.

Now we go up “the little stairs to Mayd’s room” which has 2 warming pans, one chest, one press and one candle box. Probably the maids slept on straw or wool mattresses on the floor.

“Chamber next to Mayd’s chamber” 1 bed performed, one small cupboard and chairs, bellows, fire shovel, tongs and dogs, 2 cane chairs, 1 table and glass.

“Top Gallery”. Does it mean just an open space? It contained 1 press bed, 1 table, 1 press for sheets, one coffer and a chest.

“Top of Great Stairs”. One high press, 1 press, 1 linnen press, 2 old chests, a suit of curtains, 10 pillows, 4 blanketts, 1 quilt, 1 old carpet, 1 counterpain.

“Ye top chamber” (No 7) One bed performed, 1 table and form, 1 spinnett, 5 old chairs and stools, 1 small screen, 2 pairs of iron dogs.

3,4 “Inner Top Chamber” Two cold stills, 3 Limbricks, earthenware, old boxes, 1 speaking trumpet.

“Ye little Hall Chamber”. Was this the area now equipped with a bath and lavatory? It contained 2 feather beds performed, 2 old chairs and other lumber.

“Great Hall Chamber”. (No.1 and 1a) Two beds performed. One feather bed and old bedstead, 5 old chairs, 1 couch and table, one old trunk and dogs, 2 Turky carpets, 2 suits of tapestry (valued at £15-0-0) 5 cushions, a remlett (?remnant) of cloth, 1 ciprus chest, 1 dozen cushions.

5, “Top of ye Great Stairs”. Linnen. 15 doz. Napkins, 6 doz. Of Hatchbark, 39 table cloths, other small linen and towalls.

6 “Ye back Gallery”. This is unidentified. 20 pairs of sheets, 20 pillow biers, 20 pair servants sheets.

“In ye Great Chest”. 10 pair of fine sheets, 6 pair of sheet, 6 kitching table cloths, 16 small table cloths, 3 doz. Napkins, 2 table cloths, 2 damask cloths and 7 napkins, 1 tablecloth.

“ In ye trunk at the head of ye little stairs”. 2 damask cloths, 2 dozen napkins, 2 damask cloths and 12 napkins, 6 diaper cloths and 4 dozen napkins, 2 diaper cloths and 2 dozen napkins, 1 fine diaper cloth and dozen napkins, one large diaper cloth and 4 towells.

“In ye trunk in Little Chamber”. 6 pair fine sheets, 4 pair sheets, 1 pair sheets, 7 pair pillow biers, 4 pieces of crestick.

7. “Ye Inner Camp Chamber”. (Unidentified) Three beds performed, 2 old chairs.

8. “In ye outer camp chamber” (unidentified) 4 beds performed, wool (valued at £40)

Old Puter (?pewter) 202lbs (valued at £4-18.0)

Ffive (?fine) one dozen and half of better plates

“ye stair case”	8 maps and 6 pictures	£4. 6. 0
“ye best gallery”	15 pictures	£6. 13. 0
“Great Parlour”	11 “	£6. 0. 0.
“Middle Parlour”	8 “	£1. 0. 0.
“Little Parlour”	1 “	5. 0.
“Wrought Chamber”	1 “	5. 0.
“Pantry Chamber”	1 “	2. 6.
“Kitchen Chamber”	1 “	2. 6.

Plate weighing 1546 ounces £380. 1. 2.

Notes: 1 – 8 by courtesy of the Record Office.

- No.1 Turkey was a richly coloured woven material with a deep pile, cut so as to resemble velvet.
- 2 see No. 7 below
 - 3 “cold stills” Presumably stills as used for distilling. Significance of “cold” uncertain
 - 4 “Limbricks” Alembics. Gourd shaped vessels used for distilling.
 - 5 “Hacibacks” Probably a local variation of huckaback – rough linen used for towels.
 - 6 “pillow biers” pillow cases
 7. “beds performed” Beds with all the furnishings and hangings.
 8. “Camp chambers” Uncertain. But a camp-bed at this stage was a four-poster.

It is curious that there is no mention of the kitchen equipment, except for the 2/6 picture. Clearly it is the room with the huge open hearth, now sealed off, and the bread oven at the side.

The most valuable item is of course the quantity of silver and next to that the bed in the nuptial chamber, left by John to his wife with much else, and an annuity of £250. His wearing apparel, watch and rings are also valued at £20. And there is the surprising item of wool, worth £40, in the outer camp chamber. Presumably, it was the year’s yield, valuable enough to be brought into the house for storage.

The Tudor building, now the card room, is not mentioned. It is thought now that it may have been a dower house, in which case the contents would not have been John’s property.

So that is the house John and Elizabeth built and equipped, and brought up their large family in.

Room 9 with the Sanford arms in the window seems originally to have been part of the solar, and to have been enclosed by a thin wall, to make an additional bedroom, at a later date, and the same may have been the case with Room 8. The Tudor Cottages, much patched with later work, forming the west side of the Court and part of the north, probably housed estate labour. Mr Bothamley points out that one of these cottages, now used as a store-room, at its south end goes right up to the roof, with no second storey, and so looks much as must the original hall. It would seem that the “little stairs” led up, as now, from the small landing on to which No.20 and No. 12 open, turning back to give access to the second floor, on which were the “mayd’s chambers”. The main block ended here, and the fork leading up to the 3 attic rooms was made when the east-west block was built. From the landing the “little stairs” also descended to the ground floor, as now, and the Jacobean style banisters built into the wall are still apparent.

The beautiful square brass door locks still on the doors of many rooms are typical of the late 17th Century.

John's Will sadly records family trouble, for, ---- "my daughter Susanna has to my great grief and sorrow imposed upon and withdrawn from her obedience to me" and ---"as long as she shall live unmarried to James Knight of Nynehead Fleury, clerk, " --- she is to have only an allowance of £40 in trust, annually; while the other daughters are left the handsome sums of £2,500 each. If she and James Knight live "abroad" the same provision is continued. ("abroad" probably meant "away from Nynehead" and "clerk" meant "in Holy Orders").

Elizabeth put up a handsome pillared memorial tablet of grey marble to her husband, showing his arms and the details of the marriage of the nine children surviving out of the eleven she had borne him. Susanna is listed as unmarried.

The other 3 daughters all married Londoners, which suggests that Elizabeth's London connections were maintained, and perhaps helps to account for the advanced style of John's architecture, already referred to.

John's heir, William (1685-1718) married Anne Clarke, the daughter of Edward Clarke of Chipley, M.P. for Taunton, Comptroller of the Household of Mary II and close friend and correspondent of Locke, the philosopher. Her mother was a Miss Jepp who is commemorated in the Elizabethan monument in the Church. Anne left, unwittingly, a touching memento of herself in the tablet in the floor of the north transept to "Ellinor Price, spinster, aged 72, true and faithful servant above 50 years to Edward and Jepp Clarke of Chipley, Esq. stone placed by Mrs Anne Sanford, widow, one of the daughters of the said Edward Clarke, Esq."

The last Clarke died about 1800, leaving Chipley to his steward, Mr. Martin (*Humphreys*). But Mr Sanford records ("Points of Interest in Nynehead History") "that part of the property was left by Will to Mr Sanford the father of the present owner" i.e. E.A.Sanford 1794 – 1871.

When this first William died his property was listed in great detail. His wearing apparel was put at £20 and his watch at £10. If Anne wanted to shop in Taunton or travel to Bath or London she could do so in stately comfort, for the stables contained "four coach horses" and 12 other horses, mostly named, "Punch, Pollard the Blind Horse, Duke, Whitefoot, Dragon". "There were 39 yews, rams, 28 hogs, 6 cows in calf, 2 fatt oxen, 6 plow oxen". In the Hoggs styes 17 various. In the Court Barton were "reeks of barley, wheat and hay" with stores of beans, peas, wheat and wool.

In the tablet with which Anne commemorates her husband's early death, she again shows her interest in their servants, calling him "the best of masters". A stout cherub mourns him with large substantial tears.

William (2nd) Ayshford Sanford (1717-1170) married Ann Chichester, who died in 1777. They had 5 sons and a daughter. One of the sons, Joseph, married Lady Rachel, daughter of the Earl of Antrim, who was buried at Nynehead in 1811. Joseph died at Nice in 1819 (*Burke*).

Some of the Estate accounts for this William have been transcribed for the years 1740-1759. Here are some items:

“Livery lace	£2.6.8
Betty Holly, one years wage she lived in)	£3.0.0 (her job is not specified but presumably
Snuff box	£1.16.0
A horse	£7.10.0.
Cow	£5.17.6
For painting ye little parlour	£3.3.0.
Soap and candles	£12.19.6 (evidently these were no longer home- made).
Ye chimney-sweep for ½ years salary 10/-	
Took out pocket money (this item is repeated quarterly. Whose pocket money is it? Or does it just mean petty cash?).Thos. Arscott his bill for meat from March 1748 to Feb. 1751 £19.15.4	
50lbs honey 16.8.”	

In March 1751 10 weeks seem to have been spent in Bath. There were expenses for the journey, an extra horse, a doctor’s bill, an apothecary, lodgings, housekeeping, wine, a French horn was bought for £3.3.0 and a set of livery buttons cost £1.14.6.

The Court bell, used to summon men to work and meals, is a high quality metal and decorated with engravings. It bears the inscription “1747. W.A. Sanford Esq.” and hangs now between two tall brick chimney stacks, over the tower room and kitchen (*Mr Priddle*). It was presumably moved there when the east-west wing was built.

It was during the 1770’s that the silk industry, later deliberately murdered by the woollen manufacturers, flourished in the Taunton area, so probably this William planted the magnificent mulberry tree which still yields such an abundant and delicious crop. Though why he chose that spot, in a corner of what seems to have been the farmyard, is difficult to understand.

John Ayshford Sanford (1743-1779) married the Hon. Jane Austruther. There were 2 sons and 2 daughters of the marriage. Jane seems to have gone to Exeter for the birth of her first son, William, for he was baptised there, in the parish of St Lawrence, and a daughter, Anne Elizabeth Charlotte, born in 1773 was baptised in the parish of St James, Bath.

John’s headship of the family is notable for 3 things. The custom of frequent Continental journeys was established and there were Italian inter-marriages; the personality of his second son, the Rev. John (1777-1855); and the enormous pomp of his funeral. One of the daughters married an Italian, the brother of the Duca of Ascoli, and died, childless, at Naples. The other also died at Naples, unmarried.

The Rev. John was Vicar of Nynehead from 1810-1834 (*Thorne*) but it is unlikely that he ever occupied the Vicarage. He put a curate, Thomas Tanner, who eventually succeeded him as Vicar, in charge of Nynehead, and, having married Eliza Morgan, settled himself in the Villa Torregiana at Florence, and made a notable collection of paintings, pietradura, statues, furniture etc.

He and Eliza had an only child, Anna Horatia Caroline (1824-1899) who married the 2nd Lord Methuen in 1844 (*Burke*). No doubt some of John's acquisitions settled at the Court, and are amongst the "treasures" referred to later, but when he died the collection as a whole went to Corsham where it forms part of the famous Corsham collection.

There is a portrait of the Rev. John, painted in 1850 by John Hollins, in the collection (*Corsham catalogue*). He is wearing what to modern eyes is a most un-clerical dress; a dignified, able person, well aware of his own value. He was a patron of the sculptor, Aristodeme Costoli (1803-1899) then a young pupil of Casanova, who made busts of him and Anna and a model of Anna's hand. John's bust is in the Memorial Chapel.

He put up 2 tablets there; one of John and Jane "as a mark of respect to his parents" and the other to William and Anne, his grandparents "as a mark of respect of his ancestors".

To the church he gave the 2 exquisite and priceless Della Robbias which we prize so greatly and perhaps guard rather light heartedly. An equally exquisite Mino da Fiesole tabernacle was sold to Cardiff Museum in 1970 to pay for the restoration of the church. Might he today have felt that the tabernacle was out of place in an English parish church, even if its alternative home had to be a secular museum where it would be seen by many?

Chipley at this period was still Clarke property. In 1775 John Sanford writes angrily to Edward Clarke of Chipley on a subject which is not clear, though the purchase of a horse comes into it.

Four years later John is dead, evidently dying out of the country; possibly journeying homeward as a sick man, and dying on the way. Of that part we have no information, but there is a long detailed bill from Burrows and Badcock accounting to the Executors from Plymouth Dock to Nynehead.

A lead coffin is provided covered with black cloth and 12 men paid for carrying it to the "Herse" with a set of handbells, more black cloth Shellboard, fustian, buttons, silk twist, pockets, garters, hat, ribbed stockings, buckles, and belts, 24 yards rich black silk, 3 drivers, 2 mutes, gloves, ribbons, herse and horses for 6 days, 24 cloaks, coach and 4 horses for 6 days. Finally a mason was paid 18/6 for making the grave.

The 6 days journey must have been macabre indeed.

Did the poor Hon. Jane follow in the coach, or did it travel empty "as a mark of respect" through the long green Devon lanes?

William (the 3rd) Ayshford (1772-1833) is described by Burke as "of Nynehead and Lynton" so presumably he broke away from the fascination of Italy and bought the Woody Bay property. He married Mary Marshall in 1793 and they had one son, Edward, who was to make a considerable mark in the history of the Court.

Mr E.W.A. Sanford of Chipley Park possesses a superbly executed pen ink and wash drawing entitled “The S.E. View of Nynehead Court, the seat of W.A.Sanford Esq.” In a corner in minute script is inscribed, in different handwriting, ‘As it was in 1792’.

Mr Sanford is of the opinion that the drawing was done from memory, and some curious anachronisms support this – e.g. the relative sizes and sites of the house and church are incorrect; while the drawing-room block, with its fireplace, attributed by such an authority as Sir Nikolaus Pevsner to c. 1760, is omitted. Other points of interest are: the east-west wing is missing from the drawing and a one-storey building of inferior type stands on the projecting site of the present kitchen. The site of the orangery is occupied by a 3 storey building of cottage type which blocks the present eastern archway. Adjoining this to the east is another building with 2 doors, probably cottages.

In front of the main block are rectangular lawns with a low wall much as at present, but no drive. Another circular lawn edges this but neither tulip tree nor sycamore are there. Beyond this again is another low wall with a double hand-gate leading apparently to a drive.

Close between the church and the Court is a building of some size which might have been the “church house” listed on the “Manner” roll of 1711.

There does not seem to be a main entrance to the house on this south-east side, so that probably the old porch opening on to the inner court was still in use, with the 1380 door closing it.

During the lives of William (3rd) and Edward much alteration took place. All the early maps show a bridge over the river, but the route to the house from that point varies greatly, sometimes keeping west and going round the back of the building.

William (3rd) widened the river at that point into “a beautiful sheet of water with cascades” and built the really fine 3 arch bridge across it in 1817, leaving his name and the date incised under the central arch. One of the “cascades” now usually called a weir, still survives near Hornsay Farm, but of the other only scattered fragments remain, and the lake has silted up so that the river now flows under only one arch. His avenue of Turkey oaks, entering from the Nynehead-Wellington lane is shown on the 1840 tithe map and also on Humphreys (1889). The fine pillars at the entrance from the lane are still there, but the avenue was cut down about 20 years ago, when the property was in the hands of Kleinwort and Benson. No doubt the intention was to carry the avenue on up the hill past the west door of the Church to the east front door along the drive shown on the later maps, but this does not seem ever to have been done.

It must have been before this that the main entrance, with the 1380 door, was moved from the original porch (now the nurses dining room), for the maps show the north exit from the inner court to have been blocked, and coaches could no longer deposit their passengers and drive on through to the stables.

This raises the question of the date of the knot garden, and with it the planning of the vista, outlined by the great trees, across the knot garden and over the parkland to the rosy tower of Wellington church against the blue Blackdowns.

The influence of Le Notre is evident here. The Sanfords would certainly be familiar with Versailles and with such ambitious efforts as neighbouring Bicton. Could they not have brought home from the Continent cuttings of the French box which makes the Court Knot garden unique. And even perhaps the design “lifted” from a venal Versailles employee? It is certainly the work of a genius. Only when you study the circles and whorls and curves and angles, the accuracy of the paths, miniscule or larger, and consider the urns standing at exactly the right points on pillars of exactly the right height, do you realise this. At some time the central circle was a pool, doubtless with a fountain. The necessary water pipes are still there.

If the drive to the present main entrance skirted the knot garden then the yew tunnel must have ended further east than at present, as must the wall which forms its back. Examination suggests that this was the case. The archway was of course non-existent and is obviously a later construction.

So far, no clue to the date of the building of the east-west wing which forms the greater part of the north side of the Court and projects eastwards, has been found, but it must have been during this period. The junction with John’s building is clumsily contrived, especially on the upper floors. The wing projects east at a curious wider-than-right angle and the size and height of the ground floor room, now the kitchen, give the impression that it was intended to be of importance, as do the 3 tall north windows, embellished outside with stone panelling. Mr Bothamley, seeking a reason for the odd angle, consulted Nikolaus Pevsner who suggested that the projection might be set “on the foundations of a 14th century or earlier building, detached from the main house”.

Could it be that our present kitchen is indeed on the site of the Wyke’s. We know that, because of fire risks, kitchen and hall were habitually detached.

Miss Francis’ charming “Scrapbook” includes an illustration of a “golden pelmet” lately removed from one of the rooms, which certainly derived from “Prinny’s “ 1821 golden drawing room at the Pavilion, Brighton.

The orangery must have been comparatively short lived, since it clearly was not standing when the 18th century picture was made. William and Mary (1689-1702) had made orangeries fashionable but they were not very quickly adopted. That at Saltram was not finished until 1775 when Henry Stockman followed Rob. Adam there. A picture postcard of the Court dubbed “circa 1892” shows a 2-storey building standing where the little brick court is now. Just visible at the S.E. corner of the picture is part of a roof-high window, and the beginning of the steps outside the platform on which the orangery stood. It is thought that the 2 storey building was a dummy front, erected to give height to a roof over the palm trees inside. This photograph shows the tulip tree in the foreground, mature and well grown. It can hardly have been much less than 100 years old and so must have been planted soon after the 18th century drawing was made. The orangery was still standing in 1869 when it was used for services while the church was being restored. It is reported that

the iron framework was in position about 1946, with a tiled floor, though the glass had all gone (*Francis Hake*).

The “Taunton Gazette” and “Western Flying Post” gave rapturous accounts of a visit of several days to the Court in 1809 by H>R>H> the Duke of Cambridge, who had been a friend of William’s during Continental tours. Nynehead and Wellington church bells were rung; an ox roasted all day on the lawn, and was “liberally partaken of by over 2000 spectators with bread and plenty of strong beer and cider”. After dinner Mr Sanford’s house guests “had the windows open so that they could enjoy the interesting spectacle of rural gaiety in its most exhilarating character”.

The Duke was further entertained by rides to “the romantic hills of the Blackdowns” and also dutifully “visited Mr Fox’s manufactory of coarse cloth”, as well as calling on Mr Sully of Wiveliscombe, who was surprisingly, the Duke’s oculist, Mr Sully also maintained a “useful establishment .. the Wiveliscombe dispensary “which was generously supported by many local gentry” including Mr Sanford.

Next year there was the excitement of watching, presumably from Lynton, a balloon which had started from Bristol in the morning, coming down in the sea about 4 miles off the Valley of Rocks. However, a boat “sent out by Mr Sanford and other gentlemen” was in time to rescue the aeronauts.

In 1815 Edward had a great coming of age party.

His father referred in the speech of welcome to his royal godfather, and the “Courier” dwells on Edward’s very extensive tour on the Continent, and to “intellectual attainment and amiable character”.

“Vast numbers attended” and enjoyed “supplies of prodigious extent and vast baronial hospitality” “beef from an ox roasted whole, beer and cider flowed” villagers danced to the music of bands, the neighbouring church bells rang, there were fireworks and a balloon. A “select party of ladies and gentlemen enjoyed an elegant cold collation” and in spite of all “the company retired in very orderly conduct to their respective homes”.

The proposal to erect the Monument is said to have originated at a dinner party at the Court. A meeting was subsequently held at the town-hall, with W.A.Sanford in the chair, and the project went ahead. Originally the scheme was to have been completed by building 3 cottages for Waterloo veterans, an Englishman, a Scot and a Welshman, but funds gave out. Thomas Lee of Barnstable, who also designed the Court bridge, was the architect.

There was another great function in July 1829, when the “Courier” records an Archery meeting. Tents and a marquee to hold 70 were put up, and ladies dressed in green and white competed. In the evening there was dancing to “the fine Nynehead Band”, and all were “impressed with the liberality and graceful attentiveness of the hospitable host and amiable consort”.

William(3rd) died at Lynton in 1833, also did his widow 20 years later. Both have memorials in the chapel, he to an only son and brother; she to a beloved mother by her only son.

Edward Ayshford Sanford (1794-1871). From Winchester his housemaster in 1804 reports favourably on his “regularity” but has to admit he is idle otherwise in spite of possessing “very good talents”! After Winchester, he attended Trinity College, Cambridge, and in due course became an F.R.S. and, as already noted, spent some time in travel on the Continent. He married Henrietta Langham in 1817 and by her had 7 children. He became a J.P. and represented Taunton and later Minehead in Parliament and was also a Deputy Lieutenant of the County. He owned nearly the whole parish. (*Nynehead in 1866*)

Henrietta died in 1836, at the age of 37. Six years earlier, she had built and endowed the village school – 40 years before the first Education Act. She may well have taught there herself, according to the custom of the more thoughtful and benevolent of her generation and class.

One of their sons, Edward, took Holy orders and held various livings and became a Prebendary of Wells Cathedral. Another, John, served in the Navy and died unmarried, while Charles, in the H.E.I.C.S. was killed as a Major after brilliant exploits during the siege of Lucknow in 1858.

IN 1841 Edward married as his second wife Lady Caroline Anne Stanhope, who have the armorial window to the church. It seems that Lady Caroline wished her stepdaughters to see something of the fashionable world, for in 1844 the Somerset Gazette records “the following distinguished party staying at Nynehead Court – the Duke and Duchess of Leinster, Lord Kildare, Lord Otto Fitzgerald, and Lady Jane Fitzgerald, Lord Foley and Miss Foley and Mr R. Neville”. One wonders where she put them all, and their maids and men! It would certainly not have been possible without the additional rooms in the east-west wing, for Dukes and Duchesses (even Irish ones) expect their dressing rooms. Sanitation too must by now have been installed, though doubtless they still took their baths cosily before their bedroom fires.

Lady Caroline died in 1856. One of her daughters, Charlotte had married in 1847 and the remaining one, Henrietta Mary did so in 1858. It looks as if William the heir who had married in 1857 may have moved in to join his father, for in 1852 there was an advertisement of stock for sale at Chipley, “Mr Sanford having let his estate there”.

Correspondence with Stephen Bailey of Hornsay, agent in the 1860's shows Mr Sanford as “spending the whole summer” at Lynton where he kept a yacht on which Mr Bailey “enjoyed a sail”.

But they came home for shooting! (*Humphreys*) records the – to our eyes, shocking bag of such birds as a golden oriole, great grey shrike and green sandpiper in 1862.

The Court at that time employed 6 gardeners. There was an intriguing letter written by "Ingham" in 1858 to his employer apparently at Woody Bay saying he "has one of the hogs head of beer ready for Australia in first rate condition for moving" and asking for instructions.

The great undertaking of 1869 was the building of the Memorial Chapel and the restoration of the church. The old horse-box pews were replaced and the Sanford memorials collected from the rest of the church. Costoli did the beautiful kneeling angel (too big perhaps for the chapel) in memory of Henrietta. Bligh Bond says Edward was his own architect and also designed the little rose windows. He was certainly a very able man. There is a letter to a Duke of Leinster, condoling on the death of a child, which is a model of dignified courtesy and sincere sympathy. It is easy to accept the "beloved father" described on his tomb.

His full length portrait, presented to him in 1862 by a group of friends, still hangs on the Court staircase with a ghostly group of daughters dimly visible in the background.

But posterity had unexpected publicity awaiting him for in January 1978 the "Listener" published a photograph of a "mid-Victorian upper class group at Nynehead Court, Somerset in 1860" as an illustration of a Reith lecture on changes in British Society". Taken outside the main door, the group consists of Charles Lethbridge, Mr Sanford, Clara, Alfred Seymour and Janet Bouverie. This is probably the period at which the treasures of the Court were at their most numerous.

No doubt they included items collected and presented by the Rev John but amongst the most interesting and valuable, must have been the two halves of a bible written in Anglo French about the year 1260, probably at Exeter. For some centuries the second volume was in the Sanford possession having been given by Roger Ayshford to his cousin John Sanford during the reign of Charles the second. The first volume was given to Mr Sanford by the last Miss Warre of Hestercombe shortly before her death having been found in her cellars. These volumes contained the finest and most brilliant illuminations, though many of these have been cut out, enough remains to make the re-united volumes almost unique. Only one other copy also imperfect is known to exist and is in the British Museum.

There were also portraits of Mary the wife of William 3rd, Queen Victoria as a child, Napoleon Bonapart, John Locke (with many letters of his), miniatures of Catherine the Great, Lord Nelson, Mr Pitt and many family portraits. (*Points of interest and Humphrey*).

William Ayshford (4th) 1818-1902.

He was educated at Eaton and Cambridge and was for a time employed in the Colonial Service. His special interest was geology and natural history and he published works of research on these subjects. The County Gazette records a lecture of his in the Town Hall in 1858, two years after his return from his foreign service. As has already been noted he was the author of "Points in the History of Nynehead".

He was a J.P. for Somerset and Devon, Deputy Lieutenant for Somerset and President of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. His extensive

ownership of land in Devon and Somerset and generosity to tenants made him the obvious holder of the Presidency of the County Agricultural Association. In 1857 he married Ellen Seymour and their children followed rapidly. Their first child Ellen Henrietta (1858) married Charles Pole-Carew in 1886. The heir Edward Charles Ayshford followed (1859-1923) Then came Mary Ethel – Ettie- (1860-1941) who married the 3rd Lord Methuen in 1884, Blanche Clotilde (1862-1936), Henry Seymour John (1863-) and Rosalind (1864- 1935) who married in 1894 as his second wife, Sir Sydney Shippard.

Ellen died in 1867 and in 1874 William married Sarah Hervey who lived only three years afterwards. So Blanche who did not marry would have been alone with her father after Rosalind married, except when Edward was with them before his own marriage.

They seem to have been a cheerful, affectionate, family. There is a long letter from her brother describing a stag hunt of Ettie's, probably from Woody Bay praising her pluck in sticking it to the end "though she did get split once". The Master, the famous Mr Bassett gave her the head, a rather small one.

Another letter from Nellie (Ellen Henrietta) written in capital letters to her "Dear Papa" in 1865 when she would have been 7, entreats him to ask "Inghey" to send dozens of bottles of beer every time" for I cannot do without it." Could it have been home-made ginger-beer she required so urgently? She writes from 3 Catherine Terrace where presumably she was at school.

An undated letter from Rosie's governess Matilde Schollinegar upbraids Mr Sanford for having, without reference to her, made it impossible for them to meet Mrs Bouverie who was the only person able to "counter act the fatal influence that Miss Alice has on Rosie". The reference stirs curiosity as to the crimes likely to be committed under this "fatal influence". The only Alice I can find is a distant cousin, a Sanford of Triley Court, Abergavenny.

The stable accounts at this period especially around 1880 show frequent payments for post horses and post boys, items of £2.2.0 and £3.16.6. The four in hand goes from Nynehead to Woody Bay or Ilfracombe and "gates, presumably turn pikes are opened at the cost of 4/-. The horses are fed at Porlock for 5/-. A man with Mr Crooks horses helps to get the carriage up Lynmouth hill for 2/-. Post horses and post boys take "take the young ladies to Taunton Ball". Fetching Miss Sanford from Wellington station cost £1. She must have had a maid and an enormous amount of luggage to cost all that.

There were occasional visits to London for the season and in 1883 a house was taken in Cavendish Square. Blanche writes for permission to stay on for two nights to attend a ball she has been invited to.

The house at Woody Bay was sometimes let. Edward Warne of Eaton writes in June 1880 that he is arriving with a party of 17 "counting horses, my mother and her maid, two babes and 6 servants". He paid a rent of £80. The Baroness Marie de Tanlegues writes in 1889 that she wasn't really responsible for the damage to the yacht but she will pay if it is insisted on.

Surprisingly there is no reference to pets. No horses or dogs are mentioned. Even Ettie's mount for the stag hunt or the pony that went so fast when Blanche had a day on the moor, or the other pony which was prevented from bolting by a brother in law when both the shafts broke as he fetched Rosie from the station- they are all nameless.

The Woody Bay property was evidently extensive with a bailiff permanently in residence, writing letters about the "horses" (Exmoor Ponies?) foaling; potatoes and poultry ready to despatch to Nynehead; best coal available at 15/- a ton from a Lynmouth boatman at anytime.

After her marriage and her husbands appointments took her into exalted circles there are letters from Ettie: from Hatfield where "Lady Salisbury is very kind" and Windsor where "the Queen is charming". Did she succumb to the alleged habit of Windsor visitors of staying up half the night writing to their friends on the Royal letter paper?

Poor Ettie evidently had a miscarriage while staying at the Court awaiting her first child, for there is a testy letter from her father-in-law to Mr Sanford, attributing the loss of his grandchild and heir to Ettie's unsuitable light-hearted conduct – long walks and running up and down stairs! However, other babies arrived safely and Lady Methuen's charm and kindness supported her husband in the many offices he held with distinction. During the 1st World war he was Governor of Malta, when the island became a huge hospital for men from the Dardanelles and Mesopotamia.

In 1915, I and Lady Methuen's niece, Ione Pole-Carew, found each other in adjacent cots on H>M> Hospital Ship Asturias, en route for Malta, part of the first group of V.A.D. nurses to serve overseas. Ione had come from Australia to join up and her Devonshire cousins were friends of mine.

Lord Methuen met us at Valetta and though we were sent to different hospitals we met occasionally at the Palace, the Governor's beautiful residence built by the Knights Templar, its windows overhanging the main square. I did not know then that I should one day live in Lady Methuen's childhood home; next door to her final resting-place! Both she and he were greatly respected and admired on the island.

The present peer refers in his hand-book "Corsham Court", to her work on planning the gardens there, when her husband succeeded. Blanche settled at Asham House after her father's death, apparently on a very limited income, until Lady Methuen joined her after the Field-Marshal died in 1932. Blanche is remembered by old inhabitants for her generosity and kindness in the village, where she was the Vicar's right hand, and is said to have been the organist. (*Eva Edwards*) Together the sisters beautified the house and garden, and it became the centre of village fetes and activities.

Blanche and Rosie died within a year of each other and Lady Methuen a few years later.

On the wall of the entrance to the organ-chamber is a lovely little circular tablet of rosy marble. Inscribed round the rim are the words "Sorores carae Sorori" which can be translated "to dear sisters by a sister". In the centre is a monogram containing a large symbol impossible to interpret, and 2 smaller entwined letters S. A rubbing was taken which revealed that if the tablet was turned top to bottom the large symbol became a clear letter D, with the 2 other letters entwined.

Did Lady Methuen so record her love and loss?

Did the mason affix the tablet upside down?

Lady Methuen herself lies under a dignified memorial in the churchyard. Lady Shippard and Sir Sidney have a large granite stone. For Blanche there is nothing, unless it is this.

Lady Shippard's 21 year old eldest son was killed in 1917, and Mrs Pole-Carew suffered a similar loss.

Edward Charles Ayshford (1859-1923). He succeeded in 1902 and was still a bachelor until 1904, when he married Elizabeth May Griffith (who after his death married Lord St. John of Bletso and died in 1978). He was in the army for several years and held a command as Lt Col of the 3rd Battn. Duke of Edinburgh's Wilts. Regiment in Ireland and later of Boer prisoners on the island of St Helena. He writes of much illness in the camp, which he had moved to a healthier position near Long Wood, Napoleon's old house. While he was there Rosie's husband, Sir Sidney Shippard, K.C.M.G Governor of Bechuanaland, died, and Col. Sanford writes expressing his satisfaction that he had been buried at Nynehead, and of the "beautiful funeral" of which Blanche had written him.

Only six weeks before his father's death, he returned to England and was awarded a C. M.G. He was a J.P. for Devon and Somerset, a Deputy Lieut. And High Sheriff in 1908.

He now lived at Chipley Park, the Court being tenanted by Mr J.S.Lysaght J.P. in 1906.

In 1919 until his death in 1935 the tenant was Major Stobart, J.P.

Colonel Sanford's heir, William Charles Ayshford, born in 1905, and his second son, Henry Martin born 1907, were killed together in a car accident in 1974. A third son, Roger Aylward was born in 1909.

William Charles Ayshford married Rosemary Jean Lindsay in 1928 and had 2 children, the present Mr Edward William (the 6th) Ayshford Sanford, of Chipley, born in 1929. Joy Primrose born in 1931 who married Capt. Lloyd and died in 1967.

The present Mr Sanford married Judith Vickary in 1977 and has a son Edward Samuel Ayshford, born in 1978.

The Court stood empty for a while after Major Stobart's death, until in 1939 it was taken by a London mental specialist, Dr Waterhouse, who on the outbreak of war moved his patients from his nursing home in such haste that it is alleged they arrived before the beds!

But after the Munich "peace in our time" they were returned to London; until the rhythm changed, and they came back, and a German resident doctor joined them.

He left suddenly one day when Mr Greenslade came home to find his was to the Home Farm blocked by police, and a search in progress. A transmitter was dug up in the cottage garden; and the doctor departed to London, in handcuffs.

The Court became the property of Kleinwort and Benson, and about 1948 was bought by Mrs Jenson Potts as an hotel, in which she accepted residential guests. In course of time it became necessary to employ nursing attendants for ageing guests. Control was transferred in 1960 to a small limited company, of which Mrs Jenson Potts is a member. Through her generosity it was registered as a charity and retirement Home with nursing facilities.

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Most of the information is however taken from transcriptions of the Sanford papers in the County Record Office, lent me by Mrs Fletcher of Nynehead stables, Mrs darby of hornsay farm and Mrs Edwards of The Old Vicarage. Mr Priddle, Mrs Birch, Mr Reed, Mr Greenslade, and Mr hake have also contributed many details.

Mr Andrew Bye has kindly read the typescript.

Brackets () indicate authority.

To Mr Sanford by his coachman:

“Morning Sir, speaking of that there wall they’ m putting up on way from coach house to front door. I bain’ t going to drive pair fresh young uns in landau under that there arch with that wall a just sticking out to catch hub and make fine old mess and to do, with me and lads chasing them horses a hopping over them little hedges in Madam’ s Dutch garden. Ye’ ll have to have a sweeter turn in to front door. There’ s enough turn ups with young master in these here lanes bursting along at 10 miles an hour without having them at you door.

Good day Sir.

Another thing, Sir, you try getting the four-in-hand and coach round there with that there new wall a sticking out”

H.C.

N.B. The iron gate uprights still standing in the garden suggest that a wire railing divided the garden from the park in which young horses and perhaps cows grazed. With apologies to coachman. Ed.