



Cleeve Prior Chroniclers

The Bakehouse, Malthouse & Cottages

The Messuage and the Malthouse taken

From "The Laurels" A Worcestershire Farmstead and its People 1555 to 1982

By

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Charles Squire

The earliest that we hear of the Malthouse was in 1772, when Charles Squire was listed as the freeholder of a "House Garden and Malthouse" at the southern end of Cleeve Prior.

The documents give no other clue as to the location of the building, but the Snape Map of 1775 shows that Charles Squire owned a "*House Malthouse & Gardens*" in the south east part of Cleeve Prior. His will of the 24th April 1777 describes him as a "*Maltster*" of Cleeve Prior and the owner of

"three messuages or tenements , malthouse and gardens thereunto belonging situate lying and being in Cleeve Prior aforesaid in the several occupations of the said Charles Squire, William Ellis and William Silvester with the appurtenances".

The main beneficiary of his will was his wife Ann, whom he had married on the 27th May the previous year, and to whom he left all his various real and personal estate, apart from a "Blue bed in the best room" and certain bedroom fittings.

On 24th May 1776, we understand from his will that he entered into a Lease and Release Tripartite in which he was the first part, William Harbridge and John Slatter were the Second Part, and Ann Price was the Third Part. In this he placed his three Messuages or tenements, Malthouse and gardens in Cleeve Prior, which were occupied by himself, William Silvester and William Ellis in trust to Harbridge and Slatter. They were to hold it in trust for Charles Squire and his wife to be for the rest of his life, and then for the rest of her life, or until she remarried. The will recounts:

"should there be no children from their marriage then the Above property would go to his nephew Charles Silvester, Son of His brother- in-law William & Sister Anne. At this time the property was to be held in trust by John Bennet & John Rock, Gentlemen of Cleeve Prior. Should Charles Silvester die Childless then it should pass to his brother William. Should he die childless then it should pass to his brother John, and in the event of him dying childless it should go to the heirs of Charles Squire. His Widow Ann was also to receive all his personal estate, other than a blue bed and hanging press which was to go to Charles Silvester"

This will was written probably in the knowledge of his ill health as he passed away the following year and was buried at Cleeve Prior on 28th June 1777, shortly to be followed by his widow, who was buried on 1st April 1779



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Having inherited his uncle's estate he moved to London and having married had a son, Charles Squire Sylvester. We are not sure of the date of his father's death but Charles Squire is shown as the owner in November 1810, when the property is still listed as a "Messuage or tenement and malthouse, formerly in the occupation of Charles Squire and now in the tenure or occupation of Henry Keen" One of the Properties was still occupied by William Ellis, a brother in Law of William Silvester and therefore a great uncle of Charles Squire. The other was now occupied by Thomas Newman who married his Aunt Mary Silvester, daughter of William on 22nd November 1809. Henry Keen was the tenant of the Malthouse and would remain so until at least 1846.

Born and raised in London, Charles Squire Silvester may never have been to Cleeve Prior and possibly had little interest in his inheritance, other than a means of funding his own business. A prospect perhaps given added importance by his recent marriage. He was however bound by the terms of entailment as set out in his great-uncles will. Which clearly stated that the properties could only be passed down a specified line of descent and not sold. H therefore decided to instigate a "Recovery" or fictitious law suit in the Court of Common Pleas in Westminster to destroy the terms of the will leaving him free to sell the properties. He engaged two gentlemen, probably solicitors Messrs Seymour & Montriou, following which he leased the properties to Seymour for one year. The purpose of this was to enable Seymour to accept a "grant and release" of the properties the following day after which Montriou had to sue his partner to "recover" the three properties. This was all part of a fake legal procedure in the courts. The court was usually the Court of Common Pleas, but manorial courts could also deal with common recoveries. Common recoveries were used to break entails and to enable the transfer of land or property.

Once all the transactions had taken place Montriou leased the properties to Robert Silvester on 11th April 1811, a gentleman of Cleeve Prior, whose relationship to Charles is unknown. The following day the property was purchased by Robert for £300.0s which was not surprisingly paid to Charles Squire Silvester.

By 1835 24 year old Thomas Farr had become joint tenants of the Malthouse with Henry Keen, Robert still being their landlord. Robert had over a period been increasing the mortgage on the property to £250,, and by 1845 not only had he not paid back any of the capital sum there were "considerable arrears in interest", and the malthouse had been allowed to fall into such a poor state of repair that the debt far exceeded te value of the property. Unfortunately there is no documentation around the transactions, but the property was sold on behalf of the mortgagee to Frederick William Farr, listed as a 24 year old Maltster from Cleeve Prior. It appears that Farr did not have the monies required for the purchase, and he persuaded Benjamin Workman, a Gentleman of great Hampton to loan him the money and the sale was completed on 28TH February 1846.

Three years later Frederick Farr approached William Smith, Innholder of the "White Hart" in Bidford for a loan of £ 600, putting the Cleeve properties and other estates in Bidford up as surety. By June 1849 the deal was done, with the condition that should he default or be two months in arrears William Smith could exercise a power of sale to recover the debts. Furthermore during the term of the loan Farr was to be Smiths tenant paying a yearly rent of £22.0s, with the condition that the agreement could be terminated at any time as long as smith gave Farr fourteen days' notice to quit. A very onerous Clause one which is very one sided & left Farr with no security.

Smith Died 21st March 1857 and three years later the executors, his wife & son, demanded that he repay the loan. Although he had maintained the interest payments for 11 years he could not pay back the capital sum.



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He therefore negotiated with Robert Walker that he pay off the capital sum & interest, and the properties were made over to him. By 25th May 1860.

Very strangely within three months Walker decided to sell the properties in Cleeve Prior, and they went up for auction at the White Hart in Bidford. It may have been that he only wanted the assets in Bidford, those in Cleeve

John Fisher Tomes was declared the highest bidder and paid £310.0s for the properties.

On the 31st July the following year Tomes re-mortgaged the properties for £350 and increased this by a further £300 in 1864, however in 1868 John Fisher Tomes died intestate. The Property was sold recovering the debt & was purchased by George & Edwin Pearce but within 6 months they decided to sell & it was purchased by John Smith Holtom for £290.0, when he bought "The Laurels". To which he added the Malthouse, Bake house and other Hereditaments.

From the Cleeve Prior Census

In 1861 Charles Chandler 18 is listed as baker & he is living with the Cannaway family. George Cannaway listed as miller & farmer of 19 acres employing 2 men

Henry Thomas Farr in 1861 was a Tailor & post master his wife was post mistress

Henry Thomas Farr in 1871 was a Tailor & Farmer of 4 acres

Frederick William Farr is in Cleeve Prior in 1851 as Maltster & Baker

In 1861 he is 40 living with his mother in Bidford trade is still baker

1881 still in Bidford looks like the bank owns the house

		MARRIAGE	Males	Females
House Wood	on the	Bank		
Frederick Wm Farr	Head	Mrs	5	4

It looks like his wife is a school mistress & they have 6 children & 2 assistants as boarders

John Fisher Tomes in 1861 he is 26 with a wife and a 1year old son And he farms 100 acres he lives in a farm house not a cottage. Is this Kemises

In 1901 Thomas Sparrow aged 19 was the baker. He was living with his father George, and the rest of his family, believed to be in Peacock House. George was a butcher & Farmer on the 1881 census it shows that George is a baker & Shopkeeper living in Church Lench

1871 [Sarah Ann Taylor](#)26 [Esan Taylor](#)23 [Ann Taylor](#)58 Sarah Ann & Esan [brother] were bakers

In 1861 they were in Overbury where with their father James & her mother they were millers & bakers



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Eli Ankens	Head	M	56	W	Ironkeeper
Clara Do	Wife	M	43		
Mary M. Do	Daughter	S	18		Scholar
Clara A. Do	Daughter		9		do
Richard J. Do	Son		7		do
Sarah J. Gilbert	Serv.	S	46		General Servant