

Frederick and Eliza Amos who were living as a newly married couple in Doynton in 1881 found their children scattered, some forty years later, to British Columbia, Manitoba and California.

This last page forms a background to the man who stayed at home, Henry Hendy, sitting sedately in the bar of the Cross House with his polished shoes amongst the sawdust on the floor.

Little change took place before WW II or on into the period after it. The entrance in 1965 was still through the central door. If one turned left, there was a linoleum-covered, unheated, rexine and hard-back seated private bar. That bar was little used; most customers turned right into the public bar - larger, dartboard decorated and most convenient to the hand-drawn beer, which the publican reached tentatively down a few steps leading to the cellar. In the past his interest had been in pigs, nurtured by the war-time scraps from the Bristol hospitals. In the 1960s the only animals were the cats and the vociferous chickens that existed mainly in the old barn dating from the eighteenth-century farming days and recently used by Joshua Camery, whose cold forge still stood there.

With the arrival of Dennis Hood a major internal reconstruction was undertaken. The whole ground floor became one bar and the entrance was removed to the side, although the external appearance with an apparently central doorway was maintained. Some five years later new kitchens were added and the former cellars became part of the restaurant.

In 1808 navvies were digging out the new main road up Tog Hill, which then completely bypassed the old posting inn at Toghill House Farm (map shown in "Doynton and its Sinners"). This belonged to the Whittington Family at Hamswell and few of their estate records are still available.

A marriage settlement of 1798 mentions the messuage, tenement or inn called Toghill House and sixty acres of land in the occupation of John Gunning as tenant. He will have been one of the last of the innkeepers to have known the bustle of the changing of horses for the post coaches on the London to Bristol road. It may have been his sister or his daughter, Martha (born Cold Ashton 1759), who married Cornelius Dolling in 1782. Cornelius, born in Doynton in 1754, was the son of Charles Dolling who was the surety and victualler of Doynton in 1755, dying in 1760. The marriage of children whose fathers were in the same calling was common enough for us to suggest that Dolling may somehow be found to be associated with Toghill House.

In 1818 William Bishop bought Benchey Lease (TN167). Within two years he was declared insolvent and yet managed to carry on obtaining mortgages and building a further cottage on the site next to the new toll road. By 1839 his widow was running a pub on the site and the three small parts had a total of 29 people living in them - crowded tenements were not exclusive to industrial towns.

The Rev. C.R. Davy of Tracy Park set out to buy the property in 1860 but, waiting for documents from Melbourne, Australia, had to wait until 1875 to complete the purchase. For the first time a name was given to the pub: 'The Royal Oak Garden'. By then the railways had taken most of the traffic from the main road and perhaps the rural setting and the view from Toghill had to be stressed. The tenancy of the Royal Oak in 1861 moved from the Bishop to the Nichols family. One of these, William son of Thomas, married a girl, Mary Jane Watts of the Three Horseshoes in 1887. In turn, their daughter Eliza Mary born c1900 and brought up in the Royal Oak married Henry Crew.

Initially they lived in Hinton but ultimately returned to run the Three Horseshoes where her mother, as an orphan, had been brought up by her uncle and guardian.

The Royal Oak does not seem to have been licensed in 1903, but memory believes that it was finally closed in 1915.

**Fig 5.33. Party in Dyrham School 1915.** In 1915, Doynton had no village hall and so, if there was to be a party it was held, as here, in the Dyrham School. On this occasion the weather was bad and the band did not arrive, so the music for the dancing was played by Mrs Anstee of Court Farm on the piano and by Daniel Davis of Lower Ledge Farm on the violin.

*Photo courtesy Harold Elli.s*

Back row: Mrs Tom Gent, ? Pegler, Sybil Warlock, John Salmon, Bertram Ellis, Ellen Hodges, Philip Crew, Violet Anstee, A. N. Other.

Middle row standing: Frank Hardy, Tom Gent, James Batley, Bessie Kidner, Ernest Webb, Mrs. Webb, Minnie Mitchell, Fred Mitchell, Ivy Blake, Philip Gibbs, Daniel Davis.

Middle row sitting: Lottie Sparrow, Mrs Albert Anstee, Annie Cowley, Rose Davis, Doris Millarship, Mr. Millarship (of Dyrham School), Mrs Miliarship, Miss Satchell.

Front row on floor: Tom Gibbs, Philip Gibbs, John Warlock, James Kidner, Albert Anstee, George Gifford, Harry Crew.



**Fig 5.34. The W. I. meet for their Jubilee celebrations, Dyrham School, 1965.**



**Fig 5.35. The Cross House in September 1986.** The archway to the garden on the right. Modern entrance to the pub on the left by the driveway to the car park. The older building lies behind the road frontage of the Napoleonic period.



**Fig 5.36. A Wedding Photo** - hence the white carnations on the arch. Note that the gate is tied up and will only be opened when the bridegroom has hurled coins into the road for the children. In the background, Philip Exon from Bottoms Farm Cottage waits with the pony and trap for the photographer to finish his marathon seventy-five minutes with bride and groom. The allotments in front of the Church Site houses show an enviable neatness.



**Fig 5.37. The village hall is used for village administration, intellectual pursuits, social gatherings and physical recreation.** Here a junior dance class rehearses in April 1990.



**Fig 5.38. An early W.I. excursion in 1937 included a trip on the Thames near Windsor.**

*Photo courtesy Spencer Hall.*



The Old Brewery, built in the late 18th century by the Palmer family, was not used as a brewery until 1800 when William Wait, occupying the former tanner's cottage next door, bought the newly erected messuage, tenement and malthouse. He died only three years later leaving a complicated will, which his trustees did not manage with any financial records. By 1831 his grandson of the same name, living in 'The Hampshire Hog', Berwick Street, Soho was a bankrupt and was waiting for his aunt to die to inherit Doynton Brewery. He had to sell the expectancy of his inheritance, which, being a bankrupt and without any immediate expectation, did not put him in a strong position to raise substantial funds. The aunt did not die until 1847. The new owners sold as soon as possible to Henry Evans of the Three Horseshoes but he only held it for two years before his own death and his trustees again had to sell - this time to Job England. For a while, other tenants seem to have held the brewery before the Englands took on the work. After the death of Job's widow in 1878 the brewery was bought by the nephew, Henry Hendy. When there was a question of inheritance tax in 1893 the tax on the brewery was £24-5-0, but for the two adjoining freehold cottages let to Martha Snailum and Charles Ratcliffe no duty was payable because of their dilapidated condition.

Henry's widow remained to run the brewery and the eldest son went to run the old Star Inn on Lansdown. This was burnt down and the new pub designed from scratch including the furniture - the high backed, curved settles - and the draw-down shutters to the bar. A particular feature was the very wide porch to accommodate tables and chairs for the racing fraternity. When complete the new pub was called the 'Blathwayt Arms' and formed an outlet for the Doynton Brewery. When the widow died, two of the daughters, Florence and Edith Hendy ran the brewery until it was decided that they and their eldest brother would exchange responsibilities. In that period, before WWI they used to sell

Harvest Ale, relatively weak, at 6½ old pence (2½ new pence) per gallon and their 3 Star Beer at 8d per gallon delivered free on a horsedrawn cart by Sid Sprules.

The area alongside the road that now contains the sunken garden formerly contained the brewing vats, with spring water direct into the building. In the early 1920s one of the malthouses was burnt down and the brewing of beer stopped in 1922. The land attached to the Old Brewery became a chicken farm.

Some other licensees are known by name but it is not always certain which premises they occupied:

1743-1755	Charles Dolling	Toghill Ho. Farm?
-1757	John Shrewring	?
-1819	William Kew	?
1839-1841	Joseph Sheppard	Crossways
1851	George Evans	S. of Dyrham/Wick Rd.
1861	Nicholas Manning	Rectory Farm

Some of the above have already been mentioned in the text but John Shewring who died in 1757 presents some interest. Not only the site but also the style of pub is unknown. He left £10 each to two of his kinsmen. Three other recipients were women and no terms such as 'wife of —' is added. Two were to receive their bequests at the age of twenty-one, another was to act as executrix and to receive the rest and residue. Two of them were identified as 'that now lives with me'. None of them had Doynton names nor did they subsequently marry in the village.

Such a will could have provided gossip for the taproom habitués. Indeed gossip is one of the facets of village life. Noone admits to initiating it but more will admit to hearing it. Doynton's gossip has a certain quality of accuracy. If we move on from gossip to creative storytelling, then we have to admit that Doynton has little to offer. The murder at Trunkhouse Barn was based on fact but was embellished by casual narration to which 2½ centuries was but a yesterday. Ghost stories have the same timeless quality. The Old Brewery was twice the setting of a story: one in which a bloodstain appears on the wall and it was suggested that this is consequent upon the suicide of a man in the brewery who charged a muzzle-loader, put it in his mouth and fired it with his toe. The man and the cause of the suicide are forgotten - it is the bloody details of the act that are remembered as in the modern horror stories or in the old-fashioned barnstorming productions of 'Sweeney Todd' on the stage. The second story was of the type that aroused fear in the person involved. A mason working on the rebuilding reported being attacked by a male figure brandishing a cudgel. The workman was not hit but, frightened, fell over backwards and sustained a blow to the head. He avoided working there afterwards. The story was not spread around the village, but others later reported similar fearful sensations in the same area.

The pubs, with their meeting rooms and relative spaciousness compared with the cramped conditions in the crowded cottages, were suitable centres for the organisation of village activities, whether these were committees for the Poor Law or the Highways or groups to arrange games or sports.

Now that horse riding is a leisure activity we forget how tightly horses were interwoven into the daily fabric of life in the country. Several families retain photographs of members of the North Somerset Yeomanry or the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry: Arthur Bryan, George Cryer, Thomas Fisher, James Kidner, George Salmon photographed on a meticulously groomed and gleaming horse. George Fox Cryer from Close Farm was called up at the outbreak of the war in 1914, taking his own horse when the regiment embarked for Egypt soon afterwards. He returned in 1918, but his brother-in-law, Arthur Edwin Bryan of the same regiment, died in 1917 and was buried in Alexandria. The fortnightly camps are known to have been held in Dyrham Park and at Radstock. For that generation, the interest in horses lasted on beyond their youthful military manoeuvres. Alex Amos remained all his life an enthusiastic follower on foot of the Beaufort Hunt and in this he was joined by some or all of a group comprising Harry Crew, Arthur Jones, Harry Matthews and Fred Mizen. Flat racing drew their interest as well with Bath racecourse conveniently close and this enthusiasm still lives on. The 'Sporting Life' appears regularly with the paper delivery in the Church porch.

Until the construction of the M4, the Hunt used to meet as far south as Toghll, Tracy Park and Lansdown. Eileen Clarke, later Pitman, was one of the few active riders to hounds in Doynton.

The origins of cross country competitions do not stem from Badminton but from the type of local wager that occurred in 1803, when three gentlemen, Bailey, MacArthur and Dawson entered the wager in a book for a one-round cross country course from Dyrham Park to Doynton Church.

It was in the pub, too, that the third incarnation of the cricket club was arranged. The club had started in 1925 and had no permanent ground, the committee having to persuade a farmer to spare them a field. Court Farm seems to have been a centre, for Percy Anstee and Ralph Fussell were players and 6 acre, 12 acre or Hagmead often provided the pitch. Clarence Lear, at the age of sixteen, was one of the first captains. In those days the pitch had to be roughly created on a surface pitted with rabbit holes and larded with cowpats. Each weekend, a Yeo Bros. marquee had to be set up.

**Fig 5.39. Eileen Pitman at 92 shames most other OAPs with her energy.** A constant gardener, unafraid of dirtying her own hands, she opens Doynton House garden in aid of charity and is seen here below the climbing rose 'Seagull'. In the past, a strong rider to hounds. Founder President of Doynton and Wick W. I. and Permanent Vice-President of Doynton Cricket Club.

*Photo courtesy Mark Pitman.*



**Fig 5.40.** Filled with a sense of purpose and mission, Pat Rees left Doynton for Sierra Leone as a medical missionary. The setting was so very different but the people had similar problems and needs. She has now returned to Doynton.

*Photo courtesy Pat Rees.*



**Fig 5.41. The Hounds meet at the Cross in the early thirties.** Had the photographer moved a little to the right we might have had an image of the mysterious 'Starling Villa'.  
*Photo courtesy Clarence Lear.*



**Fig 5.42. James Bond, Milkman.** With E.C. regulations milk bottles may become as archaic as milk churns. Certainly James Bond, milkman, had a quality about his attitude to the job which belonged to a past age; living in the village, when blizzards threatened to cut off Doynton he made a special late night trip to the dairy, collected the milk and when snowdrifts blocked the road in the morning he delivered the bottles on a hand-drawn sledge. Bad weather 1969/70.



The same fields provided a venue for the athletics competitions where the tug-of-war created the most vociferous support. Running races were organised on a handicap basis. Oswald Hitchings remembered the Doynton Sports Day in 1918. This was an annual event and not on the same day as the Doynton Revel. It was a celebration of the competitive element in the young men of the surrounding villages, but this was sometimes set at naught by the judges awarding unrealistic handicaps. Oswald had recently won a mile race in Pucklechurch and was handicapped 135 yards in the mile against a friend of his who entered as a joke. He was defeated by his friend and the handicap.

The Doynton Revel took place on the weekend of Patronal festival, that is Trinity Sunday weekend was held sometimes at Tracy Park or in 6 Acre field as the ultimate destination of the brass band-led procession, including the Friendly Societies with their staves and banners. There were fancy dress competitions and a concoction called 'White Pot' was served. This was a traditional dish for the Doynton Revel and Mrs. Elizabeth Anstee of Court Farm's recipe is as follows:

1½ lbs Plain Flour

2 lb Treacle

4 Eggs

1 gallon Milk

Nutmeg or Spice flavouring

Make the flour into a smooth paste with a little of the milk cold, add rest of milk boiling, stir well. If not as thick as blancmange return all to saucepan until it thickens. Add eggs and treacle. Mix spice with dry flour. Butter pan before putting in oven. Add teacup of cold water in the mixture without stirring. This make the jelly. Bake 4-6 hours. Grate nutmeg on top.

The quantities are huge for today's small families, the sweetness beyond all healthy conjecture and no measure of heat in the large kitchen ranges of the time is given - all experimenters do so at their own risk!

Between the wars there were enough young men in the village to make it easy to make up a cricket team. They were able to give up their dependence on the generosity of individual farmers when they acquired a yearly lease on the Rectory Field. The between wars pattern came to an abrupt close in 1939 when some members of the team were called up in the reserves and the early days of conscription. Until then, a season contained an average of eighteen matches, but in 1939, the truncated list read P9, W4, L5. The lease on the Rectory Field was allowed to lapse during the war, but with demobilisation the impulse was not only to play again, but to improve the facilities. The members themselves spent ten months building their own pavilion, consisting of two rooms on a concrete base and walled with corrugated asbestos sheets on a framework of old railway sleepers. There were no toilet facilities. The members were kept at the construction by the dominant enthusiasm of Percy Perryman.

The fixture secretary at that time, Arthur Amos, not only dealt with the bookings and confirming transport but had to negotiate with the Ministry of Food over supplies needed for cricket teas and with the Regional Petroleum Office to receive an allocation of petrol for the motor mower.

The Cricket Club collapsed again in the late 1960s and for a while after that, youthful energies were released with football, which had never been a game organised on a regular basis. There were

fewer and fewer young men in the village and those there were tended to leave for work or an affordable starter home elsewhere. Cricket had the advantage over football in that more mature players could hold their own in the team and thus had a larger reserve on which to draw, so there was tremendous enthusiasm for a third revival of the club in 1977.

The meeting that brought this about was again one that took place in the pub - this time to arrange a one-off fixture between the members of the old club and a team from the Beaufort Young Farmers' Club, to be part of the celebrations in the village for the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. From such beginnings came the third revival.

The initial idea was to repair the old pavilion but the club now had muscle in the boardroom as well as in the cricket field and within two years, planning permission was being sought to erect a new pavilion with cavity walls, a pitched roof, WC and shower facilities and mains drainage.

Trust Funds and private contributions were badgered and raided; Wine and Cheese parties were faithfully attended; loans negotiated until the necessary sum of nearly £12,000 was obtained, largely through the drive and enthusiasm of Tony Hooper and Bill Scott. Over 40 Vice-presidents were obtained to give a certain financial strength to the accounts. The building was available for use for the 1981 season. Led by Paul Francombe at the wicket, who combined a natural flair as a batsman with the ability to bind a team of disparate personalities, Doynton club had several successful seasons, with a fixture list of 34 matches.

Towards the end of the 80s there was need for a new generation to fill the ranks of players and a new wave of backroom boys to handle the organisation of the continued financial stability of the club. This reached a crisis point at the end of the 1990 season and, in what the village hoped was a temporary hiccup, the Cricket Club was disbanded and its assets handed in trust to the Playing Field Committee,

**Fig 5.43. How snowdrifts can cut off Doynton from the rest of the world.** The village is filled with a spirit of holiday, leaving the farmers and the snow warden to fret about getting their milk lorry through. Here, Barbara Kent, 5ft. 3ins. tall, gives scale to the drift on the Dyrham road in front of the Old Chapel In 1982.



**Fig 5.44. A photo taken by Frank Ellis in 1961 showing Nos. 2 & 3 bells and the wheel of No. 4 bell in the belfry of Holy Trinity.**

*Photo courtesy Harold Ellis*

The original bells were:

1. 1664 Roger Purdue II, Bristol
2. 1766 (recast in Chew Stoke)
3. 1657 William & Roger Purdue II, Bristol
4. 1709
5. 1844

A note by the Rev. C. F. Goddard dated Oct 1929 states that a new belfry floor was provided in the 1880s and that the bells were recast and rehung during the tenure of the Rev. Wm. Robinson, 1899-1908.



Fig 5.45. A postcard sent from London to Bristol in 1905 shows another view of Wick Rocks with its blackberry-rich walk through on the Doynton side.



The middle years of the 1920s saw another beginning - the Women's Institute. The new branch was founded in February 1924 with its initial meeting in November of that year. Since then it is the first full year of meetings, 1925, that has been recognised as the start of the Doynton and Wick W. I. impulse came from Tracy Park and the young Eileen Clarke, in her twenties, became the first President, but when she left the village, on marriage, her mother took over the chair. In 1932, the following ladies formed the Committee:

Mrs Clarke	
Mrs. E. Holloway	Mrs. Coram
Mrs. G. Salmon	Mrs. W. Anstee
Mrs. Bliss	Mrs. J. Rawlings
Mrs. A. Perry	Mrs. G. Packer
Mrs. Cook	

Modern members are embarrassed by the image of 'Jerusalem and Jam' as applied to the pre-war Institute, but the women who ran it were realists. A competition for 'a boiled potato' did not measure a lack of imagination but a realistic appraisal of the financial difficulties of the villagers. Where now the annual subscription is £10-50 (decimal) it was then 3/6d. In the pre-war village without transport available at whim, the monthly meetings provided a social centre such as the men had had in the games group. True there was a trickle of women joining the new form of PCC but it

was only a mere trickle. The sports needs of the members were catered for by Folk Dancing in 1937 and the desire for a trip out by the excursion to Windsor in the same year.

The organisation always spread the responsibilities widely - the number of officers through Secretary, Treasurer, Speaker's Hostess and 'Home and Country' would have formed a cricket team on their own. With over 100 members present at times it is understandable that the elections held in the Annual Meeting might have had some of the quality of 18th century Parliamentary election hustings. Men are tolerated as occasional speakers and the W. I. even in these days of sexual equality has politely declined to accept membership applications from tongue-in-cheek male aspirants. Nevertheless, two men were always brought in to act as 'tellers' for the annual elections. The idea of spreading responsibility widely may be a reason why the ladles have been more consistent than their menfolk and why the W. I. unlike the cricket club has not had to be revived again and again.

In the period after WW II the W. I. took on the cooking and distributing of 'Meals on Wheels'. Sometimes a certain panache crept in - after all if you have been brought up in good service you do not hand round plates without wearing white gloves. The Social Services now co-ordinate the delivery of reheated frozen meals from Warmley and that certain flair has been lost.

A village constantly renews itself and is proud of its new ideas. There is talk of a Badminton Club to start in the Village Hall in 1993, ignoring the octogenarians who were playing the game there 55 years ago.

**Fig 5.46. The architect's drawing of the new pavilion in 1981.**



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