

CARLTON & CHELLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 14, No 4

NEWSLETTER

December 2016

Chairman's Letter

We have now completed all our talks and visits for 2016, and inside this newsletter you will find our schedule for 2017. Your Committee has worked hard to put this together — we have had to make several changes at a late stage for a variety of reasons, but we hope that the list of events is now stable. On your behalf I would like to thank all Committee members for their efforts during 2016, and to all other members who have helped in any way at our meetings.

Our delayed Cheese and Wine Evening in September was a great success, as usual, and it raised more than £200 for the Society's funds. This event will be held in September again next year (rather than August, which we prefer), because the Village Hall will almost certainly be unavailable to us during the 2017 school holidays owing to scheduled building work.

Looking back over the year, 2016 has been very good nationally for historical discoveries. To mention just a few, we have

- The bronze age village unearthed at Must Farm near Whittlesey in Cambridgeshire, built on platforms over water, and destroyed in a fire. This site has been described as "Britain's Pompeii" because of its excellent state of preservation. Some of the earliest artefacts found there date back to 1650 BC or earlier.
- The 405 inscribed Roman tablets found during an excavation in London. They were made of wood and coated with wax, which was written on with a stylus. One tablet can be accurately dated to 57 AD from its contents, but others, the earliest examples of writing in Britain, have been carbon-dated to 43 – 53 AD, the first decade of Roman rule here.
- The 81 Saxon burials in well-preserved coffins made from hollowed-out tree trunks, recently discovered at Great Ryburgh in Norfolk. These have been dated to 600 – 800 AD, and may possibly relate to an early Christian monastic community.

We must hope that 2017 will bring further equally interesting discoveries. In the meantime, I send you all my best wishes for a very enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

Mike Pratt

EDITOR'S NOTES:

With this newsletter you will find a Membership Renewal Form for 2017. The subscription rate is unchanged from 2016, at £6 for an individual membership or £9 for a family membership. Please return the completed forms, with your subscriptions, to June Wood (contact details overleaf and on the form).

Also distributed with this newsletter is the latest newsletter from Bedfordshire Archives, or details for accessing the Internet version.

On page 2 you will find the Society's schedule of talks and visits for 2017.

Mike Pratt

In this issue: Page 2, Committee News and 2017 Program; Pages 3 – 6, William Sweet Escott of Carlton

COMMITTEE NEWS

Your Committee has completed our program of talks and visits for 2017, and details are given below. Please note that, because the Village Hall is likely to be unavailable for our August meeting, that meeting has been scheduled in **Harrold Cricket Club Pavilion**.

Officers of the Society: Chairman and newsletter editor, Mike Pratt, 21 High Street, Carlton, Bedford MK43 7LA, (01234) 721720; Vice-chair, Myriam Ritchie, (01234) 721119; Secretary, Mike Meade, 5 The Moor, Carlton, Bedford MK43 7JR, (01234) 720070; Treasurer, June Wood, 4 Pavenham Road, Carlton, Bedford MK43 7LS, (01234) 720689;
Committee members: David Chadwick, Louise Heathcote, Lloyd Lugsden, Judy Meade, Winifred Pratt.

TALKS AND VISITS FOR 2017

Unless otherwise stated, talks are held on
THURSDAY evenings in
CARLTON VILLAGE HALL

Doors open at 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm start.

ADMISSION: Members £1.00, Visitors £3.00.

Tea or Coffee & Biscuits between 7.30 and 8.00 pm

Thursday February 16th

A talk by **Debby Horsman** on Antarctic exploration: 'Shackleton's Forgotten Men'.

Thursday March 16th

A talk by **Matt Tuohy**: 'The Landscape Architecture of Carlton & Chellington'.

WEDNESDAY April 19th

Outing in our own cars to **Drayton House** and **Lowick Church**.

Thursday May 18th

AGM at 7.15 p.m., followed at 8 p.m. by a talk about 'Woburn Abbey', by one of the Abbey guides.

Thursday June 15th

Coach trip to **Hemingford Grey Manor**.

Thursday July 20th

A talk by **Roy Smart** on 'Earl Beatty and the Battle of Jutland'.

Thursday August 17th

A talk by **John Tunesi** on 'Heraldry' **IN HARROLD CRICKET CLUB PAVILION**.

Thursday September 21st

Annual Cheese and Wine Evening.

Thursday October 19th

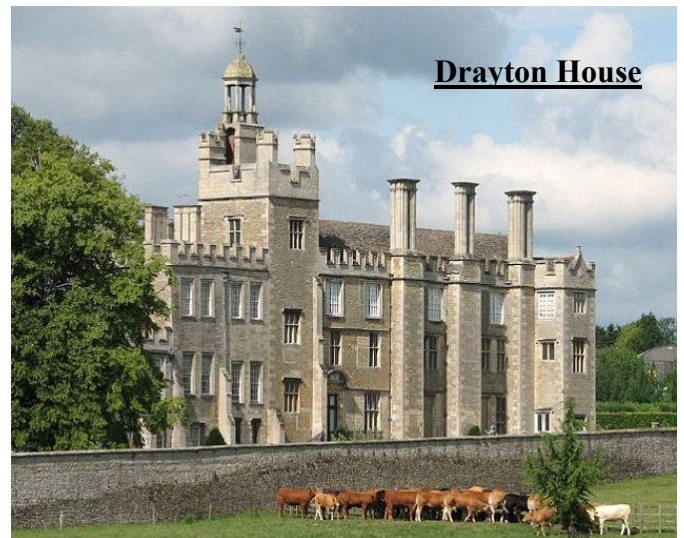
A talk by **Margaret Baddeley** entitled 'Margaret Beaufort — Saint or Schemer?'.

Thursday November 16th

A talk by **Mike Luke** on 'Architectural Discoveries from Bedford's Northern Bypass'.

NOTES ON THE 2017 OUTINGS

The April outing, in our own cars, will be to the Northamptonshire village of Lowick, near Thrapston. In the morning we will visit Lowick church, a very impressive building awarded four stars in Simon Jenkins' "Thousand Best Churches". There is a good pub in the village where we can have lunch. Then, in the afternoon, we will go to nearby Drayton House. This has a local connection; it was owned for more than 200 years by the Mordaunt family who became the Earls of Peterborough. They also owned the manor of Turvey, and for some reason they preferred to be buried at Turvey (where there are splendid Mordaunt tombs in the church) rather than Lowick where they actually lived. In 1770 the house passed to the Sackville family, who still own it today and use it as a family home. The core of the Drayton House dates back to about 1300, but there have been major alterations and embellishments in every century since, notably around 1700.



Drayton House

The June outing, by coach, will be to the Manor House at Hemingford Grey on the river Great Ouse in Cambridgeshire. We are still working on the details of this trip, and will hope to include another attraction as well. As at Lowick, there is a good pub in the village of Hemingford Grey where we can have lunch. The manor house is said to be the oldest continually inhabited house in Britain. It was built in the 1130s, and much of the original structure remains intact despite changes over nine centuries. The house also has a beautiful garden, which should be at its best in June.

WILLIAM SWEET ESCOTT, RECTOR OF CARLTON & CHELLINGTON 1862 — 1875

This is the last Rector of Carlton and Chellington whose life I will recount, at least for a while. All the rectors who succeeded him were mentioned in my newsletter of June 2012, and this account plugs the sole remaining gap between Benjamin Rogers the diarist (Rector of Carlton 1720—1771) and William Henry Denison (Rector of Carlton & Chellington 1876—1909).

William Sweet Escott was born on 17th July 1806 in the small Somerset village of Brompton Ralph, between Taunton and Minehead, close to the edge of Exmoor. His father, also a clergyman, was Thomas Sweet, who had married Mary Escott in 1799; in about 1810 they combined their surnames in the form “Sweet Escott”, and in later generations of the family the double surname became hyphenated. The Escotts were part owners of the advowson of Brompton Ralph, and men of that family occupied the position of rector continuously, with one exception, during the period from 1781 to 1895. Thomas Sweet qualified for the post by marriage into the Escott family, and he became Rector of Brompton Ralph in 1802. Through his wife, William’s father Thomas Sweet Escott also owned nearby Hartrow Manor in Stogumber, a couple of miles away.

Thomas and Mary married in Stogumber on 2nd May 1799, and they subsequently had twelve children, six boys and six girls. All were baptized at Brompton Ralph. William Sweet Escott, Carlton’s future rector, born in 1806, was the sixth child and the second boy. He presumably spent his early life at Brompton Ralph, but there is no information as to whether he was educated at home or sent away to school. However, according to *Alumni Oxonienses* he matriculated at New College, Oxford, in 1825, at the age of 18. Having graduated as a Bachelor of Civil Law he became a fellow of his college, where he remained until 1832, when he became Rector of Oddington, near Stow-on-the-Wold in Gloucestershire. *Alumni Oxonienses* mentions that he was later Rector of Carlton with Chellington, but omits to state what happened between his time at Oddington and his arrival in Carlton. Those details have been filled (partially at least) from other sources, one of which confirms William Sweet Escott’s institution as Rector of Oddington.

The date of that institution was 16th August 1832, and just a few weeks earlier, on 7th June, William had been married, to Lucy Horatia Rice. She was about five years younger than him, and was born in Swansea, Glamorganshire. The marriage took place at Fairford, Glos., a few miles south of Stow-on-the-Wold. Interestingly, the outgoing rector of Oddington was Lucy’s father, the Rev. Edward Rice, DD, who happened to own the advowson of the parish. He was eminent within the Church hierarchy, and on resigning from the

rectorship he had presented his own very recently acquired son-in-law to the living! The official record reads “Vacant by resignation of Rev. Edward Rice DD. Presentation of the Hon. and Very Rev. Edward Rice DD, Precentor of York and Prebend of Driffild”. The last phrase means that Edward Rice proposed William Sweet Escott to the Bishop of Gloucester to fill the vacancy caused by his own resignation, and the Bishop approved the appointment. Edward Rice was clearly a man of many parts; he was also Dean of Gloucester Cathedral from 1825 until his death in 1862.

I do not know how long William remained at Oddington, but in the 1841 census he was found at Great Rissington, also in Gloucestershire, just a few miles away. By this time he and Lucy had their first five children, who all appeared in the census: Lucy (born in about 1833), Mary (1835), Frances (1836), Rosa (1838) and Edward (1839), all of whom had been born in Great Rissington. The Great Rissington household also includes a 15-year-old pupil (the Honourable someone, name illegible) and two female servants. William was a curate at Great Rissington, the Rector there being his father-in-law the Very Rev. Edward Price, who was presumably too busy with other matters to attend to this parish. William seems to have held the curacy in parallel with his rectorship at Oddington, but a condition of his additional appointment was that he lived in the Rectory House at Great Rissington.

The next census was taken in 1851, and by this time William Sweet Escott was back in Brompton Ralph, Somerset, where he had spent his early years. He was now rector of that parish, his father having died in 1842 and passed the incumbency on to him. His wife and ten of their children were present in the household, which also included four servants. From the childrens’ ages and birthplaces as given in the census, it appears that the family had moved from Great Rissington shortly after William’s father died. Between 1841 and 1851 the following further children had been born: William (in about 1841), James (1844), Henry (1846), Horace (1848) and Editha (1850). William had been born in Great Rissington before his parents’ move, and the remaining four children at Brompton Ralph.

In 1853 William made a major career change by taking up the post of Headmaster of Foyle College, a school in Londonderry, Ireland. He moved there with his family, and held the position for nine years. There is no 1861 census record for him, because for some reason the Irish census records for 1861 and 1871 were destroyed as soon as they had been subjected to statistical analysis.

It was when he returned to England in 1862, in his late fifties, that William Sweet Escott became Rector of Carlton and Chellington. He seems to have been dedicated to his new parish. I looked at all the records of baptism and marriage during his incumbency, both at

Carlton and Chellington, and found that he officiated at all those services during his thirteen years as rector, apart from fewer than ten exceptions. I found no evidence that he ever employed a curate to lighten his load during those years.

Two Carlton marriage records from that period, both dated 1866, were for two of his daughters:

- On 14th June 1866 Rosa Sarah Sweet Escott married William Hunter Parrett, a clergyman from Londonderry, Ireland.
- On 4th December 1866 Frances Sweet Escott married John Smith Keats, a Captain in the Royal Navy, who came from Wiveliscombe, Somerset.

William's new son-in-law William Hunter Parrett was, in fact, his successor as Headmaster of Foyle College in Londonderry, the position he had himself vacated in 1862.

In fact 1866 was a busy year for weddings in this family. Earlier, on February 8th, William Sweet Escott's second son (also, confusingly, named William Sweet Escott) had been married in Ireland. The marriage was reported as follows in the Belfast Newsletter dated February 10th:

ESCOTT and BOND — February 8, at the Cathedral, Londonderry, by the Lord Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, assisted by the Rev. W.S. Escott, Rector of Carlton, Bedfordshire, father of the bridegroom, the Rev. W.S. Escott, Curate of Great Barford, Bedfordshire, to Louisa Dunn [Bond], daughter of Robert Bond, Esq., of Dallerton House, and Glenview, County Tyrone.

This son had probably attended his father's school in Londonderry, and he then went on to attend Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated with a BA degree in 1864. He studied for a further year at Trinity for a Testimonium in Divinity, a condition for ordination, which he obtained in 1865. He then returned to England, where he was ordained in Rochester as a Deacon, and in Ely as a priest, the same year. He started his ecclesiastical career as a curate, assisting the Vicar of Great Barford and Roxton. He and his new wife, who was born in Londonderry, wasted little time in starting their family; their first child, Robert Bond Sweet Escott, was born in Carlton — probably in the Rectory — towards the end of 1866; he was baptized in Great Barford on 21st December of that year, but does not appear in subsequent records, and almost certainly died in infancy. William Jr. and Louisa were undeterred, however; in total they eventually had 17 children, of whom all but three were found still living in the 1911 census.

In 1869 Francis William Rice succeeded to the title of 5th Baron Dynevor of Dynevor, Carmarthen-shire (the name Rice was an Anglicization of the Welsh

surname Rhys). Francis was a brother of Lucy, née Rice, our rector's wife, who in consequence became the *Hon.* Lucy Horatia Sweet Escott. In fact the Sweet Escotts also had distant relationships with other titled families, making them rather more aristocratic than some of the earlier rectorial families of Carlton and Chellington.

In the 1871 census William Sweet Escott Snr. was found living in Carlton Rectory with his wife and just three of their younger children; also a cook (whom they had brought with them from Somerset) and a parlourmaid, Jane Burbidge, a local girl. The children at home were Horace and Editha, mentioned above, plus Cecil, the final child, who was born in Brompton Ralph in about 1853.

William Sweet Escott Sr. resigned the rectorship of Carlton in 1875, and his departure was noted in the Bedfordshire Mercury of 30th October of that year:

"On Sunday October 19th Mr Escott preached a farewell sermon at Carlton. Evening service was held at Chellington, where there was a crowded congregation. On Wednesday Mr Escott and his family were invited to the school where he was given a tea urn and a set of fish knives and forks by the parishioners. A gold pencil case was given to Mrs Escott by the choir. The presentation was made by Mr Rogers. A parting visit was made by Mrs Escott to each house in the village, and a card left of Parting Words and Affectionate Counsel".

Even after his official retirement, the Rev. Sweet Escott officiated at a Carlton wedding on 9th November 1875, giving his status very precisely as "Officiating Minister" rather than, as on all previous such entries in the register, "Rector".

The 1881 census showed William Sweet Escott back where he was born, at Brompton Ralph in Somerset, where he was now the Rector again. Only one of his offspring was at home with his parents, and that was Horace, who at the age of 34 was unmarried and had no specified employment. The household also included a five-year-old granddaughter and two domestic servants. William died at Brompton Ralph in 1884, at the age of 78. His personal estate was worth well over £3,000, and he appointed his wife sole executrix of his will. She survived him until 1895, when she died in Herne Hill, Surrey.

Information from the Bedfordshire Archives

The Bedfordshire Archives provide few further details of William Sweet Escott's time in our locality. A document relating to the Carlton Reformatory for Boys, dated 1863, shows that he was one of the directors or managers of the reformatory at that time, but

any Rector of Carlton and Chellington would have held that function *ex officio*. There are also three copies of a rather mysterious inventory and valuation (at £81 10s.) of the “fixtures” in Stagsden rectory, headed “Rev^d. W.S. Escott to Rev^d. Jackson”, and dated February 1879. This was after the Rev. Escott left Carlton, and I can find no cleric of the name of Jackson who was associated with Stagsden.

More interestingly, the archives also have a small album containing photographs of some late Victorian Bedfordshire clergymen. The majority of them have no names ascribed to them, but one of the exceptions is a depiction of Carlton’s former rector:



**William Sweet Escott, Rector of Carlton,
1862—1875 (courtesy of Bedfordshire Archives)**

Hartrow Manor

As mentioned earlier, Hartrow Manor in Stogumber, Somerset, belonged to the Sweet Escott family, and it functioned as a centre of gravity for family members.

The earliest manor house on the Hartrow estate dated from about 1580. In 1711 the property passed into the estate of a Thomas Rich, whose son died unmarried at the age of 23 in 1727, leaving the major part of his estate, including Hartrow Manor, to his fiancée, Margaret Hay. She never married, and at her death in 1753 she left the Manor to her eldest nephew, Bickham Escott (1731—1801), son of her sister Sarah. Bickham

and his wife had three daughters, the eldest of whom was the Mary Escott who married Thomas Sweet (later Thomas Sweet Escott) in 1799. These were our future rector’s parents. At this time, any property bought by a wife to her marriage became the property of her husband, and Thomas assumed the ownership.

Thomas Sweet Escott pulled down much of the old manor house, though he retained part of it, visible to the left in the photograph overleaf. He then built most of the present house, including a Great Hall, the windows of which were filled with Dutch and Flemish 17th century stained glass and some earlier English glass.

After Thomas Sweet Escott the ownership of the manor went as follows:

- Bickham Sweet Escott (1800—1853), eldest surviving son of Thomas and Mary, who inherited on the death of his father in 1842;
- Anna Sweet Escott (1826—1872), Bickham’s daughter, and only child, who never married. Bickham died in 1853 at Hartrow Manor. His wife Anne, his appointed executrix, failed to administer the provisions of his will, and when she died in 1858, also at the Manor, its ownership was effectively granted to their daughter;
- Rev. William Sweet Escott junior (1841—1913), her eldest surviving uncle, who was the executor of Anna’s will after she died in Paris in 1872;
- William Sydney Rice Sweet Escott, his eldest surviving son, who inherited on his father’s death in 1913;
- Rev. Edward Herbert Sweet Escott (1855—1939), his second cousin, who purchased the property in about 1918.

In 1932 Hartrow Manor was sold out of the Sweet Escott family, together with many choice articles of furniture, etc., which had been acquired by various previous owners.

Thus while William Sweet Escott senior never owned the manor house himself, his son William Sweet Escott junior did. As previously mentioned, he had started his ecclesiastical career in Great Barford in Bedfordshire while his father was Rector of Carlton and Chellington, and his first child was actually born in Carlton. In his middle life he moved at frequent intervals between various clerical positions, mainly not far from Hartrow Manor. He and his wife Louisa spent most of the years between 1872 and 1889 living in the Manor itself, where eight of her 17 children were born. The family seemed to live in some style there; in 1881 they were accompanied by nine of their children, the youngest of them aged 15 months, together with a governess for the children and six servants: a cook, a parlour-maid, a house-maid, and no less than three nurses.



Hartrow Manor in Stogumber, Somerset, which was owned by the Sweet Escott family from 1753 to 1932. There was a manor house here in the 16th century, but most of the present building was erected by Thomas Sweet Escott, the father of William Sweet Escott the former Rector of Carlton.

Notes on William Sweet Escott Sr.'s children

I will deal first with the sons. Edward, the eldest (b. 1839), was a civil engineer who spent much of his life in Yorkshire, where he was Borough Surveyor of Halifax. He never married, and he died in 1904.

The second son William (b. 1841), much of whose life has already been sketched, had fourteen surviving children, as previously mentioned. He spent the years 1884 – 1889 as rector of his father's former parish, Brompton Ralph (living meanwhile at Hartrow Manor), then moved to Penarth, Glamorganshire, and finally to Hillfarrance, Somerset, where he and his wife died within two months of each other in 1913.

Next came James (b. 1843), who had a career in Her Majesty's Patent Office. In 1874 he married Emma Harrison, by whom he had two children: Emma Rhoda (b. 1877) and Horace (b. 1879). They lived in London; Edward died in Wandsworth in 1901, aged 57.

The fourth son, Henry (b. 1846) "lived on his own means", at Brompton Ralph, in London, and in Cheltenham. He married twice (his second wife was 26 years younger than he was); there were no children of either union. Henry died in Cheltenham in 1926, aged 80.

The fifth son was Horace (b. 1848), and I can find no record for him later than 1871, when he was lodging in Birkenhead, employed as a civil engineer, like his eldest brother Edward. There is a Sweet Escott family recollection that he died childless in Australia.

The sixth and last son, Cecil (b. 1853), went into the church like his father and his brother William. In the 1871 census he was living in Carlton with his parents, but in 1881, at the age of 27, he was a curate in Sidmouth, Devon, living in a lodging-house. He died

unmarried in 1888, in Lambeth, London.

As for the five daughters, the eldest, Lucy (b. 1833) was 20 when her family moved to Ireland. I suspect she met and married a husband over there, but I have found no records of her subsequent life.

Mary (b. 1835) married William Hancock of Wiveliscombe, Somerset, a well-to-do banker and brewer. They had about a dozen children, of whom one or two died young. William, who was some 26 years older than Mary, died in 1896, leaving £95,000 or more. Mary herself died in Wiveliscombe in 1909.

I noted on page 4 that Frances, the third daughter (b. 1836), married Captain John Keats of Wiveliscombe in 1866, in Carlton. In 1871 they lived in Fowey, Cornwall, with a son aged 3, who seems to have died soon afterwards. By 1881 John Keats had been promoted to Commander, RN, and they lived in London with a second son, aged 6. He survived until at least 1911, but was described as "weak minded", and was boarded out with carers. Frances died in Somerset in 1898.

I also recorded on page 4 that the fourth daughter Rosa, (b. 1838) married William Hunter Parrett of Londonderry, in 1866, in Carlton. I have found no further reference to her in the English or Irish records, but there is hearsay evidence that the marriage was childless.

The last daughter, Editha (b. 1850) was married to Gerald Davies, but not until the year 1913, when she was 63 years old. Naturally, there were no children.

Thus our former rector and his wife, William and the Hon. Lucy Sweet Escott, were the progenitors of nearly thirty known grandchildren, mainly due to the efforts of just two of his children and their spouses.

Mike Pratt

The subscription to the Society for the calendar year 2017 is £6.00 for an individual or £9.00 for a family membership (2 adults from the same address and any number of their children under the age of 18 years).

I / We wish to join the Society / renew my / our membership, and submit with this form a cheque / cash for £6.00 / £9.00.

Name(s), with ages if under 18

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Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone.....E-mail address.....

Please make cheques payable to Carlton & Chellington Historical Society and pass them to the Treasurer, June Wood, 4 Pavenham Road, Carlton, Bedford, MK43 7LS

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