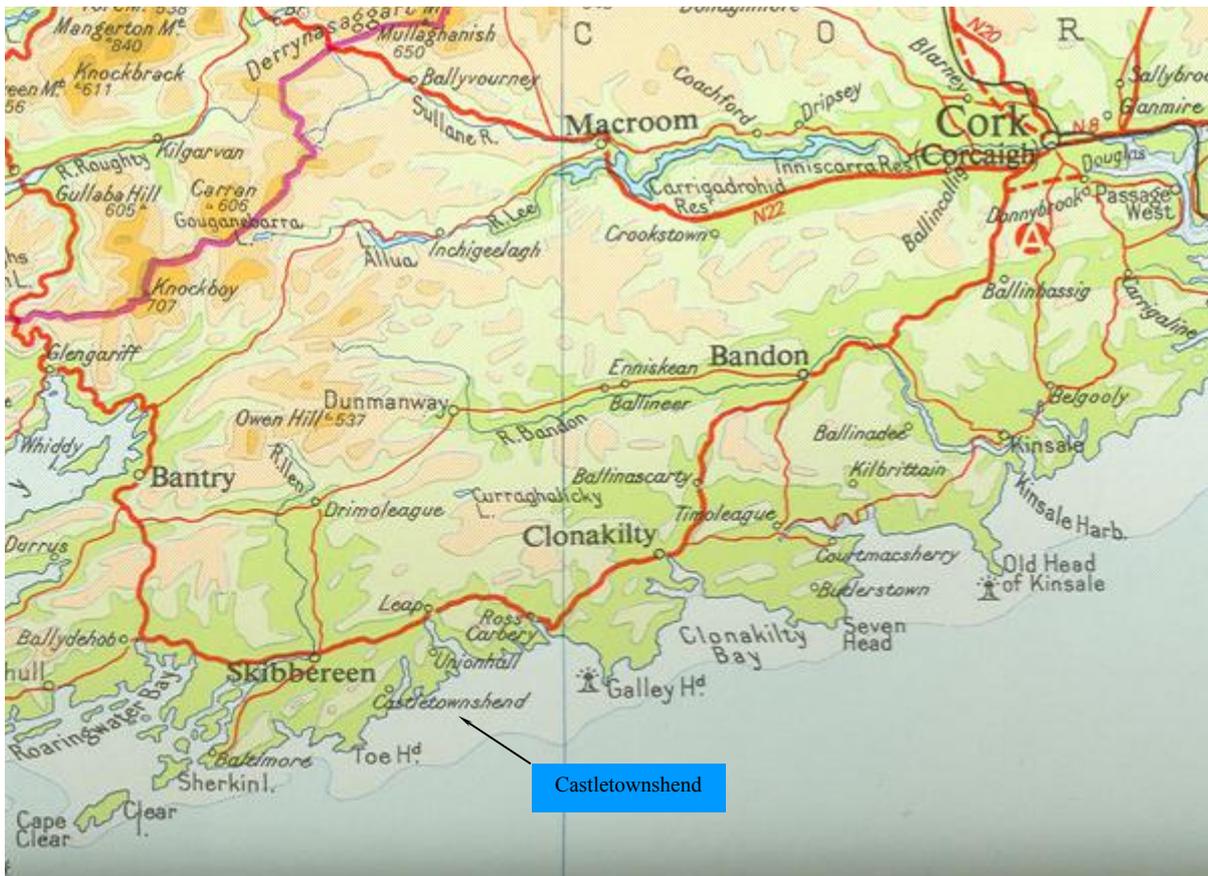


Reverend Maurice FitzGerald Townsend [231]



Maurice in later life



The Castle and St Barrahan's Church 2013



The Main Street



Letter dated June 29th 1810, from Frederic Ricketts, Christ Church, Oxford, to Mrs Townsend,
8 Montague Square, London.

My dear Madam, I am ~~now~~ just come from
Maurice's examination and although I have
but little time at my disposal to just recite
giving you some account of him. In the first
place he is not plucked: and therefore will
be free from anxiety during the long vacation.
In his deportment at the table he was, as he
always is, mild and gentlemanlike, but
disadvantageously timid, upon the whole he
did very faintly, although with more self-
confidence, what he did know might have
won a more commanding appearance.
If there is a point to be spoken of with less com-
-mendation than the others, it is the grammatical
part of his knowledge. But as I said before
he did on the whole very faintly. He is in my
room at this moment as usual and contented
as possible. Both he and Doyle are in high
health. Of the latter I have spoken to
Webber (the Archdeacon) who has been very
seriously ill, & therefore wholly unable to pay
attention to anybody. He has however faithfully
promised to endeavour in the course of the
next term to give Doyle's mind more closely
to those studies which are worthy of his abilities.
I made a most successful appeal to Webber's
Vanity, by telling him that it was thought
that he had more influence over Doyle than
any man; and to his sense of duty, by reminding
him that this influence if dominant is of course
unproductive. I have not time at this moment
to add more than that Mr. Feigh & I go on
well together although he is dead. And my

hope that yourself & family are in health.
May I hope by my best respects & com-
-pliments to all your family and remain
My dear Madam your ever sincere and obliged
Frederic Ricketts. Maurice & Doyle desire
their love.

My Dear Madame

I am just come from Maurice's examinations and although I have but little time at my disposal I cannot resist giving you some account of him. In the first place he is not plucked (?); and therefore will be free from anxiety during the long vacation. In his deportment at the table he was, as he always is, mild and gentlemanlike; but disadvantageously timid, upon the whole he did very fairly; although with more self confidence, what he did know might have worn a more commanding appearance. If there is a point to be spoken of with less commendation than the others, it is the grammatical part of his knowledge. But as I said before he did on the whole very fairly. He is in my room at the moment as merry and contented as possible. Both he and Boyle are in high health. Of this latter I have spoken to Webber (the Archdeacon) who has been very seriously ill, & therefore wholly unable to pay attention to anybody. He has however faithfully promised to endeavour in the course of the next term to fix Boyle's mind more closely to those studies that are worthy of his abilities. I made a most successful appeal to Webber's vanity by telling him that it was thought that he had much more influence over Boyle than anyone; and to his sense of duty, by reminding him that this influence if dormant is of course unproductive. I have not time at the moment to add more than that Mr Leigh and I go well together although he is mad: And my hopes that yourself & family are in health. I may I hope beg my best respects & compliments to all your family and remain my dear Madame your ever sincere and obliged Frederic Ricketts.

Maurice and Boyle desire their love.

Irish Examiner Wednesday December 23 18698

**Irish Examiner 1841-current, Wednesday, December 23,
REV. MR. TOWNSEND, OF THORNBURY
MEETING AT SKIBBEREEN.**

A LARGE and influential meeting of the inhabitants of **West Carbery** was held yesterday, at the Courthouse, for the purpose of determining the best mode of complimenting the Rev. F. S. Townsend, of Thornbury, in England, in appreciation of his conduct as a landlord and a liberal proprietor.

Among those present were—Mr. M'Carthy Downing, M.P.; Rev. C. Davis, Rev. D. Collins, P.P., Rath; J. R. H. Becher, J.P.; George Robinson, J.P.; F. D. MacCarthy, Thos. H. Marmion, jun.; J. E. Browne, Smithville; Wm. Swanton, Farranagulla; Daniel Donovan, M.D.; Michael Becher, Carriganear; R. Carey, Munster Bank; Samuel Reardon, T.C.; Daniel M'Cartie, T.C.; M. Sheehy, T.C.; John Hennessy, T.C.; A. Minihane, J. Waters, J. Copithorne, T.C.; &c.

Mr. M'Carthy Downing, M.P., took the chair, amidst applause.

The Chairman said—I can say unaffectedly that I do not believe I ever presided at a public meeting with more unmixed satisfaction and pleasure than I do at present. It is not only an honour to me to preside, but I feel a peculiar pride in doing so (hear, hear). The meeting to-day shows the estimation in which the Rev. Mr. Townsend is held by every creed and class in West Carbery (loud applause). I need hardly say that Mr. Townsend will feel a pleasure when he sees the requisition calling the meeting, which appeared in the local paper of Saturday, which was headed by their venerated and respected Catholic Bishop of the diocese (cheers). Few can have such an intimate knowledge of the kind feelings the Rev. Mr. Townsend entertains for his tenantry as I have.

Mr. Townsend entertains for his tenantry as I have. When Mr. Townsend came to this county at first he took my advice and counsel as to the best means of improving his property, and more than all, his tenantry (hear, hear). I did not give him you may be sure, bad advice. The result has been seen—leases have been given to the greater part of the tenants on his estate and they are improving and happy. When examined before a committee of the House of Commons a few years since on the land question I was asked if lands held under long leases were improved. My reply was that it was absurd and ridiculous to think that they would not. Mr. Townsend was at that moment giving leases to every tenant of his on fair and reasonable terms. There were no less than forty leases now in preparation at the rents proposed by his worthy agent. Mr. Gladstone taking up one of Mr. Townsend's leases may safely say "Here is an act written in this which if generally adopted will make Ireland a happy, a prosperous, and a contented country (cheers). There could not be the least doubt but that Rev. Mr. Townsend had wonderfully improved the town of Skibbereen (hear). In a letter to me some time since he said "I care not where you build your markets whether they are north or south

On my property or not my only object is to improve the town, and make the people prosperous and contented (hear, hear). Mr. Townsend had given a site for the gasworks and a lease of it for 500 years, at a nominal rent. They all knew that gas was a vast improvement to the town and to the people of the county also. When the gas question was considered a failure Mr. Townsend took £300 worth of shares. That was not all—he gave as a subscription £50 toward

Screenshot

ter Works, and unfortu-

movements calculated to promote the improvement of the town and interest of its inhabitants.

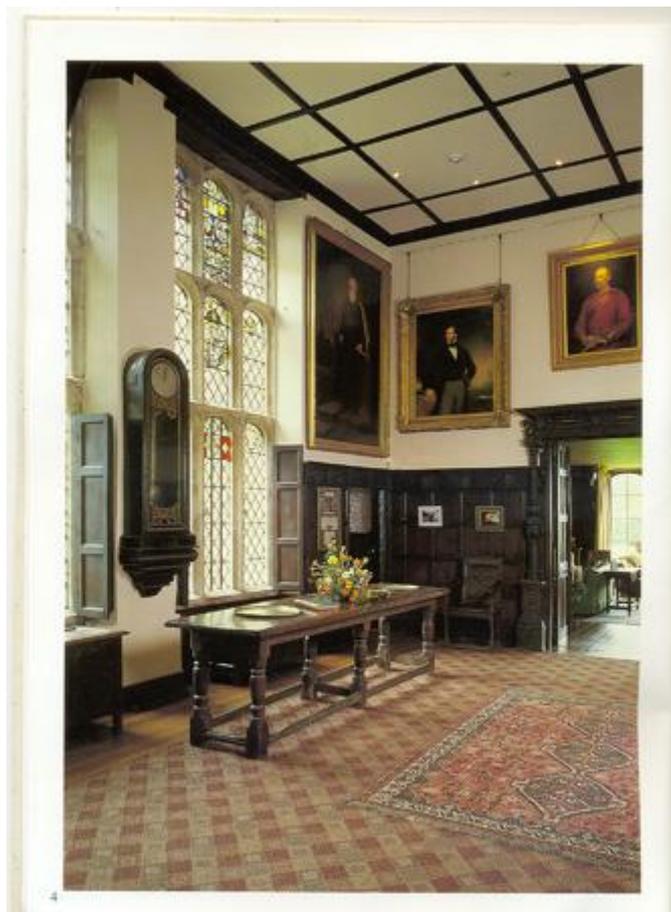
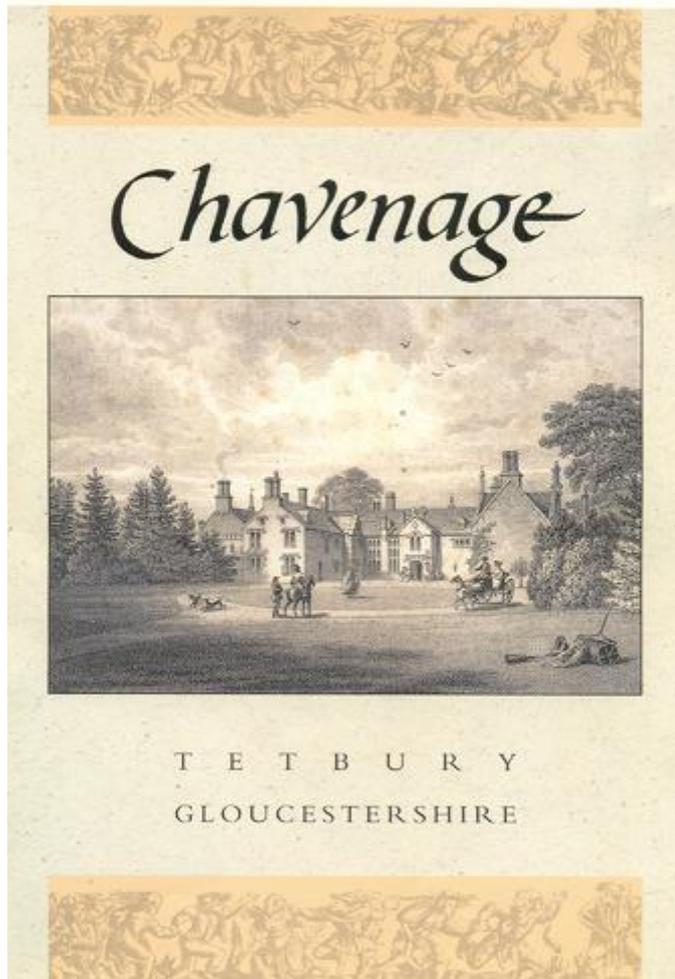
The Rev. Mr. Davis, in a truly eloquent speech, contrasted the management of other landlord proprietors with that of Mr. Townsend. Some were ready to crush their unfortunate tenants, while Mr. Townsend was always ready to serve and improve them.

Mr. James Swanton had much pleasure in seconding the resolution, which was unanimously adopted.

Mr. George Robinson, J.P., proposed the next resolution, which was seconded by Mr. William Swanton, and adopted:—That, in order to testify the sincerity of that appreciation, we deem it a duty to entertain Rev. Mr. Townsend at a public banquet, to take place at such period as may be most convenient to him, and as a more lasting record, that he be presented with a piece of plate, with a suitable inscription;—and in grateful acknowledgment of the interest evinced by Miss Townsend in everything connected with Skibbereen and its vicinity, that a suitable ornament be presented to her.

A committee was then formed to carry out the objects of the resolution, and the Chairman was desired to communicate with Mr. Townsend.

Chavenage Brochure (12 pages)



MEDIEVAL CHAVENAGE

The earliest recorded owner of Chavenage was Prince Godwin, the uncle of Edward the Confessor. However, there are records of Chavenage Castle being the starting point of the Hundred Court early in the twelfth century.

In the troubled years prior to the successful Norman invasion, Earl Godwin Godwin's husband, and former friend of the King, gathered a regiment together at a point on the coast, all known only as Longress Bottom, with the purpose of assisting his brother-in-law Edward, at Gloucester. The Earl Godwin, and his own controlled north of southern England at this time and in 1016 had his headquarters at Bermonsey. The Godwin family supported the King's Norman admission and wished to make him an ally. Eventually a compromise was reached and no fighting occurred.

After the conquest a community of Augustinian monks from Tournai in France settled at Henley, which since Anglo-Saxon times had encompassed Chavenage. Shortly after, however, the Abbot of Beaulieu, Sarum,

was given information to transfer some French property to the Augustinian Order in exchange for the Manor of Henley and surrounding lands. Thus an English Community was established at Henley in the late eleventh century.

Due to a serious rebellion by the Prior in 1220, which resulted in his excommunication, there followed a long period when the Community at Henley and the lands were administered from Beaulieu, Sarum. The administrative headquarters of the estate was presumably at Henley, where the abbey had a fully dependent monastery, but despite this, buildings of some size had been erected at Chavenage in the late fourteenth century. Parts of the present-day house are thought to date from this period. The house would have consisted of the Great Hall with kitchen at the north end and a two-up and two-down at the south end of the Hall. At this period the first medieval courtyard here (which was known a modern square court) was built on the adjoining farm.



A small view of the stained glass window in the Great Hall, showing the leaded glass pattern of the late 14th century.

5

THE STEPHENS FAMILY

After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, the manor and estate were granted to Thomas Seymour, who shortly after Henry VIII's death married his widow Katherine Parr and was subsequently created Lord Seymour of Sudley by Edward VI. During 1549, Thomas was executed and his lands awarded for his role in an attempted plot against the Crown. The property, then reverted to the Crown, was granted anew in 1555 to Sir Walter Denny of Dyham and in 1564 Sir Walter's son, Richard, sold the estate to Edward Stephens of Eastington.

fradul baron in Gloucestershire from the reign of Henry II. In the sixteenth century they were a family of wealth and influence in the county with estates at Eastington, Chavenage, Upton, Cherrington, Longrove (recently owned by the Earl of Westminster) and Little Sedbury.

On purchasing Chavenage, Edward Stephens started the massive project of a major reconstruction of the site. He gained the medieval building he found, and put on the two wings and the porch to create a manor house of the classic Elizabethan style. He also fitted the strikingly large windows on the south side of the porch, much of the glass being ecclesiastical coming from the abandoned churches and monasteries in the area. He also used old timbers from old galleons, broken up on the nearby River Severn. Upon these rose literally hundreds of tons of mellow grey Cotswold tiles. By 1576, the date carved with his initials and those of his wife Joan were carved above the front door when his work was finished. On Edward's death the house and estate passed to his eldest son Richard. Richard died in 1599 and left Chavenage to his second wife, Anne, before his eldest surviving son, Nathaniel (born in 1580) inherited. Richard Stephens was probably responsible for the screen in the main Hall, on which he placed his father's initials. The paneling is contemporary with this period and that of the Oak Room is dated 1627. The Gothic-style



Two of the four main windows in the Oak Room paneling, with the central panel - these were probably removed during Parliament time to be viewed separately, with glass, at a later date.

The Norman House of Fitz Stephens originally took its name from the christian name house in honour of St. Stephen. The name, over a period, became Fitz Stephens then Stephens or Stevens. The Fitz Stephen family, had come over with William the Conqueror and were



The Oak Room showing the elaborate chimney-piece of gilded stone (1877-95) after the Gothic period Albany piece of the same date although most of it is

replaced in the Oak Room is dated between 1587-99 (recently filled in and made much smaller) whereas the chimney-piece in the Great Hall, was constructed in 1625-30.

Nathaniel Stephens was a Knight of the Shire in Parliament and according to the *Parliamentary History of The County of Gloucester*, the fatal illness which attacked him a few

months after his acquiescence in the King's death" gave rise to the legend of Chavenage. The story of the Stephens' family ghost is well known and has been told many times, and was in 1845 the subject of a poem by the Rev. R. W. Hantley of Dorswell entitled *Chavenage*.

The Billiard Room - part of the early nineteenth century addition of Henry VIII Stephens.



CIVIL WAR

Nathaniel Stephens, M.P., P.C., was Lord of the Manor during the Civil War (1641-45). He raised a regiment of horse of which he was Colonel and fought on the side of Parliament against Charles I. At this time, General Henry Ireton (Cromwell's son-in-law) was a guest, being a relation by marriage of Colonel Stephens.



A contemporary copy of the King's portrait, from the portrait of Oliver Cromwell - "War and Art"

In 1644, from Chavenage, troops under the overall command of Colonel Massey were charged with the task of besieging nearby Beventone Castle, which at the time was inhabited by an important Royalist family, a branch of the Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle. After the Roundheads failing twice to breach

the strong defences at Beventone, it was discovered that a young girl at Chavenage was secretly dating the commander at Beventone. To let her lover know that the count was clear and that no attack was planned that night from Chavenage, she would place a candle in a window (see the garden door, leading from the Library passage). On the detection of this subterfuge, a candle was placed in the window and the order given to attack in the knowledge that the commander was away for the night!

After the cessation of hostilities while Charles I was imprisoned, it became apparent to Cromwell that the King would have to be executed in order to stop any form of Royalist uprisings. To this end he sent Ireton to Chavenage, to try to persuade Colonel Stephens to add his support to the regicide. Ireton arrived while Colonel Stephens was keeping the festival of Christmas in 1648. Stephens, known as a mild man, had shown much irresolution in deciding upon sacrificing the life of King Charles I and was on the verge of wavering when Ireton reached his destination. It is said that they sat up all night and eventually Ireton obtained from Stephens his very reluctant acquiescence.

Shortly after his daughter Abigail returned from having passed the New Year elsewhere, she, in a fit of homesickness and anger, laid a curse on her father for bringing the name Stephens into such disrepute. The story goes that the Colonel was soon taken terminally ill and never rose



Colonel's room, showing the 1940s iron-casters opposite with to Lord Anglo.
 "The Coronation of King David" - a close up of one of the Millat scenes painted in its register at Ireston's House.



from his bed again. When the Lord of the Manor died and all were assembled for his funeral, a hearse drove up at the door of the manor house driven by a headless man, and the Colonel was seen to rise from his coffin and enter the hearse after a profound reverence to the headless personage, who as he drove away assumed the shape of the martyr King, Charles I - this being regarded as restitution for the Colonel's disloyalty to the King. Thereafter until the line became extinct, whenever the head of the family died, the same ghost of the King appeared to carry him off.

In Cresswell's and Ireston's room there are several relics from the Civil War including horse furniture, a leather hat cover and several swords and pikes.



HAVENAGE AT WAR

At the village of Loughterton (five miles south-west of Chavenage) in the cemetery there are the graves of twenty-four Australian servicemen killed while learning to handle early aeroplanes. They all belonged to the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) and were part of the ANZACS (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). During the autumn of 1917 two aerodromes were constructed at Anco Down (on land owned by the Lowndes-Williamses) and at Loughterton. Chavenage, being almost equidistant between the two, became an 'open house' to the aviators. It was the grandparents of the present owner who invited the Australians to dances, parties and occasionally for morning coffee, sometimes with disastrous results. The family received many souvenirs from this period - one large

photograph album containing many aerial views of local towns and villages and various parts of their aeroplanes including a biscuit barrel carved from the propeller boss of a Sopwith Camel.

The 654th Engineer Topographic Battalion arrived in Tetbury in late 1943. Their mission was to make maps for the battles that were soon to take place in France. One of the most important undertakings was the construction of a detailed scale model of 'Omaha Beach'. At this period Chavenage was occupied by 'B' of the Battalion, and in the main house was an Officers' Mess as well as the NAAFI and the Barber's Shop, whilst the greater portion of men were housed in a single row of tents along the avenue. Even a baseball pitch was put in as well as an athletic field.



A biplane shot in Chavenage by a member of the AFC.



OWSLEY-WILLIAMS AT CHAVENAGE



The Ballroom at Chavenage, part of the Chavenage wing.



Reverend George Williams, M.A., Canon of Worcester married Mary Lowley in 1845. Mary was in her fifty-second year at the time of her marriage. Next year, she gave birth to the heir of the Lowley Estates, Miss Caroline Eleanor Williams. In her turn, Miss Williams married Colonel W. W. Hoole of Ravensfield Park of the County of Yorkshire. However sadly, in 1869, she died at the birth of her first born, a son christened George Williams Lowley-Hoole. As the Reverend Williams was predeceased by both his wife and daughter it was left to him to settle the estates on his death in 1874. Reverend Williams bequeathed the Lowley property to his grandson George.

William Lowley-Hoole (the present owner of Chavenage's great grandfather). This property consisted predominantly of the Aston Manor Estate and the Loweswater Estate towards Mischelhampton and Rothborough with the main residence being Magrath House.

To inherit the Lowley Estates, on his coming of age the young George had to add to his surname by Royal Licence and was thereafter known as George Williams Lowley Hoole-Lowley-Williams. In 1891 he came down from Yorkshire with his father, Colonel W. W. Hoole, to view his inheritance. Neither of them were attracted by Magrath House and whilst they were guests of Sir George Holford at Wottonbirt, Sir George informed them that Chavenage Estate was for sale. Sir George's father, R. S. Holford had been mortgagee of the lands since the last of the Stephens had left Chavenage in the middle of the nineteenth century, the estate having been in their ownership for 350 years and nine generations. The Holfords had overseen the lease of the property to the Chaplin family (1866-1890).

The Lowley-Williams have been at Chavenage ever since. George was married in 1896 to Beatrice Mary Seale and they had three sons and two daughters. He was the owner until his death in 1937, when the property passed to his eldest son, Colonel John Seale Lowley-Williams, D.L., R.N.A. Colonel John never married and lived at Chavenage with his mother and his two sisters, until in 1988 he gave the estate, the house and its contents to his nephew David as a wedding present on his marriage to Rosa McCosquade.

Reverend George (later Hoole)

Colonel John was suffering from cancer and died three days after the wedding service to the knowledge that the Chavenage had been safely passed on to a further generation.

A contemporary description of Colonel



The Hoole heir at Ravensfield Park.

Hoole: 'About five feet nine inches in height, riding near twelve stone, clean shaven except for a light moustache, trim and soldierly in gait, appearance and manner. Most attentive, courteous and considerate as a host; a good shot; a straight rider with the Deauville Hunt; and most keen on making judicious improvements to the Gloucestershire Estates. He brings into Gloucestershire much county experience from Yorkshire, which must prove very beneficial.'





In 1963, the Lowley-Williams decided that the house really was not big enough! They sold the property at Lowestoft at less than £10 an acre to fund the building of an extensive new wing. The Edwardian wing was built to the designs of John T. Micklethwait and it accommodated a bedroom with a gazing floor and service rooms, some of which have now been converted into the family's apartments.

The Chaworth Ladies Team from 1908 has been found and is now in display. Of particular interest is the match of 26th August 1914 when five members of the team played for Sir G. Colquhoun 1st Baron Chaworth.



Mr. George Thomas was the leader to three generations of the Lowley-Williams at Chaworth House. He recognised how the first Mrs. George Lowley-Williams often made journeys to London during the 1920s and used the Tisbury train to Kemble. She was not known for her punctuality and would frequently be untidy fifteen minutes or so before the train was due to depart. The chauffeur had to drive her to the station in the

Ruston Hornsby and some panic ensued in order to get her to the train on time. The order was often given, "Thomas, ring the station and ask them to hold the train for us, till then we are on the way." The chauffeur would make a sprightly dash through the lanes and even though they arrived ten minutes late, the train and its other passengers would be dutifully waiting. From *The Tisbury Book* by Stephen Randolph.

Part of an obituary to George Williams Lowley Hook-Lowley-Williams: "To the country of Gloucestershire generally and to the Tisbury district in particular the passing of Mr. George Lowley-Williams represents a great loss. An English gentleman in every truth and held to the highest virtues by all the community, he had spent the best part of his life in a quiet and unassuming endeavour to serve his country, his day and his generation..."

Princess Marie Louise, whose mother was Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein (the third daughter of Queen Victoria), was a frequent visitor to Chaworth especially during

her recreation from London during the 1939-45 war. Mrs. George Lowley-Williams became her lady-in-waiting and accompanied her on several trips overseas. In her book *My Memoirs of Six Reigns* she tells of her experiences of ghosts and of doors opening and shutting – perhaps Sir Hugh Cholmondeley! The room she occupied was named after him, he being one of Cromwell's generals during the Civil War. Her maid realised that whilst sewing she saw a lady in an old-world dress, walk through the maid's room into that occupied by the Princess, who was retiring prior to dinner. The maid saw the lady bend over the Princess then quietly withdraw and fade away, and noticed her very beautiful hands and face reflect at the west. Was this the Grey Lady?



Chaworth Church

In 1970, a friend of the family made an amazing discovery of a portfolio of drawings in the attic of Chaworth. The group of drawings were taken to Sotheby & Co. and were perceived as drawings of both historic and artistic interest, showing the designs for the reconstruction of the interior of a large number of the private apartments at Windsor Castle. For the most part, they were finished drawings executed

in watercolour over black chalk with all the furnishings shown in great detail. Many of them had the monogram of George IV on the mount and some had the letters 'appd' indicating the monarch's approval of the designs. On the mount of one of the drawings for a bathroom, it written in the King's hand 'Colour of hangings to be changed'. These drawings were identified as the work of Sir Jeffrey Wyattville 1827-1830, and were sold as a private collection at Sotheby's in April 1970.

We have been fortunate to have been used as the location for some television films. Most notably in 1990 Chaworth was featured in the extended episode of *London Weekend Television's House to Celebrate* Agatha Christie's 100th birthday. The episode was called *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. In 1991-1992, Chaworth was known as 'Millstone Manor' and was the setting for the reruns of the *As You Beep Served* cast in a new series called *Case and Fenton*. The house and grounds have also been featured in *The House of Elton* and on a lighter note, as the setting for one of Noel Edmond's 'Gothic' in *Ned's House Party*.

Chaworth House is open to the public May to September, from 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Thursdays, Sundays, Bank Holidays, Easter Sunday and Monday. The last tour starts at 4.30 p.m. Groups are welcome at any time, on day – by appointment. Catering is not all eaten by arrangement. Chaworth is available for hire for private functions, such as weddings, dinners, lunches, etc.

Acknowledgements: James Kerr (Country House Photographs) 1071 228 9434; The County House of Gloucestershire by Nicholas Knightley; The House's Guidebook by C. Ellis Brown (1994); County 126 15th April 1971; Victoria County Society of Gloucestershire; The Tisbury Book by Stephen Randolph.