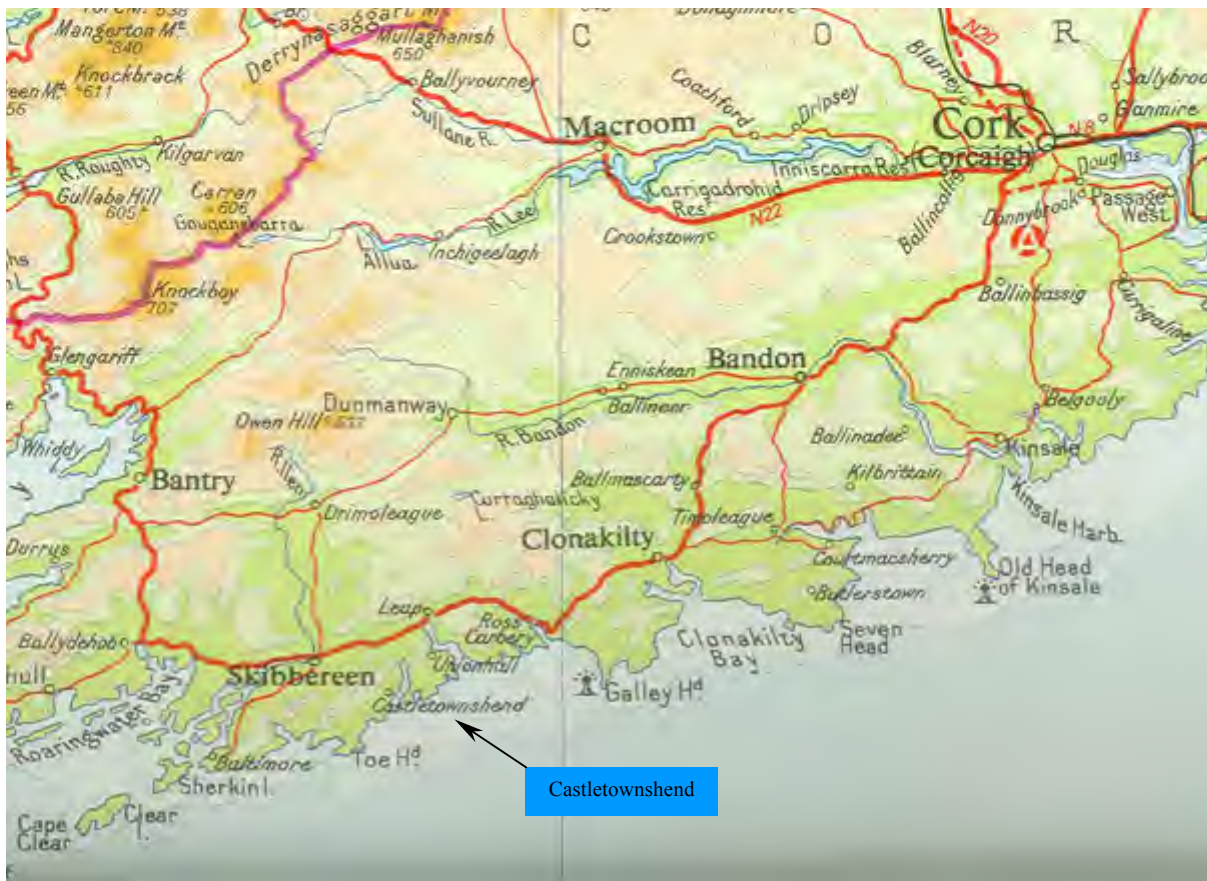


Reverend Maurice FitzGerald Townsend [231]



Maurice in later life



The Castle and St Barrahan's Church 2013



The Main Street



Christ Church College, Oxford
Tom Quad



Extracts from Samuel Lewis' Topographical Dictionary 1837

CASTLE-TOWNSEND, a village, in the parish of CASTLEHAVEN, East Division of the barony of WEST CARBERY, county of CORK, and province of MUNSTER, 4 1/2 miles (E.) from Skibbereen; containing 901 inhabitants. This village, which derives its name from Castle-Townsend, the seat of **Col. Townsend*** (*Colonel John Townsend [230]*), is situated on the north side of the harbour of Castlehaven, and consists of one long street, with a shorter one diverging from it, comprising 150 houses, which are mostly small but well built. It contains the custom-house for the port of Baltimore, and is a coast-guard station in the district of Skibbereen, and a constabulary police station. It occupies a gentle declivity, which descends to the bay, and is well adapted for an extensive trade, but has none, except a little in fish. The harbour, which is half a mile wide, is well sheltered, and vessels of 500 tons' burden can anchor within the haven. There is a ferry to the opposite parish of Myross, affording a ready communication with the village of Union-Hall, on the harbour of Glandore. The fine seat of Castle-Townsend was attacked, in 1690, by about 500 Irish troops in the interest of Jas. II., under young O'Driscoll, who were so warmly received by the proprietor and a garrison of 35 men, that in two assaults they lost 40 of their number, with their commander and two other officers. It was attacked again, soon afterwards, by Mac Fineen O'Driscoll, at the head of 400 men, who, having slain five of its garrison of 30 dragoons compelled the rest to surrender. --See CASTLEHAVEN.

* *Maurice's brother.*

CASTLEHAVEN, a parish, in the East Division of the barony of WEST CARBERY, county of CORK, and province of MUNSTER, 4 1/2 miles (W.) from Skibbereen; containing 5619 inhabitants. This parish, anciently called *Glanbarrahane*, derived that name from a deep rocky glen dedicated to St. Barrahane, and its modern appellation from the castle that protected the haven. This parish is situated on the harbour of the same name, on the southern coast, and contains 10,421 statute acres, as applotted under the tithe act, and valued at £6336 per annum. About two-thirds of the land are cultivated; the remainder is waste, consisting of high barren rocky ridges, or bog. The harbour is more than half a mile in width, and is very secure and well

sheltered: it is adapted for vessels drawing 10 feet of water, which can lie about a quarter of a mile above Reen Head, with the rocks called the Stags in sight. The coast here is bold and picturesque, with several small islands lying off it, the principal of which are Horse Island and one called Blackrock. The Stags are three very conspicuous rocks lying four miles (S. W. 1/2 W.) from the entrance of the harbour; and Toe head is a broad promontory, between which and Gokane point is a small but well sheltered bay. The principal seats are Castle Townsend, the residence of **Col. Townsend** (*Colonel John Townsend [230]*); Point House, of R. B. Townsend (*Richard Townsend [221]*), Esq.; Drishane, of T. Somerville*, Esq.; Smithville, of T. Townsend (*Thomas Townsend [319]*), Esq.; and Shepperton, of M. Townsend (*Jonas Morris Townsend [222]*), Esq. The living is a rectory and vicarage, in the diocese of Ross, and in the alternate patronage of the Crown and the Bishop: the tithes amount to £600. The church is a large and very handsome edifice, with a lofty square tower supported by buttresses and crowned with pinnacles: it stands in the demesne of Castle Townsend, and was built in 1827, of hewn fawn-coloured freestone obtained from the quarries on Horse Island, at an expense of £1500, of which £1250 was granted by the late Board of First Fruits, and £250 was contributed by **Col. Townsend [230]**. There is an elegant glebe-house, standing on a glebe of 15 acres. The male and female parochial schools are in Castle Townsend, and are aided by the rector and **Col. Townsend [230]**. An infants' school was established there in 1835, and is supported by subscription. The ancient castle, the walls of which are still visible near the mouth of the harbour, was built by the O'Driscolls, and subsequently belonged to the family of Touchet, of which George Touchet, Lord Audley, who had been governor of Utrecht, and was wounded at Kinsale in 1602, was created Earl of Castlehaven, in 1616: this title was enjoyed through five generations, but became extinct in 1777. Not far distant from the castle are the remains of the old church of Glanbarrahane; and near it is a well, dedicated to St. Barrahane, still frequented.

* *Somerville connections here at Elizabeth [225], Henrietta [234], Jonas Morris [237], John [316] and Mary [506].*

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

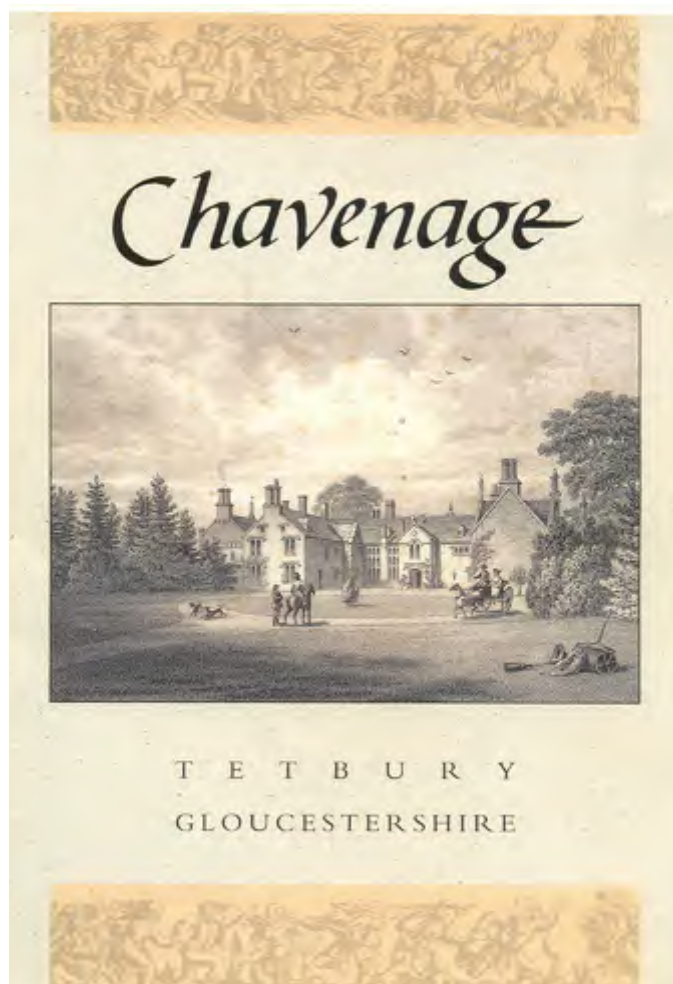
My dear Madam, I am ~~not~~ just come from
Maurice's examination and although I have
but little time at my disposal I must resort
to giving you some account of him. He the first
place he is not pleased. And therefore will
be free from anxiety during the long vacation
in his department at the Bible he was as he
always is, mild and gentlemanlike, but
he disadvantageously laboured upon the whole he
did very faintly, although with more self-
confidence what he did from might have
been a more commanding appearance.
If there is a point to be spoken of with some
commendation 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 very
good health at the present he is very contented
as possible - Both he and Boyle are in high
health - Of the latter I have spoken to
Webber (the Archdeacon) who has been very
sincerely ill & therefore wholly unable to give
attention to anybody. He has however faintly
promised to endeavour in the course of the
next term to give Boyle's mind some shock
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 Boyle than
any man, and to his sense of duty, by remarking
that this influence of Woodcut is of course
unproductive. I have not time at the present
to add more than that Mr. Taylor & I go on
well together although he is dead. And my

hope that yourself & family are in health.
I 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 & Boyle 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.

Chavenage Brochure (12 pages)





MEDIEVAL CHAVENAGE

The earliest recorded owner of Chavenage was Princess Goda, the sister of Edward the Confessor, however there are records of Chavenage Green being the meeting place of the Hundred Courts early in the sixth century.

In the middle times prior to the successful Norman invasion, Earl Godwin (Goda's husband), and former friend of the King, gathered a regiment together at a point on the estate, well known today as Longtree Bottom, with the purpose of confronting his brother-in-law Edward, at Gloucester. The Earl Godwin, and his sons controlled much of southern England at this time and in 1054 had his headquarters at Beventone. The Godwin family resented the King's Norman advisers and wished to make him see sense, fortunately a compromise was reached and no fighting ensued.

After the Conqueror a community of Augustinian monks from Tournai in France settled at Hordley, which since Anglo-Saxon times had encompassed Chavenage. Shortly after, however, the Abbot of Bruton, Somerset,

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

Due to a serious indiscretion by the Prior in 1320, which resulted in his excommunication, there followed a long period when the Community at Hordley and the lands were administered from Bruton, Somerset. The administrative headquarters of the estate was presumably in Hordley, where the abbey had a little dependent manor, but despite this, buildings of some sort 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 kitchens at the north end and a one-up and one-down at the south end of the Hall. At this period the first medieval covered barn (which now houses a modern squash court) was built on the adjoining lane.



A window from the large, ancient glass windows of the Great Hall, featuring a window pointing the head of John the Baptist.



THE STEPHENS FAMILY

After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, the manor and lands were granted to Thomas Seymour, who shortly after Henry VIII's death married his widow Katherine Parr and was subsequently created Lord Seymour of Sudeley by Edward VI. During 1540, Thomas was executed and his lands granted 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 Buntingford.



Two of the five tiles: The Queen and The Virgin, joined in the oak floor parquetry with the central tile - they are probably historical figures. Parquetry tiles in the room are assembled, each piece, at a time later.

The Norman House of Fitz Stephens originally took its name from the Christian name borne by the founder of St. Stephen's. The name, over a period, became Fitz Stephens then Stephens or Stevens. The Fitz Stephens family, and connected with William the Conqueror and were

feudal barons 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 Easington, Cherrington, Lyptott, Cherrington, Lyptott (recently owned by the Earl of Westmorland) and Little Sodbury.

On purchasing Cherrington, 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 redundant churches and monasteries in the area. He also used old timbers from old galleons, broken up on the nearby River Severn. Upon these are literally hundreds of tons of yellow grey Cornish tiles. By 1576, the date carved with his initials and those of his wife Joan, incised above the beam above where his work was finished. On Edward's death the house and park passed to his eldest son Richard. Richard died in 1599 and left Cherrington to his second wife, Anne, before his eldest surviving son, Nathaniel (born in 1589) inherited. Nathaniel Stephens was probably responsible for the screen in the main Hall, on which he placed his father's initials. The parquetry is contemporary with this period and that of the Oak Room is dated 1627. The Gothic-styled



The Oak Room showing the elaborate scheme of parquetry (c.1627-30) with the Gothic-styled stone screen of the main fire (although dated 1584-85).

display in the Oak Room is dated between 1587-99 (recently fitted 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 appointment in the King's death' gave rise to the legend of Cherrington. The story of the Stephens' family glens is well known, and has been told many times, and was in 1845 the subject of a poem by the Rev. R. W. Hensley of Bristol entitled *Cherrington*.

The Billiard Room - part of the early seventeenth century addition of Henry VIII's Stephens.





CIVIL WAR

Nathaniel Stephens, M.P., P.C., was Lord of the Manor during the Civil War (1641-48). 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 Duke of York's portrait of Oliver Cromwell - "War and All".

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

the strong defences at Beverston, it was discovered that a young girl in Chertsey was secretly passing the commander at Beverston.

To let her lover know that the coast was clear and that no attack was planned that night from Chertsey, she would place a candle in a window (near the garden door, leading from the library passage). On the discovery of this stratagem, 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 whilst 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 uprising. To this end he sent Ireton to Chertsey, to try to persuade Colonel Stephens to add his support to the regicide. Ireton arrived whilst 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 horror and anger, had a conversation with her father for bringing the name Stephens into such disrepute. The story goes that the Colonel was soon taken terminally ill and never rose.



Cromwell's room during the 1648 execution appears with it. In a chair. The Chamber of King Charles I - a close up of one of the 1648 woodcut illustrations of the execution of James I.



from his bed again. When the Lord of the Manor died and all were accounted for his funeral, a hearse drove up to the door of the manor house, driven by 3 graders, and the Colonel was seen to rise from his coffin and meet the hearse after a profound reverence to the graders personage, who as he drove away assumed the shape of the martyr King.

Charles I - this being regarded as retribution for the Colonel's disloyalty to the King. Thereafter until the first became extinct, whenever the lord of the manor died, the same ghost of the King appeared to carry him off.

In Cromwell's and Ireton's room there are several relics from the Civil War including some furniture, a leather hat, cross and several trunks and girdles.



HAVENAGE AT WAR

At the village of Leighton (four 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 Aston Down (on land owned by the Lowley-Williams) and at Leighton, Chavenage, being almost equidistant between the two, became an 'open house' to the airmen. It was the grandpapa of the present owner who invited the Australians to dances, parties and occasionally for morning coffee, sometimes with delectable meals. 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 linear barrel carved from the propeller boss of a Sopwith Camel.

The 65th Engineer Topographic Battalion arrived in Tisbury 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, while the greater portion of men were housed in a single row of rooms along the avenue. Even a baseball pitch was put in as well as an athletic field.



A souvenir sent to Chavenage by a member of the AFC.



OWSLEY-WILLIAMS AT CHAVENAGE



The Dining Room at Leighton, part of the Leighton estate.



Reverend George Williams, M.A., Canon of Worcester married Mary Lowley in 1845. Mary was in her forty-second year at the time of her marriage. Next year, she gave birth to the heir of the Lowley Estates, Mary Caroline Eleanor Williams. In her turn, Miss Williams married Colonel W. W. Hoole of Ravenfield 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 Lowesmore Estate towards Minchinhampton and Redborough with the main residence being Magnesian 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 William 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 Magnesian House and whilst they were guests of Sir George Holland at Wotton, Sir George informed them that Chavenage Estate was for sale. Sir George's father, R. S. Holland had been mortgagee of the land 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 Hollands had overseen the lease of the property to the Chaplin family (1808-1890).

The Lowley-Williams have been at Chavenage ever since. George was married in 1896 to Beatrice Mary Sivile 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 Sivile Lowley-Williams, D.L., R.H.A. Colonel John never married and lived at Chavenage with his mother and his two sons, until in 1958 he gave the estate, the house and its contents to his nephew David as a wedding present on his marriage to Rosa McCosgrode.

www.chavenage.com

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

A contemporary description of Colonel



The Hon. Sir John Sivile Lowley-Williams

Hoole, 'About five feet nine inches in height, rising near twelve more, clean shaven except for a light moustache, thin and soldierly in get, appearance and manner. Most amiable, courteous and considerate as a host, a good shot, a straight ruler with the straightest front, and most keen on making judicious improvements to the Gloucestershire Estates. He brings into Gloucestershire much country experience from Yorkshire, which must prove very beneficial.'



13



In 1903, the Lowley-Williams decided that the house really was not big enough! They sold the property at Lowesmore at less than £10 an acre to fund the building of an extensive new wing. The Edwardian wing was built to the design of John T. Mickelthwait and it accommodated a ballroom with a spring floor and service rooms, some of which have now been converted into the family's apartments.

The Chavenage Clock from Book dated 1880, has been found and is now on display. Of particular interest is the record of 26th August 1884 when five members of the novel Cecil family played for Sir G. Colquhoun at Aston Chavenage.



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

Ruston Hornby 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, tell them 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 Tebury Branch* by Stephen Randolph.

Part of an obituary to George William Lowley Hoole-Lowley-Williams: 'To the country of Gloucester generally and to the Tebury district in particular the passing of Mr. George Lowley-Williams represents a great loss. An English gentleman in every sense and held in the highest esteem 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 Chavenage especially during

her evacuation from London during the 1939-45 war. Mrs. George Lowndes-Williams became her lady-in-waiting and accompanied her on several trips overseas. In her book *My Memoirs of Sir Roger* she tells of her experiences of gloss and of doors opening and closing – 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 recounts that whilst sewing the sew a lady in an old-world dress, walk through the maid's room into that occupied by the Princess, who was setting 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 lace ruffles at the wrist. Was this the Grey Lady?¹⁰⁰



Chavering Chapel

In 1970, a friend of the family made an amazing discovery of a portfolio of drawings in the attic of Chavering. 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, is written in the King's hand 'Colour of hangings to be changed'. These drawings were identified as the work of Sir Jeffrey Wyatville 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 Chavering was featured in the extended episode of London Weekend Television's *Pointe* to celebrate Agatha Christie's 100th birthday. The episode was called *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. In 1991-1992, Chavering was known as 'Millstone Manor' and was the setting for the return of the *Are You Being Served?* cast to a new series called *Gate and Parson*. The house and grounds have also been featured in *The House of Elliot* and on a lighter note, as the setting for one of Noel Edmunds' 'Gothic' in *Noel's House Party*.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Chavering 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 day starts at 4.30 p.m.

Groups are welcome at any time, or day - by appointment. Getting to and off easily by arrangement. Chavering is available for hire for private functions, such as weddings, dinners, parties, etc.

Architectural sources:
Stuart King (Cromwell House Photographs 1001 200 0426)
The Country House of Gloucestershire by Nicholas Knapp
The Interior: Country by C. Elin Bennett (1976)
Country Life 158 April 1911
Visiting County Houses of Gloucestershire
The Valley Book by Services, Knapsley