

# NEWTON ST. LOE

Newton St. Loe lies four miles west of Bath, it has been favoured for centuries as a pleasant place to live as is born out by the fact that the Romans built a large villa here which was probably the summer residence of the Proprætor of the Province or of the officer in command of Amax Sulis (Bath). "The extent of the ruins of this villa were greater than those of any other villa hitherto discovered in Britain and nearly as great in magnitude as any building of the same nature among Roman colonies out of Italy, the total length was 125 ft. and it was 55 ft. in breadth".

At the Norman Conquest Newton and the land of two thanes passed from one Alaric to Geoffrey, Bishop of Contances, who acted as interpreter at William the Conqueror's Coronation in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066. The Domesday Book says "The Bishop himself holds Nowetone, Alaric held it in the time of King Edward and gelded for three hides, the arable is four carucates and four servants and four villeins, and three cottages with two ploughs." There is a mill of seven shillings and sixpence rent, and nine acres of meadow and forty acres of coppice wood. It was worth 60 shillings, now one hundred shillings. The Bishop died in 1093 and the Manor passed to Roger of St. Lo in Normandy who, it is thought, was the Bishop's nephew. The St. Lo (sometimes spelt Sayntlo, Sainet Lo, Sainlone, Sancto Lando etc.) family held it for about 300 years.

Roger, probably living in the reign of King Richard I was succeeded by Simon de Sancto Lando and another Roger who followed Simon fought against King John when he levied such enormous taxes on the great men of the Kingdom. Legend has it that King John was imprisoned in the castle built by the St. Lo family, but it is more likely that the landlord himself suffered this indignity when the King demanded £100 which was a baron's fee, instead of a knight's fee which Magna Carta puts at one hundred shillings and he was unable to pay. The keep of this castle still remains in the garden of the present house and under it the fateful dungeon. The St Los must also have erected the church as the date of the first Rector on the list just inside the south door is 1497 and also probably the old Cross or Holy Rood in the churchyard near this door, the base of which now forms part of the War Memorial.

The next five Lords of the Manor were all called John and were impoverished by Crusades and Taxes, one of them was Sheriff of Somerset and was summoned to fight with King Edward I in 1294 at Carlisle against the Scots.

A tax roll of 1327 in the reign of Edward III is interesting, being a list of inhabitants of Newton whose goods were of the value of 10/- or more.

Johanne de Sancto Lando	vij	s
Henrico atte Cleygh	v	s
Johanne Wolmere	xij	s
Thoma Rossel	v	s
Willilmo Atte Bergh	xviiij	s
Willelmo Rayssh	ijs	vjd
Henrico le Shephurde		ixd

Hugone atte Wheole	iiij	s
Waltere le Freusshe	vjs	iijd
Johanne Bird		vjd
Johanne Pestere		vjs
Johanne Whitholf		ixd
Johanne Rossel	ijs	vjd
Willelmo le Smyth	iiijs	vjd
Laurencio le Carpenter		xijd
Thoma Hayroun	iiijs	
Johanna de Sancto Lando	iiijs	vjd
Henrico Petit	iiijs	
Johanna le Devenisshe		vjd
Ricardo Bruton		ijs

Willelmo le Smyth one might surmise carried on a flourishing business at the smithy the old walls of which can still be seen at the top of Smith Hill under the spreading chestnut tree, but alas the poor parson Nicholas Kymmersford 1319 - 1336 is not even on the list!

From 1375 or 1385 Newton passed through the female line many times, one of these heiresses Mary (1477) bore the title of Baroness Hungerford (Farleigh Hungerford) Homet, Botreaux, Moets, Moleyns and Peverill. When she married Edward, Lord Hastings she held no less than 87 Manors. Her son the third Baron Hastings, first Earl of Huntingdon, fought with Henry VIII at the sieges of Terouemie and Tournai.

In 1540 Leland when touring Somerset wrote "There is a faire Manor Place like a castelle building at Newton Sanct Lo, two miles from Bath by Avon, sometime one of the chief houses of the Lordes Sanct Lo, The Lorde Hastings, Erle of Huntingdon hath it now." He died in 1559.

In 1561, the first year mentioned in the Parish Register, the Manor was in the hands of the Nevills, the same family as the Kingmaker; they held it for nearly a century, they quarrelled as to the heir and lived mostly in Sussex. In 1666 the year of the Great Fire of London a widow of the Nevill family sold Newton St. Loe to Joseph Langton of Bristol, whose family lived here for 275 years.

It is interesting to think that Cromwell in all probability stayed at the castle though not aggressively, because Captain Hamington who lived at Kelston was related to the then owner of Newton and he was a great Parliamentarian and a supporter of the Protector.

It is not known where the Manor House stood at this time. It was probably joined on to the ancient castle (there are still marks on its walls to encourage this theory). The front drive as we know it now was not in existence, there are stumps of old trees from Whistling Copse near Park Farm leading down to the old castle, which probably denote the old drive approach. A fine view can still be had from the top of the hill of the whole manor with Corston church in the distance. The back drive from the village was shown on a map as far back as 1742.

Joseph Langton was 28 when he came to live at Newton Park with his wife Francis. They had nine children but only two daughters survived, the sad story is told in obscure Latin (a translation of which we have at last been

provided with by the kindness of Mr. Humphreys Of Bristol University, the wording is most picturesque) on a large marble memorial just inside the south door of the church. Joseph dies in 1719, as the register says "Buried in Lennen, for which the penalty was paid according to Act of Parliament". This refers to two Acts passed in 1666 and 1678 to encourage the wool trade but many people insisted on using linen, the penalty for this was £5 half of which to go to the informer, but a way of getting over this was for the family to inform upon themselves and so pay only £2 -10 -0! The heirs of the deceased were asked to swear of 'burial in woollen' before a magistrate and one witness, Joseph himself was a magistrate but never-the-less his family would rather pay the fine than bury him in wool!

The family name was only perpetuated by the fact that his elder surviving daughter Anne married her cousin Robert Langton in 1702, her son another Joseph Langton built the present Georgian mansion to take the place of the old manor house in 1762, as is mentioned in Farley's Bristol Journal "Thursday sennight as workmen were digging some clay in Newton Park (where Joseph Langton is building a new house) they found the entire bones of a man and a King Charles' farthing." He was then married to his second wife Bridget Glanville 26 years younger than he was, during this year their daughter Bridget was born.

Bridget succeeded in 1779 when her father died at his house in Duke St., Bath (as the Bath Chronicle and Herald records) she was only 17. At 21 she married William Gore of Barrow Court, he added Langton to his name by Royal permission. A reference to Newton in Collinson's History of Somerset says "it is now the seat of William Gore Langton Esq. who has adorned the ancient demenes with a very elegant house a fine piece of water and beautiful plantations" it is thought that as before mentioned his father-in-law built the house but it was he who bought Corston from Mr. Harrington of Kelston Park.

Colonel Gore Langton (as he became) employed Humphrey Repton, one of the great eighteenth century landscape gardeners to plan the part as it is today; he constructed the Corston drive and the two lakes, so that some of the bridle paths disappeared and it was then that the old road from the village towards Pensford which can still be traced down through workshop cover and between the two lakes was cut short just below the cottages. Some land was exchanged for the parson's Glebe lands. It is known that Repton produced one of his famous Red Books for Newton, in these he explained his plan and included drawings of the grounds as they were and as they would look in the future, these he presented to the owner.

One imagines the Gore Langtons a devoted young couple planning their home and estate and bringing up a large young family. Bridget had four children and then in 1793 the register of burials reads "Dec. 6th. Gore Langton, Bridget, wife of William Esq. she was delivered of a son (Paul Thomas) the 24th November last at Dean in Oxfordshire and died there this day at 10'clock in the morning. The melancholy news came by express to Newton Park at 12 o'clock noon today December 14th buried, 31 years 139 days. There were supposed to be a thousand people present".

After this tragedy William Gore Langton seems to have thrown himself into public affairs, his Colonelcy was in the Oxford militia. As a member of Parliament he was a staunch Whig and Mr. Pitt used to say that he was the only member of Parliament whom he could not buy!

It is likely that during his life time the life of Newton as a village was at its busiest. The coalmine opposite the Globe Inn must have provided work for many of its inhabitants, the top of the shaft is still discernable in the middle of the triangular field across the road from the public house, and the chimney adjacent to it was only thrown when it became dangerous within living memory. Seams of iron ore intersected the coal which was converted into coke and transported by road to barges on the river, one of these horse barges remained on the river near here until we were threatened with invasion in World War II when it was destroyed. The coal mine was eventually closed due to extensive flooding which one can well imagine as hardly a winter goes by without all these fields along the river known as Newton Meads being under water.

It was down here in the large field near Newton Bridge on the way to Bath that the Yeomanry used to meet for training it is still called "Cavalry Field", one can imagine what a brilliant social scene this must have meant for the local inhabitants. Yeoman farmers for miles around brought their horses for the occasion and their bright uniforms, billowing plumes and glittering swords must have been a sight to behold. The tenants of the old Toll house on the main road which is still inhabited must have had a busy time for we are told that she provided "mild refreshments". The Bath and County Graphic tells us (though this is not until 1896) that "the tenant is very obliging; she will bring out a chair and you may sit here and watch the bicycles for this is quite the Rotten Row of Bath".

It was on Oct. 21st. of that the old weighing house opposite was removed and that the Toll House "has not been used for Toll-collecting purposes for many years. There is another Toll House" to the south west of the estate near the Pennyquick Bridge beside another disused coal mine and not far from the old mill.

The making of the railway across Newton Meads when the old Squire was 83 must have caused great excitement and busy activity in the village, it was then in 1843 that the Roman Villa was found. There was prolonged litigation about the blocking of Mead Lane, the lane from the village down to the Bath Bristol Road which now continues as a track the other side of the road, the bill of costs includes coach journeys to London by a solicitor representing the Parish at 26 a time.

Colonel Gore Langton died in 1847, he was buried in the Parish church after lying in state at the house, he must have been a popular man, but a press report which states that there were between 7 and 8 thousand people at the elaborate funeral must surely have been an exaggeration. The sexton's note book is amusing it reads "1847 William Gore Langton Esq. was buried Mar aged 87 years on top of his son Frederick, under the second largest stone from the south window, room for one more, bars are in".

This Parish church of Holy Trinity (the first recorded Rector was in 1297) was restored in 1857 when the north aisle was added for the use of the poor - during the restoration a discovery was made "it consisted of a small door on the south side of the chancel arch which served the dual purpose of a hagioscope and a passage for the priest to the 'Altar of Our Ladye' (this is no longer in existence but must presumably have been to the south of the aisle which was at this time attached to the manor) although some suppose the aperture to have been reserved for the use of lepers." All this was in the time of William Stephen Gore Langton great grandson of the Colonel who on the death of his maternal uncle became the 4th Earl Temple of Stoire. The organ case was presented by the Rev. John Lascelles in 1879. The carved oak screen was presented by the then Rector the Rev. Paget Bayly in 1910. The 5th Earl died in 1940, one of his nephews succeeded to the Earldom, but another nephew who had inherited the estate sold it to the Duchy of Cornwall in 1941, the house and park are now leased to The City of Bath to be used as a Training College for Teachers.

We have no records of Newton in the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth but it is pleasing that the present inhabitants can add a distinguished page to the history of their village by recording the happenings on March 2nd 1950 when Queen Elizabeth II then Princess Elizabeth formally opened the college. on that day all the tenants of the Manor gathered in the new gymnasium, the Mayor of Bath and all the many Staff, Students and friends of the College gathered in the House and school children and crowds collected all along the route to catch a glimpse of the Princess as she drove from Park Farm to the main entrance of the Park, where a guard of Honour of the 4th Bn. The Somerset Light Infantry and many spectators were waiting.

On the death of King George the VIth Newton St. Lo together with the whole of the Duchy of Cornwall passed to Prince Charles, who then became Duke of Cornwall. We who live here now look forward with pride to the day when our young Landlord will see for himself that "There is a faire Manor Place like a Castelle Building at Newton Sanct Lo" and we must add "Prince Charles, Duke of Cornwall hath it now".

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