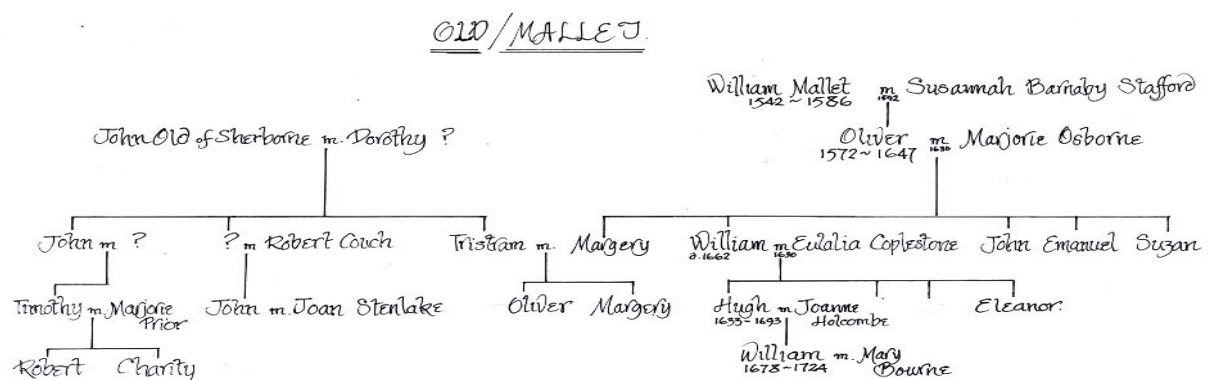


The History of Moistown: Part 5 by Dr. Sylvia Warham c. February 2010

In Part 4 of the history of Moistown I looked at the life of John Kayleway of Cullompton who left Moistown to his six year old son George. In Part 5 I shall explain what happened to Moistown when George died before reaching adulthood.

In his will of 1530, John Kayleway specified that if his son George did not inherit Moistown then it should go to Simon Kayleway of Cullompton. We are not exactly sure about the relationship between John and Simon, but think that Simon was possibly John Kayleway's nephew. He did have a son called Simon who in turn had another son called Symon. All three Symon's were wealthy and living in Cullompton. However, at some point there must have been a property dispute because Moistown did not pass directly down this line of Kayleways. The next time we see any records of Moistown it is in the hands of Susannah Burnaby Stafford who had married William Mallet, another wealthy and important family in this area of Devon. Their son Oliver Mallet had a daughter Marjorie Mallet who married Tristram Olde.



Moistown came into the hands of John Old of Sherbourne, who passed it on to Robert Couch on the marriage of his daughter. Thanks to Tom Short for this chart.

Earlier in this series I explained the importance of property rights. The right to a property was so important that traditionally when there was property involved in a marriage, the father of the bride gave the father of the groom a property. This happened so that if the bride became widowed she would have somewhere to live, but also, if she married again and produced subsequent children, the property could not pass out of the hands of the groom's family into the hands of children of a subsequent family. The property rights to the family home of the groom would remain the right of his own family. These rules of primogeniture (inheritance of the first born son) were strictly adhered to, and it is thus we can explain how Moistown passed from Oliver Mallet to John Olde on the marriage of their children.

John Francis Olde

John Francis Olde was an interesting character. He was the son of Bartholomew Olde and Margaret Churchill Of Sherborne Dorset. Margaret Churchill was great aunt of the Duke of Marlborough. Clearly this was a wealthy family. Bartholomew Olde, was the son of William Olde and Eleanor Anne Courtenay, on June 21, 1574 in Sherbourne, Dorset.

Bartholomew Olde was living at Sherborne in 1594 when he aided and abetted his brother Thomas in hiding Father Eustace, a Priest of the order of Jesus in a priest hole. Priest Holes were hiding places for priests built into many of the principal Roman Catholic houses of England during this period. Catholics were persecuted by law in England, from the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in 1558.

John Francis Olde was a QC (Cornish Record Office:1653 BRA1901/8). He was married to 'Dorothy' of Sherborne and they lived in Clawton, Devon. They had a son Tristram who married Marjory Mallett. John Francis Olde died in 1641 and his son Tristram died in 1654. Tristram's will shows that he had a daughter, Charity and his cousins were John Couch and Will Morton. Robert Couch had married a daughter of John Olde and thus inherited Moistown.

In 1641 John Couch, son of Robert Couch, an Attorney of South Petherwin (Cornish Record Office:1653 BRA1901/8) and Joan Stenlake were given 5/7 of Moyestown as a marriage settlement. (Devon Record Office: 1931B/F53) Or more correctly, the property went to William Stenlake, father of Joan Stenlake 1642

Willaim Stenlake of Moreton Hampstead leased 5/7th of the property to the Widow of William Stephens of Broadwoodkelly. (Devon Record Office:1931B/F53) The Couch family and the Stevens family were also closely related. It is therefore not surprising that Moyes was let to the widow of William Stevens.

In 1693 William Stevens of Broadwoodkelly, son of William Stevens sen., leased 1/7th of the property to Thomas Hall of Broadwoodkelly, Weaver for £55.00 (Devon Record Office:1931BT56)

It is interesting to note that a weaver rather than a farmer inhabited the house at this point. Devon has an interesting history of woollen weaving. However, it did not reach its peak until the 1700's where, particularly locally, North Tawton just five miles away had a thriving woollen industry and serge factory. It is likely that Thomas Hall played an early part of this growing industry.



One Hundred and Fifty years later we learn from W. White's History, Gazetteer & Directory of Devon, 1850 "History of Devonshire"

'There are still several large woollen mills and several thousand looms in different parts of the county, employed in making serges, blankets, and other coarse woollen cloths. Cloth was woven at Exeter and Chudleigh in the reign of Edward I. Dartmoor wool, however, was at that time exported; but Edward III prohibited the exportation of wool, and encouraged the immigration of foreign weavers, many of whom settled in this county.'

Weaving clearly played an important part in the local industry and it is interesting that Moyes was also affected by it.

Weaver, based on an original 16th century wood engraving. From "Le Moyen Age et la Renaissance", by Paul Lacroix, Ferdinand SürÚ and A Rivaud, Volume III (Paris, 1849).

In Part 5 I have described how Moistown, Alchedown and Hoggslan (Pipers Pool) passed out of the hands of the Kayleway famiy and ended up in the hands of William Stevens of Broadwoodkelly, a local weaver. Throughout its history Moistown reflected the context of the times, from the persecution of Catholics to the development of the local woollen industry. In Part 6 I shall return to the colourful story of Moistown and tell you about the dispute challenging its ownership.