

**Evidence for placing Broadclyst Church House, or Church Ale House, on the site of the present  
'Red Lion' Public House or incorporated within its environs**

The first and most important evidence lies in a c. 1496 Deed of Gift written in Latin, for a parcel of land given by James Chudleigh to the 'Eight Men of Broadclyst' on which to construct a Church House. The Eight Men were a governing body for Broadclyst in the fifteenth century and probably earlier.

The exciting discovery of the Deed together with a copy of the Burroughs Almshouses Deed threw light on the origins of the Eight Men. This group had hitherto only believed to have been in existence since their Act Book of 1605. Therefore, the discovery of the 1496 Deed of Gift confirmed their origins to have been much earlier.

The Deeds were discovered in a box belonging to Colonel Dean, in Hassocks, Sussex. He was a descendant of The Reverend Montague Barton, Vicar of Broadclyst 1753-1819, and thus had presumably inherited these Deeds. Upon his death the documents being discovered were returned to Broadclyst, and placed with their translations into English in the archives of the Devon Record Office under Ref: DRO 131OF/Z5-6 for the Church House Deed and DRO 131OF/Z7-8 – Almshouses Deed.

The Chudleigh family were the Lords of the Manor of Broadclyst from 1350 upon the death of Roger de Nonant the last Norman Manorial Lord. Actually, the Manor came down through the female line through Alice de Nonant Sir Roger's daughter. Sir John Beauchamp married for the second time to Alice de Nonant, in 1344, they had a daughter Jane Beauchamp who married John Chudleigh thus Broadclyst Manor passed into the Chudleigh family of Ashton.

James Chudleigh in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, was obviously interested in building, as he remodelled and embellished the church, increasing the beauty and height of the tower, and enlarging and decorating its interior. He probably oversaw the construction of the Chudleigh Manor House known as 'The Woode', which remains today in disguise as Broadclyst House. He would have recognised the importance of the body of Eight Men to Broadclyst, and therefore decided to award them and the villagers a plot of land measuring 42 ft x 24 ft, on which to build the Church House. The Church House Deed states that James Chudleigh assigned the land for the building of the '*Church Housse*' in the eleventh year of the reign of Henry VII. This links the building of the Church House with the completion of the church Tower, as the Coats of Arms on the south and north faces of the tower are those of the Chudleigh family (quartered with de Nonants and Merton, with whom the Chudleigh family intermarried, and inherited Broadclyst Manor by so doing), whilst those on the east and west faces of the tower are those of Henry VII.

A letter, explaining the discovery of the two Deeds, written in 1932 by the Reverend Thomas Eaton McCormick (Vicar 1924-1933) from the then Vicarage 'Prior Court' to one of the last of the Chudleigh family living in Bude, Cornwall, tells of Revd. McCormick's thoughts on the situation of the Church House. He was apparently convinced that it was, in fact, on the site of the Red Lion Garage. His theory was based on the existence of two very large old east and west end fireplaces which may be seen in the garage/coach house loft. One fireplace has been demolished, and the stones were used to construct the fireplace in the present-day Public Bar over which the large heavy lintel may still be

observed. The stones bear builder's marks, and the outline of the fireplace is still in situ but underneath a modern brick-built boiler housing. Revd. McCormick no doubt, noted the outline of the removed west fireplace when he visited the western end of the Red Lion garage, as it used to house a Bier belonging to the church.

In 1930 the discovery of the Church House Deed and its fairly clear description of the exact location of the land on which it was to be constructed, together with the observed fireplaces gave the Revd., McCormick much food for thought. The Eight Men Act Book of 1605 mentions the Church House, but not its location.

The Deed of 1496 gives the names of the Eight Men of that day: John Crockehay, Alan Pomerey, Henry Northeley, Henry Raddeford, John Iveley, John Reynold, William Wyll and John Martyn. The parcel of land contained in length 46 feet and in breadth 24 feet, *"lying between the land of the Vicar of Clyston on the south (glebe) and the Highway on the north which leads from the Cemetery of Clyston (churchyard) to Le Markett Place on the east, of which one end abuts upon the hedge of the cemetery aforesaid on the west and the other end towards Le Markett Place on the east."*

Looking at this area today, the above siting may be puzzling, but evidence exists of a former entrance to *'the cemetery of Cliston'* (the churchyard) being in the west corner of Queen's Square. This early entrance into the churchyard may be seen on an old Killerton Estate Map (1790) in the Acland archives in the Devon Record Office.

Another clue is that the edging stones of the churchyard paths direct the paths past the present day double Lych Gates (erected 1836) to the entrance formerly behind the Red Lion Garage, and from thence to Queen's Square. Queen's Square was once an important entrance to Broadclyst Village from the old North Road locally known as *'Scratcharse Lane'*, which led out of the village towards Killerton and The Crab Tree Inn and eventually on to Bristol.

This road led people into *'Le Markett Place'* an important gathering place which may have held Broadclyst Cattle Fairs which took place (according to Lysons) on the first Mondays in April and September.

The Red Lion Skittle Alley/Church House once faced Queen's Square, and is obviously much older than the rest of the building which is the Red Lion Public House of today. The precise location of *'Le Markett Place'* is not known, but is supposed to have been in the vicinity of the present day Red Lion car park extending from Queen's Square.

To the south is the *'land of the Vicar of Clyston'* the field known as Churchyard Close or Red Lion Field, sometime Glebe land.

At the Queen's Square (old front) side of the Red Lion, there are some old stone steps leading to a small old door – which may have led to the *'Upper Chamber'* containing the *'Littol Chamber'* designated for the meetings of the Eight Men of Broadclyst.

The under rooms were used as a Schoolroom and later as a place where *'the poor people may be sett to work'*. There was a frame for hanging artillery and armoury. This information is gleaned from the Act Book of the Eight Men, which was always to remain in the *'Littol Chamber'* locked in a great

Chest for which there were three large keys. These keys were kept one by the Vicar, one by the churchwardens and one by the Eight Men. A very large old key still exists in the Church Vestry safe.

Another key was found in the 'apple store room' (which could have been the upper room of the Church House) by the present day Red Lion landlord and his wife, Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Smith and they still possess the key to this day (1999).

Ruth Whitaker, relative of a Vicar of Broadclyst – the Revd., C. P. Whitaker (1896) records (in a 1919 Book on Broadclyst) that there was such a Chest in the Vicarage, the present day Broadclyst House. This Chest was recorded as existing until the time of the erection of the modern Vicarage in the grounds of Prior Court, when it was last seen in a stable, which was subsequently demolished.

In the 1496 Deed, proof exists of the Church House also being the Church Ale House, '*excepting the brewing and selling of two 'brasure' of ale in the said parcel of land to the use of the said Church of Clifton*'. This ties in neatly with the fact that many Devon Church Houses became Public Houses, an example of which is the Church House at Mortehoe, North Devon, which evolved into the Chichester Arms.

After the Almshouses had been constructed and Henry Burroughs had died, Elizabeth Burroughs, his wife, expressed a desire to build a Parish House and another New House for the further relief of the poor. She died in 1636 before these were constructed, but the Eight Men decided to carry out her wishes, and built two extra houses each to be '*one up, one down*'.

The Parish House was erected in front of the Red Lion Pub, on a plot measuring 176 ft x 72 ft. The subsequent disappearance of the Parish House left an over-large entrance to the churchyard, giving a reason for the erection of the two very unusual Lych Gates much later in 1836.

Two of the Eight Men, Anthony Ratcliffe the Elder and Robert Lake, by the use of the Church House and the benefit of selling '*drinke there with gifts of other well-disposed persons, on 6<sup>th</sup> April, laid out money towards the building of the Parish House*'. This building was completed in 1650 at a cost of £19.18.8d., some of which came from the preaching of '*Almshouse Sermons*' for which Henry Burroughs left 5s per sermon for eight sermons to be preached in the church to the '*Almspeople*'. The Parish House is shown on the Killerton Estate Map of the Village of Broadclyst dated 1790. (Ref: D.R.O. Acland Records).

When the Parish House was being built, the Church House already existed having been constructed shortly after 1496. However, it is easy to see how confusion may arise between these two buildings especially as they were both concerned with the poor of the Parish.

To add to this confusion, in 1791 the Vestry of the Eight Men agreed to build a convenient House at the Western end of the Church House (according to Glebe Terrier of 1657 '*one garden plot was adjoining the Church House*'). This was for the '*better relief of the poor and the better carrying of Parish business and all vestries were to be held there instead of in Church House*'. Probably by this time the Church Ale House had become too noisy for serious meetings! This 'Church House Chamber' would account for the two large fireplaces upstairs in the Red Lion Garage, making the garage area the Church House Western Chamber, and not the Church House itself, as surmised by the Revd., McCormick.

Once again this venture was financed by money from brewing ale in the Church House, and the Vestry Book of 1892-1855 states: *'John Havill to have the Church House Chamber to keep a school but not to sleep there, until Christmas (4 months) and no longer, and to have no pay!'*

In 1828 John Havill was allowed to *'keep a school'* in the Church House Chamber.

1829 – John Havill to have *'notice to quit'* the Church House Chamber in two months.

1830 – John Havill married and had children in 1831, 32, 34 and 1836. Apparently, he did occupy the Church House Chamber shortly before this time. At this time the tax records show that a John Hewitt (or maybe Havill) had possession of half of the Red Lion Inn.

On the Broadclyst Village section of the Tithe Map of 1844, the Apportionment states that the Church House Chamber was now listed as two cottages, and eventually it was converted into a Bier House, Coach house and stables. The Red Lion stables and outhouses that stood in the present-day car park area had been destroyed by the Great Fire of Broadclyst, on 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1878. The fire destroyed many houses in the village, including Place Barton Farm and was started by a spark igniting hay in the Red Lion stables, luckily the Inn itself was unscathed.

On the side of the Red Lion garage/Church House Chamber is the face of a man carved into the red sandstone, and reckoned to be 18<sup>th</sup> century. His face is echoed in the carving of a similar face on the stone arch in the church Vestry. By the Church House Chamber carving is a small stone entrance from which a door (now blocked) once led into the chamber.

Further evidence came to light on the discovery of a large important Deed for the Sale of the Manor of Broadclyst from John Chudleigh to Sir Thomas Arundell and others. This deed (D.R.O. Ref: 51/23/1 dated between 1586 and 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1599) enabled John Chudleigh to finance his privateering voyages, during which he was missing presumed drowned in the Magellan Straits.

The Deed of Sale ended the Chudleigh family connection to Broadclyst which commenced in 1344 when the first John Chudleigh took up residence with his wife Jane, Grand-daughter of the last of the Norman de Nonant Lords.

The Deed is very lengthy, and extremely interesting, it states that Henry Burroughs bought some of the Broadclyst Manorial lands and leased other parts. One part being known as *'The Shambles'* a name that is usually connected with butchery, and the selling of meat, such as the well-known Shambles area of York.

On pondering the wording of the Deed, the Broadclyst Shambles appears to have been in the upper part of Queen's Square, *'by the new built house of Thomas Hawkyns'*. This gentleman was keeper of the *'Poors' Books'* and was paid £1 for so doing. His house is likely to be the present day partially thatched house standing to the West of Queen's Square. This house is now divided into two but was once one large house. The Deed states that Thomas Hawkyns' house is *'near the Churchyard'* and *'under (under meaning 'near by') the house of the said Thomas Hawkyns shall be kept by the said Henry Burroughs or his assigns as a fit place for keeping of the Lordes Courte as now ytt is'*. This would refer to the Church House upper room or *'Littol Chamber'*, Henry Burroughs being one of the Eight Men probably also used this room as a Manorial Court room to administer his part of Broadclyst Manor. The *'lower parte of the Shambles towards the said Gate shall be likewise kepte fitte for selling of victualles and other wares as now it is'*. It mentions in the Deed a gate leading from the Town area – or main Village area by the water pump into the *'Courte Green'*.

This would tie up with the lower part of Church House towards *'Town'* (Red Lion back bar entrance) which would certainly have sold victuals – food and drink.

Further, it was required that the Shambles (Queen's Square) should be kept *'preserved as spacious, large and Comodyous for a Market as nowe they are'*.

It is documented that *'Le Markett Place'* was to the east of the Church House plot, so it would marry up with the top part of Queen's Square being the Shambles or butchery selling dead meat and leading through the gate (to keep live cattle out) towards the larger livestock market. The area of Le Markett Place would have stretched across the present day Kennecotts land (Kennecotts wasn't built until the 18<sup>th</sup> century) and the Red Lion Car park – towards the village pump which was near the conduit of today.

The old centre of the village would have been near the village pump, a well-known meeting place for villagers. One has to use imagination to 'see' the village as it was before the Cullompton Road ran right through the middle, effectively bisecting it.

The Red Lion Public House of today is a composite of many different periods of re-construction and alterations, each landlord having played his part in changing the original building. It becomes quite difficult to see where one building ends and the other begins, but this only adds to its fascination, and importance as a *'Lord's Courte'* or Church House in the past. Today the Red Lion Public House is a wonderfully comfortable and convivial hostelry, and a place for social gatherings, as it has been through the years.

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