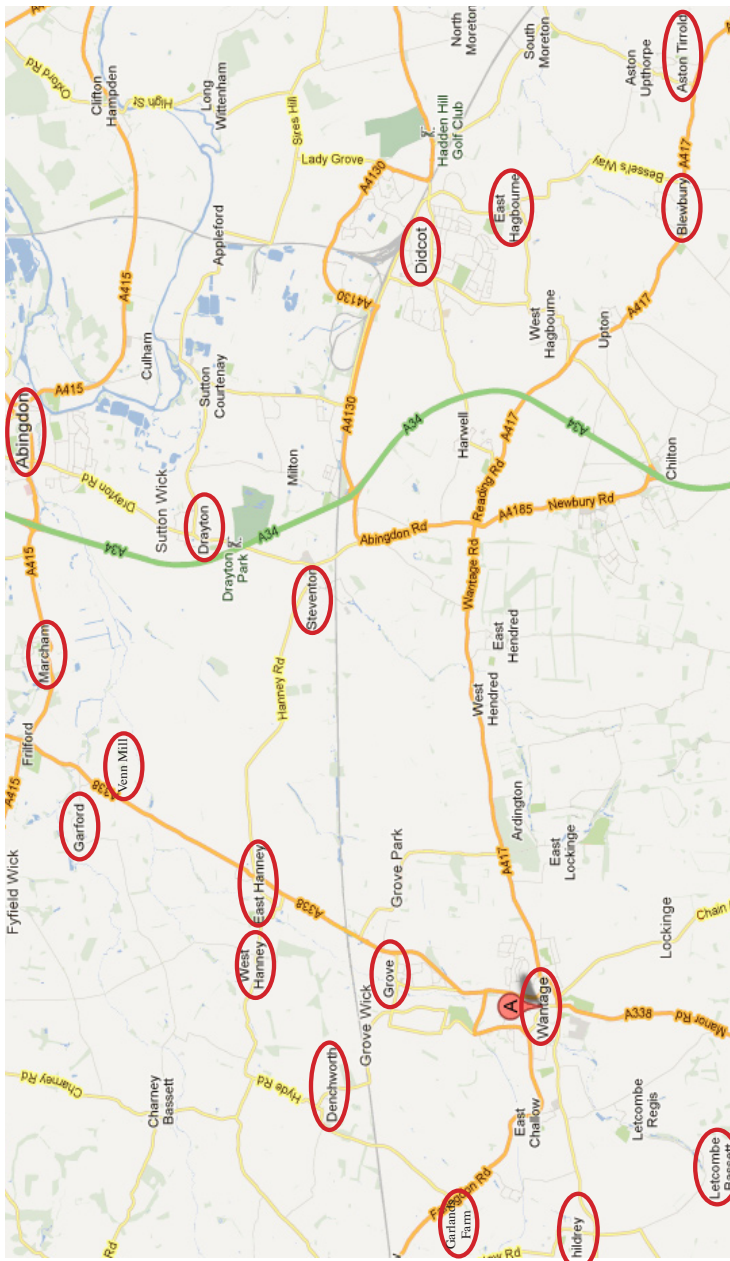


West Meets West

The grandchildren of John Aldworth West and Emma (Long) West visit England cousins and the Berkshire (Oxfordshire) places of our ancestors

October 4 - 6, 2012



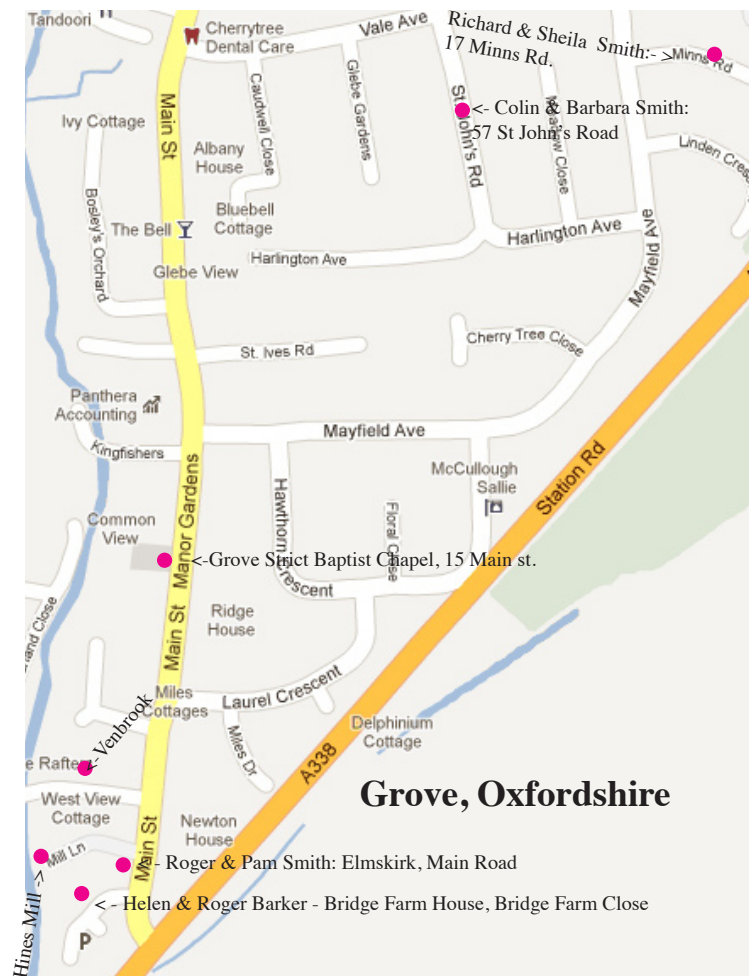
Dedicated to
Mary Irish

1904 - 2003

She was the primary source and influence on my family research and was the essence of all that I have come to know and love about the Wests.



Mary with Auntie Elsie



INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this trip is a pilgrimage of sorts to the places in Berkshire (now Oxfordshire) that the families of Grampa John (the Wests) and Gramma Emma (the Longs) came from. After our grandparents (with Jack and Elsie “in arms”) left for Canada in early 1908, the West family’s association with milling effectively ended. Furthermore, Percy was the only sibling of Grampa’s remaining in England to have children (Mary Irish). Our great grandparents, William Westell West and Sarah (Aldworth) left Venn Mill two years earlier via Reading to take up a Strict Baptist Church Parish in Heathfield Sussex along with Grampa’s sisters: Emma, Elsie, Molly and Ruth. Although Ruth married later in life, none of them had children. Therefore Grampa and Gramma’s emigration was highly significant, since it moved the vast majority of West progeny to the new world, leaving no direct descendants (after Mary) in England.

The secondary trip purpose is to re-connect with our more distant England cousins and continue the long tradition of family visits - from Phil’s visit in 1927 and Grampa and Gramma’s visit in 1937 to several visits of our parents, aunts and uncles and “kuzzins” (meaning Grampa’s grandchildren) from the 1950s onward. Our Thursday evening event is hosted by Gramma’s relatives: the Longs and Iresons, Friday evening we’re with Aldworth & West descendants: Smith/Collins/West/Pinnell/Belcher/Pepler & Tugwell (See the chart on the last page)

OCCUPATIONS:

Most of the places we will see on our tour of the area are related to the mills run by our West ancestors. However, there were many other occupations on both the maternal & paternal sides of the family. Here are a few:

Farming - Daniel West (b1856) After mill dust affected his health, he began farming at Garlands Farm. The farm is run through the present day by members of this family. Three of Grampa’s brothers, Fred & Asher in Vancouver area and Will in Drayton, were farmers at some point in their lives.

Baking - Gramma’s parents Philip & Harriet Long, Grampa’s Uncle Martin Shepherd - both in Hanney.

Harness-making - WWW’s maternal grandfather, William Westell (b1778) had a successful business in Steventon. The property was “appropriated” by the Great Western Railroad in the 1830s. WWW was reported to still be involved with a related court case in the late 19th century.

Millinery - Grampa’s sister Elsie (b. 1879) had a thriving hats, dresses and draperies shop in Guildford.

Transportation - Grampa’s uncle, John Aldworth was head of the tram system in Nottingham at the end of the 19th century.

Carriage making - Gramma’s brother Charles Long was a designer and manufacturer of horse drawn carriages.

Engineering and Drafting - Grampa’s brother Percy was a draftsman at Nalder and Nalder in West Challow. He was also an accomplished artist; several of his drawings have been handed down to us. We will see a door knocker of his design during our Wantage visit.

Building - From the Aldworths (Wantage Baptist Church) on down to Grampa and his sons, carpentry and contracting have been a major part of many kuzzin’s lives.

The Arts - Gramma’s niece Mabel Long (elocution), Asher West & Mary (piano, singing, whistling). Garford Manor house was the location of many evening soirées involving our relatives. Percy was a fine artist also.

The Ministry - Grampa’s Grandfather Daniel (b1813) was reportedly a devout Strict Baptist and his son WWW was clearly influenced by the reformist writings of William Tiptaft and the Strict Baptist movement. In 1905, he and Sarah left Venn Mill for Reading, ostensibly for theological studies in advance of their move to a parish in Heathfield Sussex.

Milling - The tradition of millers goes back at least 5 generations of Wests to Daniel (b1759 Hagbourne) and possibly earlier to James (b1690).

By 1066 nearly every household would have ground corn (meaning any grain) for its own use. This all changed with the imposition of a Norman feudal custom called ‘milling soke’ whereby all grain grown on the lord’s estate had to be ground at the lord’s corn mill. Owning hand mills was forbidden. This gave a great deal of power to millers who for centuries have carried a “bad rep” in English culture as conniving and money-grubbing with their customers & grain providers. The text of an old English folksong “The Miller of Dee” uses the refrain: “I care for nobody, no not I, if nobody cares for me”. Furthermore, milling was deemed an essential service in these years and was one of the few occupations exempt from military service. Millers as tenant operators go back many centuries. After the Black Death of the 14th century, the corn mills that survived were rented out and this was the occupation our West ancestors chose: Daniel (b1759) at Hagbourne Mill; James (b1780) at Blewbury; Daniel (b1813) at Hines Mill in Grove; William Westell (WWW-b1847) at Ham Mill (Wantage) and Venn Mill; his brother Daniel (b1856) at West Hanney Mill; Grampa’s eldest brother Will at Marcham Mill and possibly Grampa at Venn Mill. (It is not clear whether milling continued at that time, or whether Venn Mill was just a residence.) From the early 1880s roller milling began to replace millstones and the fine white flour produced on an industrial scale began to take over. Traditional rural mills could not compete. By the end of the 19th century virtually every surviving corn mill had closed. This is at least a partial explanation of why WWW and Grampa ultimately moved on to other livelihoods.

THE WEST GRANDPARENTS

William Westell West, Grampa's father, was a well connected man in the area, not only as a lay and later ordained preacher at Grove Strict Baptist Chapel, he also was a local registrar of voters and held the position of "Guardian of the Poor" in the district. This involved administration of the workhouses, which by the mid 19th century housed those who were unable to take care of themselves - mostly elderly people. Apparently WWW was instrumental in making it possible for husbands and wives, previously separated, to live together in their waning years. In 1905, he and Great Gramma Sarah moved to Reading to their new "calling", and in 1907 to Heathfield. His wife, our great grandmother Sarah (Aldworth) baked the bread, made clothes for all the children and brewed the beer (apparently an acceptable beverage to the Strict Baptist, as opposed to gin). Mary Irish remembers a story of "Gramma" Sarah going to visit "titled" relatives in Ireland, and Edna remembered Gramma Emma saying that mother-in-law Sarah was always aware of her connection to Irish nobility. I have recently found, in the British Peerage, a string of Richard Aldworths between 1629 and 1899 in County Cork, Ireland, there being no other concentrations of that family name in Ireland.

Grampa John appeared in many ways to be quite independent of his father. He was the only member of the family to join the military, fighting in the Boer War and the Second World War. Like his brothers Will, Fred, Asher and Heber, he looked to Canada for a new life (although Will returned and was a pig farmer in Drayton.) Grampa's story of being in Tacoma, waiting for a ship to the Klondike Gold rush and then being press-ganged onto a ship, travelling around The Horn and winding up in Ireland 6 months later, is legendary in the family. His leaving England was certainly to find a new life for himself and family with the opportunities for milling disappearing from England. There is also a lot of anecdotal evidence of an antipathy for his father's fundamentalist preaching. Apparently some of the boys were embarrassed by image of their father riding in his "Ezekiel-like chariot" to Chapel on Sundays. My sister Donna remembers that our mom once told her that when Grampa came to visit shortly after she married Dad, he sat quietly in a corner whenever my dad (a United Church minister) was present.

There is also the strange fact that of the four and a half month trip to England in 1937, he and Gramma only visited Venn Mill once. Lastly, there is a previously well-covered-up story about a feud between WWW (at Venn Mill) and his brother Daniel (at Hanney Mill) emanating from an accidental shooting during a Sunday visit to Venn Mill. Apparently Daniel's 3 year old daughter was tragically killed when a rifle that some of the boys were playing with went off accidentally.

Gramma Emma (Long) was at the Garford School with the West "kids". The daughter of a Hanney baker, she married Grampa in 1904 and lived both at the bakehouse (where Uncle Jack was born) and at Venn Mill (where Auntie Elsie was born). After emigrating in 1908, during the second war (1914-1918) she had to run the family in Edmonton with six children by herself. Communication with Grampa was sporadic at best, and at one point during the disastrous Edmonton flood of 1916 their house had to be evacuated. Auntie Marjorie relates a story that Gramma was so distraught at this point that she took her wedding ring off and threw it into the river. In 1917, Grampa returned home on compassionate leave, later going back to the war for a time. When Grampa returned after being gassed, Gramma hardly knew him. He was completely emaciated and his hair was white.

ENGLAND RELATIVES

which you might meet on this trip. (see underlined names below and abbreviated chart on the last page). They are all second cousins several times removed. (Remember that the line of WWW's descendants in England ended with Mary Irish).

Our common ancestors with the England relatives on the West side are Daniel (b1813) and Jane (Westell).

Their son (WWW's brother) Daniel (b1856) was at Garlands farm, and you will meet several descendants through his son Joseph (& Eunice), and the family of grandson James (& Brenda) at the Ancestor's Day: Muriel (Denton), Elizabeth (Atkin), Rosemary (Hayden) and Peter West.

On the Aldworth side, our common ancestors are William Aldworth (b1818) and Emma (Whiting). Their daughter Harriet (Great Gramma Sarah's sister) married Herbert Collins (b1849) and began the largest of our related clans.

1. Daughter Miriam married John Smith, their daughter Lois married Edwin Pocock (daughter Ruth has been a big help in organizing our trip). Their daughter Miriam provided a more recent *West* link by becoming the second wife of Grampa's brother Percy.

2a. Daughter Ruth married William Arthur Smith, had sons William and Arthur Smith and grandchildren (i.e. children of Billy and Joan (Pepler): Colin Smith who has been our primary trip contact; his sister Helen (Barker) & husband Roger who are hosting Ancestor's Day and brothers Richard & Roger Smith. Their aunt Mary Pepler married John Tugwell).

2b. Ruth had three more children with her second husband Stuart Pinnell

3. Daughter Eunice married Joseph West (see West ancestors above) providing the first of several cousins marriages in the family).

4. Daughter Mary married Cleeve Belcher

The Tour - Day One

WANTAGE AREA

1. The National Westminster Bank, a red-tiled, obviously re-furnished building at 3 Newbury St. This was the house (or its replacement) in which William and Emma Aldworth lived until Emma died in 1857.

2. Miss Bayley's School, 31 Wallingford St (next to the Shoulder of Mutton). This was where Mary Irish went to School.

3. Chain Hill Cemetery. Enter the lower gate and on the left, 2 rows from the fence, you will find the sandstone, somewhat deteriorated graves of William Aldworth 1871-1909, probably the last son of William Aldworth (b. 1848) and his second wife Mary Ann (1835-1911), who is remembered on the same grave marking. The graves of William and Emma Aldworth (in the older, "non conformist" area of the cemetery) are not visible but are probably one of the nearby graves that are weathered beyond readability. A volume of tombstone inscriptions can be found in the Oxford Library (COS) which confirms their grave in this cemetery.

4. Ormand at Newbury. The Royal Oak Pub, which was run by Charles Collins, a brother of Herbert Collins.

5. Vale and Downland Museum

6. At the other end of the square is the Wantage Parish Church. In 1545, Alice Aldworth of West "Hacbourne" left 16 pence for the installation of a "fleur de Lys" decorated bell, which still hangs on the east side of the tower. A later Aldworth grandfather became lost on the Lambourn Downs in a fog. (This also happened to Percy West at a time of great stress in his life). When he finally found his way back, he gave money to the Wantage Parish Church to ring a curfew every night at 8pm to guide travellers. Mary Irish remembers the bells playing hymns as a girl, particularly the "Angel's Song". Indeed, to this day, the playing of this hymn is mentioned in the town's tourist map.

7. While you are in the square, walk down to the right (Mill Street) and see The Baptist Church (also known as Zion Chapel) - built by William Aldworth (b.1818), an impressive display of masonry skills and an illustration of his prosperity in the community. (Rich's story)

8. #41 Grove Street The pattern for the brass knocker was made by Percy West.

Return to cars and drive down Mill St.

9. The big mill at the bottom of the street is Clark's Mill. Mary Irish went to Miss Bayley's School with Freda Clark. Continue up the hill to the double round-about. Note the brick building across the intersection on the left. This is The Camel, a house now owned by the convent across the street, where William Aldworth and his family moved after the death of Emma. I spoke with a sister from the convent who told me that the order had purchased the property around 1870 (probably from the estate of William).

10. Left on Ham Road to the end, on the left is the Ham Mill, another restored building in an equally beautiful setting, where W.W.W. and Sarah (b. 1845) lived after their wedding in 1868 until after the birth of first son Will (1869).

Return to the double intersection go left and continue west toward East Challow on the 417 and drive through East Challow. As you leave East Challow you see on the right: Nalder & Nalder (now Challow Industries), a large stone building with a fan shaped window over the front door. This is where Percy West (p5) apprenticed to be a pattern maker in the late 19th century and later worked until 1913.

LETCOMBE BASSET

1. Southwest through Letcombe Regis to Letcombe Basset, (Basset Rd.) left on Gramp's Hill and right on Forster Lane brings you to St. Michael's Church and Churchyard. There is a volume of tombstone inscriptions of this churchyard which shows that this is the burial place of Thomas Newton, Emma Aldworth's (Whiting) grandfather. The exterior of the church is not restored but the inside is very nice. This is also a particularly lovely village and churchyard. As you leave the village, note the picturesque branch of the Letcombe Brook which powered all of the "West" mills further downstream.

2. Return and continue north on Gramp's Hill (which becomes 4001). As you cross B4507, you will go through Childrey Holloway (centuries of road wear create literally a "hollow way"), where an Aldworth ancestor was murdered by highwaymen in the 17th century while returning to Wantage after buying a horse at auction. Continue through Childrey (New Road) and turn right (SE) on A417 (Faringdon Road) past Challow Hill on the left - the next right is:

GARLANDS FARM.

This is the farm where family history has it that William Smith, grandfather of Jane Westell, lived. Daniel West moved there in his later years (1890s?), and the property passed on to his son Joseph (& Eunice Collins) and to James and Brenda. Their sons Peter and Joe are now there and will be our hosts. The house is an impressive two story brick building. A story has it that William Smith's initials are carved in a table in the house.

THE FOX - DENCHWORTH

No family history here, only good food and drink. The Wests, being Strict Baptists, were not known to frequent such establishments. It has taken a hundred years of degradation in the Vancouver West family (not to mention our English relatives) to bring us to this place to break bread together (plus a pint or so). My sister Donna and husband Jim Crook recall their visit to Uncle Percy in the mid 70s when they took him to "Noah's Ark" near Garford. It was the first time he had ever been in a pub. Continue north and east to:

WEST HANNEY

right on Church street - curve to left and at the end is a white building which was the bakery and house of Philip and Harriet Long, and the birthplace of Grandma and Uncle Jack. Turn around and take the village road left, past the red phone box turning left on Halls Lane. Follow the road left and then right. At the end of the road take

the left fork and you will come to the West Hanney Parish Church. Prominently placed near the front door of the church are the graves of Philip and Harriet Long. Nearby is a stone building which was Martin Shepherd's bakery. Just before the Church on the right is Prior's Court. An Aldworth relative (?) "William Aldworth" took leases on this property in 1840, 47, 54 & 61. In 1847, New College Oxford (the manor having been granted to them by Henry VI), obtained a valuation, an inventory describing a rather large and elaborate house and farm estate. Elsewhere in Hanney, there was a house and farm called 'Aldworth's'. Continue to East Hanney and just before the A338, turn left on The Green and stop. Here you will see a white thatched house which was the bakery and house of Philip and Harriet Long, and the birthplace of Grandma and Uncle Jack.

Continue on The Green, past Morlands Farm on the right (formerly owned by Allan Ireson & Alice Long), go left on Hall's Lane, follow the road left and then right. At the end of the road take the left fork and you will come to the:

LOWER HANNEY MILL

where Daniel West was the miller followed later by his son Daniel. Jack Ireson remembers a sign on the mill saying WEST's MILL although it is likely that this was removed in recent years by some history buff. (Well, really!!!) It is a tall thin building; quite unusual, now a residence - the nearby Mill Cottage is also occupied. Nigel Hammond in his book *White Horse Country* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1972), refers to this mill as "West's Mill" (pg. 105). Kelly's Trade Directory for Berkshire shows a West (no initial) at Lower Mill, East Hanney in 1868 and Daniel (W.W.W.'s) brother at the same mill in 1869, 77, 83, 87, 91, 95, 99 & 1903. Return to the A338 and go north to:

VENN MILL

(You can't miss it, and in fact if you don't slow down, you'll hit it!) It is thought that the name Venn (spelled Ven in 19th century documents) evolved from Fenn, meaning marshland. Very early documents refer to Fenn Mill. According to the Domesday Book, there was a mill here in 1086. The mill house dates from the 17th century. Recent excavations have uncovered foundations of the earlier house adjoining the mill itself. Kelly's Trade Directory for Berkshire shows W.W. West at Venn Mill in 1903 and J. West in 1907. William Westell West and Sarah came here first in 1870. The census of 1871 shows W.W.W., Sarah, William, age 1, John Aldworth, (brother of Sarah) at 15 and a domestic servant named Harriet at the Mill house. All the children except for Will were born here as well as Grandpa John and Emma's second born: Elsie. The census of 1881 shows W.W.W., Sarah, (Will was at Hine's Mill with Grampa Daniel), Emma at 9, Asher at 7, Fred at 6, Percy at 3 and Elsie at 1. All the children of W.W.W. and Sarah went to Garford School, which was one mile north. Betsy Fox was the itinerant nurse who came once a month and when the new babies came. By the 1891 census (the Grove report was in Wil-

liam Westell West's handwriting and signed by him), Will, Emma and Asher had left, Fred was 16, Percy 13, Elsie 11, John (Grandpa) 9, Mary 6, Heber 4 and Ruth 6 months with no domestic servant in residence. The nearest town was five miles away in Wantage and the nearest shop one mile away in Garford. The mill complex included meadow lands in which hay was grown. The family had two cows. Alan Stoyel, a geologist, has restored the mill to operating status. It is a "breastshot wheel". Another family story tells of the apples which were brought into the mill house and somehow misplaced. The family could smell them but could never find them, even when they rotted! North again on the A338, the building on the left is the Old Schoolhouse, now three dwellings. W.W. & Sarah's family were all taught by Mr. Neville (probably the father-in-law of George Long) and later by Mr. & Mrs. Harris, who particularly liked the Venn Mill children (well disciplined and intelligent). W.W.W. was a visiting inspector of the school, who checked and signed the registers. The next sharp left will take you into:

GARFORD

As you enter the village, there is a manor farm (now H. Walker and Son) with large stone barns directly ahead of you. This was the home and livelihood of Mr. & Mrs. William Long (Philip's brother). Described as a horse and trap Manor Farm, it was one mile walk from Venn Mill over the fields. It was here on Queen Victoria's Jubilee in June of 1877 where Mr. Long cleared out a barn and a nearby meadow for a lavish dinner (lots of beer, which Percy remembers "suited some and not others") and a day of games and merriment. Stop here and walk between the Manor House and the barn and you will come to the St. Luke's, Garford Church. There is a huge key to the church: as you enter the yard, on the right side of the door of the manor house, (knock first) on a hook behind a vine. The tiny church houses a grand piano, an electric organ and a pump organ. There are short pews in the front, seemingly for choir boys or children. In the Churchyard, in the far right-hand corner away from the church, you will find the graves of Philip Long, William and Eliza Long, and daughter Mary Eliza in addition to the graves of Peter and Emma Hatton. Continuing down the road through the village, you will come to the town hall, a curiously out-of-place wood-frame building. The next building opposite on the right, now called "sundial cottage" was Peter Hatton's shop - the closest store to Venn Mill. Percy said whenever they had a ha'penny to spend, he went to Mr. Hatton's shop to buy sweets. Hatton used to chase them because they would taunt him: "Peter Hatton, Peter Hatton had a pig and couldn't fatten 'm." Mr. Powell was a well-to-do man in the village. His son Claude went to the very upper class "Abingdon School". Claude came home and told many exaggerated stories and the boys (and Peter Hatton) laughed at him, getting them in much trouble with the wealthy Mr. Powell.

The Tour - Day Two

MARCHAM MILL,

where Grandpa John's brother Will lived and worked. Since the census of 1881 puts him with Daniel and Jane at Hine's Mill (apprenticing), and we know he visited Canada in the mid 1880s, we can estimate that he lived at Marcham Mill from some time in the 1890's. Letters in the Berkshire Record Office document an Offer of Tenancy by the owner of Marcham Mill, subsequently guaranteed by W.W.W., in 1901. Another offer by the landlord to Will, and Will's letter of acceptance of 1909, is also there.

ABINGDON

Continuing east (right) on A 415 (to Dorchester), go through Abingdon and left on Stratton way (A415 alternate), straight ahead on Vineyard, and right on Abbey Close - park in the Waitrose Supermarket parking lot. Walk back to Abbey Close and south to Checker Walk - turn right to Abbey Baptist Chapel on the left (small unimposing cement block building - don't confuse with the Abbey in front of you). This is the chapel where Jane Westell and Daniel West met and where William Westell West was baptised. In the years after 1830, a very popular minister, Mr. William Tiptaft, attracted great numbers of people from a large surrounding area to his Sunday sermons. This could explain why William Westell and his family would come all the way from Steventon by horse and trap to attend services. Nearby is a pub which amusingly is the only place church-goers could "park" their horse and trap; the same was true in Grove. Billy Smith and his family came from Grove and were a back-bone of the congregation. The Chapel was externally renovated in the 1950s, but it is the original building. (From here, we will take a sight-seeing walk down to the river.) Return on the A415, turning left and south to Drayton on the B4017.

DRAYTON

After he left Marcham Mill, Grampas' oldest brother Will was in charge of a large pig farm. I have a newspaper article from the 1980s "100 years ago today" which describes WWW testifying on behalf of his son regarding a pig quarantine issue. Mary Irish remembers visiting a wonderful earthy old man with a broad Berkshire brogue. Both Will & younger sister Molly had severe glaucoma and were virtually blind at the end of their lives.

Entering Drayton, turn left on High St. and left again on Church Lane. On the right hand side you'll see Drayton Parish Church & the graveyard behind. Five rows from the far end of the churchyard, one grave over, you will find the grave of William (p5), Grandpa John's oldest brother, and his wife Eleanor. Note the beautiful specimens of yew tree.

STEVENTON

Continue south on the 4017 to Steventon. As you enter you will see Hanney road on the right - take the next right onto The Causeway. The Causeway is a raised, cobbled pathway which runs between two roads from the churchyard to the railroad and beyond. Where you turned off the B4017, on the southeast corner is #1 the Causeway. This is the property, but probably not the house (too new) in which William Westell, daughter Jane, Daniel, and their children lived. The census of 1841 shows William in Steventon with Jane and new husband Daniel, before the birth of their first son Jabez. The census of 1861 shows Jane and her father with Fred at age 16, Mary at 15, Roseamelia at 8 and Daniel at 5. Father Daniel was working at Hine's Mill (see earlier story of Jane and Daniel), William and Fanny were at Lower Grove (Hine's) Mill and presumably Jabez had left home. At this time, they had a domestic servant named Sarah Higgs. Continue on the causeway to St. Michael and all Angel's Church. Somewhere in the large churchyard are the faded grave markings of William and Jane Westell and William and Christian Westell. Mr. Arthur Bayliss, who lives at The Old Vicarage at #103 the Causeway, has found an old transcription of the grave markings, made by an earlier parson. In the transcription are the names and dates of the Westells as mentioned, but the grave stones before 1880 are generally unreadable. Perhaps someone can find them. They will most certainly be together. If you can't find them, the 1200 year old yew tree in the churchyard is worth the trip. (The yew tree is a standard feature of churchyards in England, since they live for so long and have poisonous berries to keep the animals away). Mr. Bayliss also has a directory of Steventon which lists William Westell as Saddle and Harness Maker in 1854. Cross the railroad tracks on your way back, where the road jogs across the causeway, right into Stocks Lane. Where that road meets the railway was a plot of land known in the 19th century as Westell's Close, now a brick ruin & fence. (see above). This was the land of two generations of Westells and where William lived with Jane and Daniel in 1841 before moving to the Causeway by 1861. The land has now been largely usurped by the railroad. At the end of the 19th century, W.W.W., who was the executor of his mother's will, reportedly had somewhat vexing problems with Great Western Railway (later British Rail) over this land. Continue south on the A4017, joining the A4130 east towards Didcot, right on Foxhall Rd., cross the roundabout and continue straight on Park rd. to the:

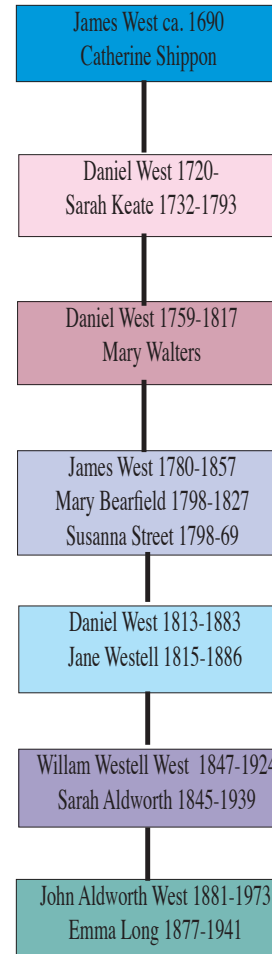
ROYAL OAK PUB

Here you can suspend your guilt about your Strict Baptist heritage, since the Long Family were solid Anglicans and we all know Anglicans are good drinkers. Continue south on Park Rd. and left toward:

EAST HAGBOURNE

Entering the village you will see the Parish Church on your right. Turn right at the town cross and park in front of the church. St. Andrews Church This is where James was christened in 1789 and where the family of Daniel and Mary lived for part of their lives. In addition to the lovely and well kept Parish Church and churchyard, this is one of the most beautiful old tudor and thatch villages I've seen in England. Return to the town cross and continue through the village, and at the next town cross, take the 4016 south (right) toward Blewbury for about a mile. On your left you will see a sign for West Hagbourne Mill still there but redeveloped. It is famous for the invention of blotting paper. Opposite, there was a sign for Blewbury Mill. There seems to be nothing left of the latter mill from the closest vantage point I could find without alerting the current owner. Neither of these mills are the historical homes of the Wests, although the existence of either could explain why James West lived in Aston Tirrold and his father Daniel in West Hagbourne in the earlier part of their lives. A likely scenario is that at some point in the late 18th century, Daniel took over the Old Mill in Blewbury, having been at one of the two above mills and his son James worked one of these mills, while living less than a mile away in Aston Tirrold until the death of his father (approximately 1817). By existing footpath the three mills, "Hagbourne", "Blewbury" and "Old Blewbury" are less than a mile apart. Continuing on the 4016, take the left turn into Aston Upton, and continue through the village a very short way until you reach a sign for Aston Tirrold. Turn left. Where the road forks, go left and then turn right on the Croft (just beyond Thorpe St. on the left) following the road around to the right until you reach the old Parish Church. Aston Tirrold is the birthplace of Daniel in 1813 and where James West's family lived before moving to live at the old Blewbury Mill after 1817. St. Michael's Church was the source of the records (now in Reading and Oxford) which show the baptisms of Daniel and his brother William (who died at the age of 14), but this doesn't necessarily mean that the Parish Church was the site of his baptism.

Return along the croft to the intersection and go left for a short block on the left to the United Reformed Church. Curiously, there is another volume of church records available for Aston Tirrold from the Genealogy Centre. The burial of one of Daniel's sisters, Ann, in 1817 (probably in infancy) is recorded here. A long tradition of alternative churches to the Church of England in the West family makes it likely that this beautifully restored old brick church housed the congregation to which James and his family belonged. Continue on this road around the Manor farm until you reach the A417. Turn right to



Blewbury. Just before the end of the village, turn right on Westbrook Street. (If you see a sign for Sebastapol Wines, you have gone too far.) At the end of Westbrook street, turn right on Church End; past the Post Office, bear left at the next intersection (Berry Lane), past Millbrook Close on the right and take the next left at the sign on a stone wall which says "the Beeches". Take the left fork and keep going until the road ends at:

The Old Blewbury Mill Family history has this as the place of work of millers Daniel West and son James. Family tradition notwithstanding, it is not at all clear how Daniel could have travelled from East Hagbourne to operate the old Blewbury Mill. More likely he worked for at least part of the time at one of the previously mentioned mills and then at the

Old Mill until his death. It is likely that James lived with his family, growing to five children in the cramped quarters of the mill from 1817 until the attached house was built. Joseph Lousley, the tenant of the Manor, wrote to his landlord in 1824, "I have built the House at the Mill." Before 1824, the miller had lived in the cramped quarters of the mill itself. This mill is possibly one of the mills listed in the Domesday Book. It was always leased with the Manor until its sale from the Wantage estate (to Henry Prior). The Priors, Henry and son John, were the millers for the later half of the 19th century....Miss Prior, John's sister, died in 1958, aged 93 years. Mary Irish and Percy visited Miss Prior in the 1950's and were shown a painting of a woman wearing a Dolly Varden bonnet, probably Susannah Prior. The owner of the mill at this time was Mr. Boumfrey, a well known author and BBC Director. In the 60's they visited again and the Mill had been converted to three separate dwellings. The previous owner was David Rogers, of the Rogers Sugar family, retired Head of Special Collections Division at the Bodleian Library at Oxford University. The current owners are Helen and Dermot Mathias, who have restored it beautifully after many years of occupation by "squatters". The Mill is in a beautiful setting which is a "must see" on the tour.

The Tour - Day Three

GROVE

Coming north on Main Street (from Bridge Farm) you will pass Mandhill close on the left and an equal distance further will bring you to a black iron fence also on the left.

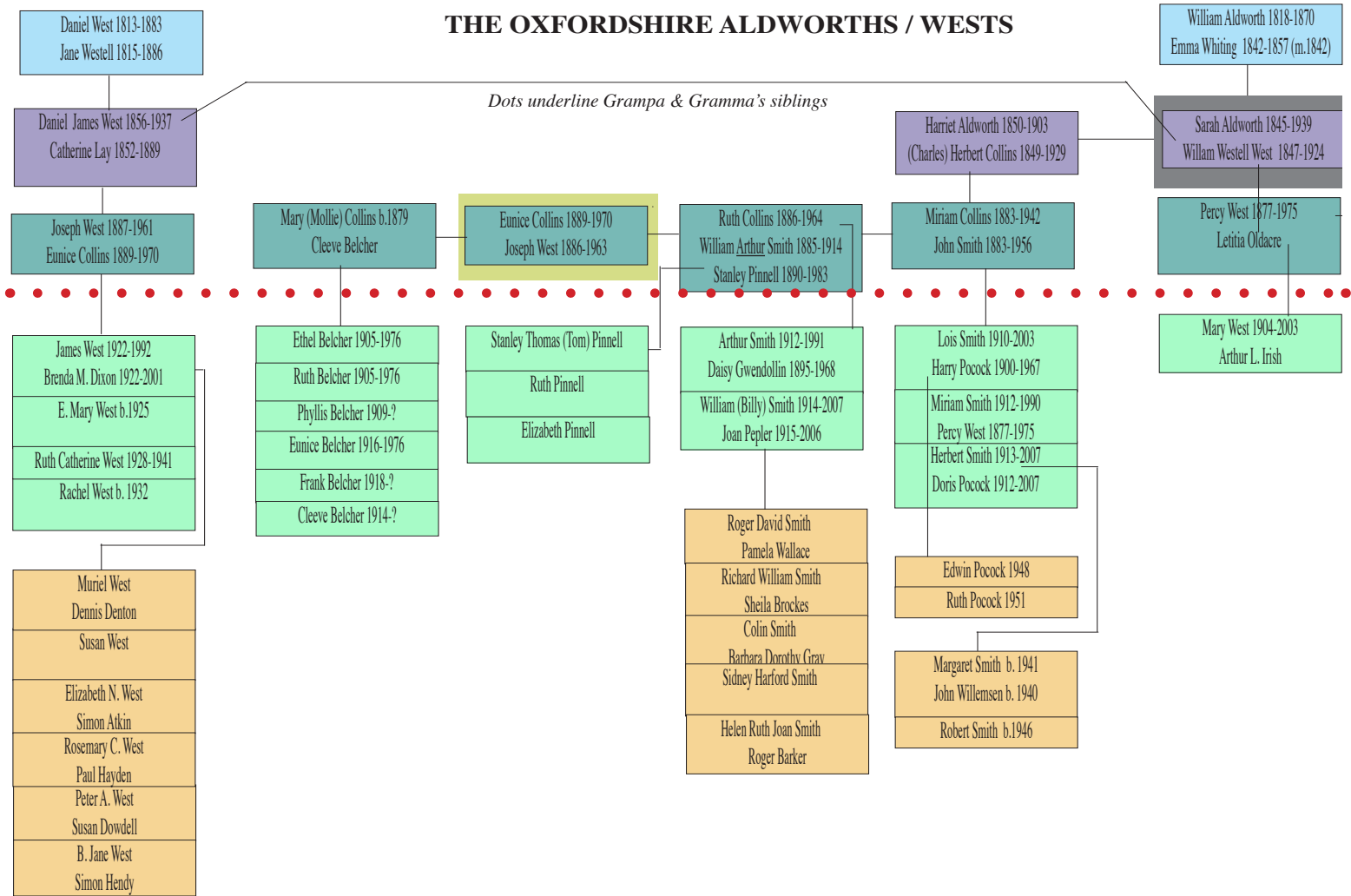
This is the Grove Strict Baptist Chapel and churchyard. For me, it is the most impressive sight, since it holds the quite readable grave marking of at least three generations of Daniel's (b. 1720) descendants. Much of the history of this congregation is the history of this branch of the Wests and Aldworths. The grave stones you will find are: Daniel (b. 1813) and Jane, Daniel (b. 1856) and Catherine, Roseamelia and Martin Shepherd (b. 1841), Harriet and Herbert Collins (b. 1849), Miriam and John Smith, Mercy Smith (b. 1857), Lydia Smith, John and Miriam Collins, Joseph and Eunice Collins, Ann Collins, Stanley Pinnell, Percy West and Miriam, Ruth Collins Smith, Arthur and Daisy Smith, Billy and Joan Smith, Herbert and Doris Smith, Harry Pocock and James West (B. 1856). Mr. Tugwell, a Deacon of this congregation, was a good friend of Percy West and has many stories to tell about Percy and the congregation. He also seems to know a fair amount about the West family.

Returning south on Main St., turn right on Cane Lane to see the former home of Percy West and his second wife Miriam. (Vennbrook - third cottage on right). Continue a very short way down Main St. The next right is Mill Lane. The row house directly in front of you, is where Daniel and Jane West lived until they died in the 1880's. At the end of the road is beautifully restored Hine's Mill, where Daniel worked. In 1994, Gordon and Joyce Entwistle were the current delightful owners. They are real "Mill Buffs" and well worth meeting.

The next right turn, on Main Street, now a new housing development called Elms Farm Close is the centre of what was a large farm where Herbert Collins (b. 1849) and his family lived. Subsequently this was Arthur and Billy Smith's large farm. Billy Smith with brother Arthur built a large milk and grain production business in Wantage. Billy had many stories to tell about the business and the family in general. Particularly interesting are stories of visits to Uncle Will (W.W.W.) in Heathfield, and riding on the back of his famous tricycle.



THE OXFORDSHIRE ALDWORTHS / WESTS



THE LONG FAMILY

