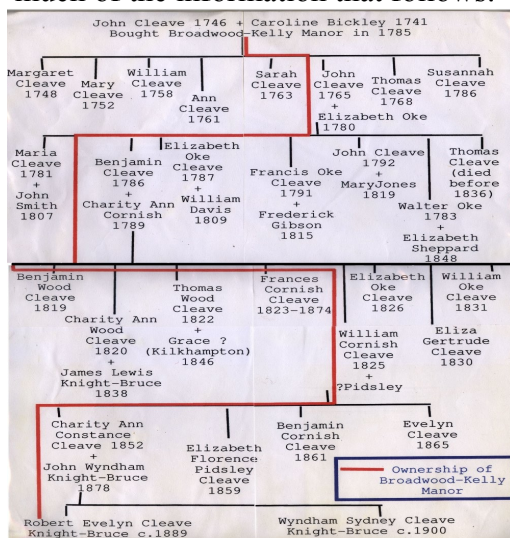


The History of Moistown: Part 8 by Dr. Sylvia Warham c. February 2010

In Part 7 of the history of Moistown I looked at John Andrews of Broadwoodkelly his family letters. In Part 8 I shall tell you about the rest of Moistown history.

You may remember that in the will of John Kayleway of Cullompton he left Woodcroft, Moys, Hoggsland (Pipers Pool) and Alchedown to his son George. As far as we know, Moys, Alchedown and Hoggsland stayed together until after the 1900's. However, Woodcroft, or Broadwoodkelly Manor does not appear in these records. We do know that it was purchased by John Cleave in 1785. If you follow the red line on the chart below, you will see successive owners of Broadwoodkelly Manor (Woodcroft). The Cleave family began acquiring Broadwoodkelly property as it became available and by the 1900's they owned most of the property south of Woodcroft Lane (leading to the main road to Winkleigh). We know from the census that Moistown was still inhabited in the late 1800's. Thanks are due to David Plaistow of Broadwoodkelly for much of the information that follows:



'At the time of the Apportionment in about 1840 it (Moistown) consisted of a house and lane and about 87 acres of land. It was owned by John Andrews and Elizabeth Goodridge but the tenant was Christopher Chamblings.

John Andrews and his wife Sarah and four of their children lived at Pattiland and John was described as a farmer. The tenant of Moistown, Christopher Chamblings, although aged 60 was unmarried but had living with him his brother Richard aged 53, and his sister-in-law Elizabeth (nee Wilkins) aged 50.The Chamblings were a large local family and had lived in Broadwoodkelly since the early 1700's.

Eight other people lived at Moistown. These were Martha Parr aged 20, Elizabeth Stoneham aged 12, John Parr aged 20, described as an agricultural labourer, George Beer aged 15, John Watkins aged 12, Mary Hooker aged 60, Emma Hooker aged 4 and Catherine Leonard aged 4.

Broadwoodkelly Manor was passed down successive generations of the Cleave family

By 1851 the household had reduced somewhat. Christopher and his brother and sister-in-law were still there but with Richard Beer aged 30 and Richard Davey aged 17, both described as servants, and Sarah and John Huxworthy aged 22 and 16 respectively. Christopher Chamblings died in 1859 and his sister-in-law in 1861, and at the time of the 1861 census the head of the household at Moistown was John Milton.

John was the tenant but the ownership had passed to Benjamin Cleave who was Lord of the manor of Broadwoodkelly and a very large land owner. With John were his wife Sarah aged 34, Richard Chamblings who was now aged 78 and described as a boarder and retired farmer, and two servants, Samuel Weeks aged 13, and Sarah Lovill, aged 14.

John and Sarah had married in 1858 when John was in his 40's and they had their first child Elizabeth in 1863 and their second, Mary Lovill (Lovill after her paternal grandmother) in 1872. Unfortunately Mary died aged 1.

In 1871 John and Sarah lived at Moistown with their daughter Elizabeth then aged 8, and a niece Sarah Ann Milton aged 18, who was described as a servant. Sarah was almost certainly the daughter of John's brother William. The Miltons were still at Moistown in 1881 and Elizabeth was still at home. Also living with them was Ann Palmer aged 84 who was John's mother-in-law.

The Miltons were replaced at Moistown by Anthony Tallyn but by 1891 John Piper aged 48, who was born at Winkleigh and his wife Agnes aged 46 who was born at Coldridge, were there. Living with them were their four daughters, Louisa aged 24, Annie aged 10, Mary aged 7 and Elizabeth aged 1, and their son Bertie aged 5.

After 1891 there is no further reference to Moistown, however we were fortunate enough to acquire an aerial photograph of the property taken by the RAF on the 19th of April 1946. The photograph shows the remains of the east and west wings of the building. Given its sudden disappearance from the census and the complete destruction of the main wing of the house, we suspect that there may have been some kind of disaster such as a major fire.



Moistown on the 19th April 1946

In Part 8 I have described how, after six hundred years of habitation and recorded history, Moistown eventually became derelict. In Part 9, the final part of this series, I shall tell you about what we are doing today to ensure that Moistown and its colourful history and the ancient history of Broadwoodkelly are not lost forever.

