

Sarah Hurst's Christmas at St
Nicholas Little Horwood 1818

A Snowy Christmas Morning at St Nicholas Xmas 1818 Sarah and William Hurst go to Church



The Church looked very different to this. Murals were not discovered until the renovation of 1889. Seating may not have existed. The North Door was there.



Lets get in the Tardis and go back in time



2021 back to 1818

- 2021 a vehicle is sent by man out of the Solar System deep into outer space sending back messages, also flying helicopters around Mars exploring
- 1989 World Wide Web
- 1969 Man on the Moon
- 1941 The Jet Engine
- 1940's First Computers
- 1927 Television
- 1903 First Flight by Wright Bros
- 1844 The Oxford to Cambridge Line Opens Swanbourne Station
- 1835 Act of Parliament for local railways
- 1799 Income Tax introduced by William Pitt to pay for the Napoleonic Wars
- 1795 The Grand Junction Canal Act

Georgian England

- Queen Anne in 1714 left no male heir as required by Parliament
- George 1st of Hanover only spoke German and loved hunting
- His wife committed adultery and so he locked her up for life.
- George 2nd never saw his mother again and was at loggerheads with his father so the press could write what they liked causing freedom of speech in England and the cartoons of Hogarth.
- George 3rd “Farmer George” was born in England and spoke English and was popular with the people.
- He had a model farm in Windsor and encouraged modern agricultural methods . Most Parishes in England were “Enclosed” during his long reign, He acceded in 1760 but by 1811 was suffering from “madness” and replaced by the Prince Regent and died in 1820.

**George 111 with
Queen Charlotte
and 15 children
Came to the Throne
1760 died 1820**

George III and Queen Charlotte with six of their fifteen children in 1770. From left to right: William, Duke of Clarence; George, Prince of Wales; Frederick, Duke of York; Princess Augusta, Princess Charlotte and Princess Elizabeth.



ters followed in rapid succession – George Grenville, Lord Rockingham, William Pitt and the Duke of Grafton. Ministers claimed that political instability was caused by George's failure to give his official advisers proper support; ignoring his constitutional duty to consult them in all things, he 'went behind the curtain' to seek advice from Bute. Grenville had some cause for complaint but, instead of trying to win the King's confidence, he indulged in long lectures upbraiding George for ingratitude. The King declared, 'When he has wearied me for two hours, he looks at his watch to see if he may not tire me for an hour more'.

mob to riot and sedition.

George had shown that governments which did not enjoy the monarch's full confidence tended to have a short life but, equally, prime ministers could stay in office only if they had the respect and votes of Parliament. Patronage might help but it was not enough on its own; was there anyone in politics who was genuinely acceptable to both King and Parliament? In 1770 George thought he had found his man – Lord Frederick North, 'the man who lost America' and allegedly the worst prime minister in British history. George's selection of North seems proof of the King's stupidity – 'a

Portrait of George 111
alone at Windsor in the
Regency Period 1811 to 1820.
"Mad King George"



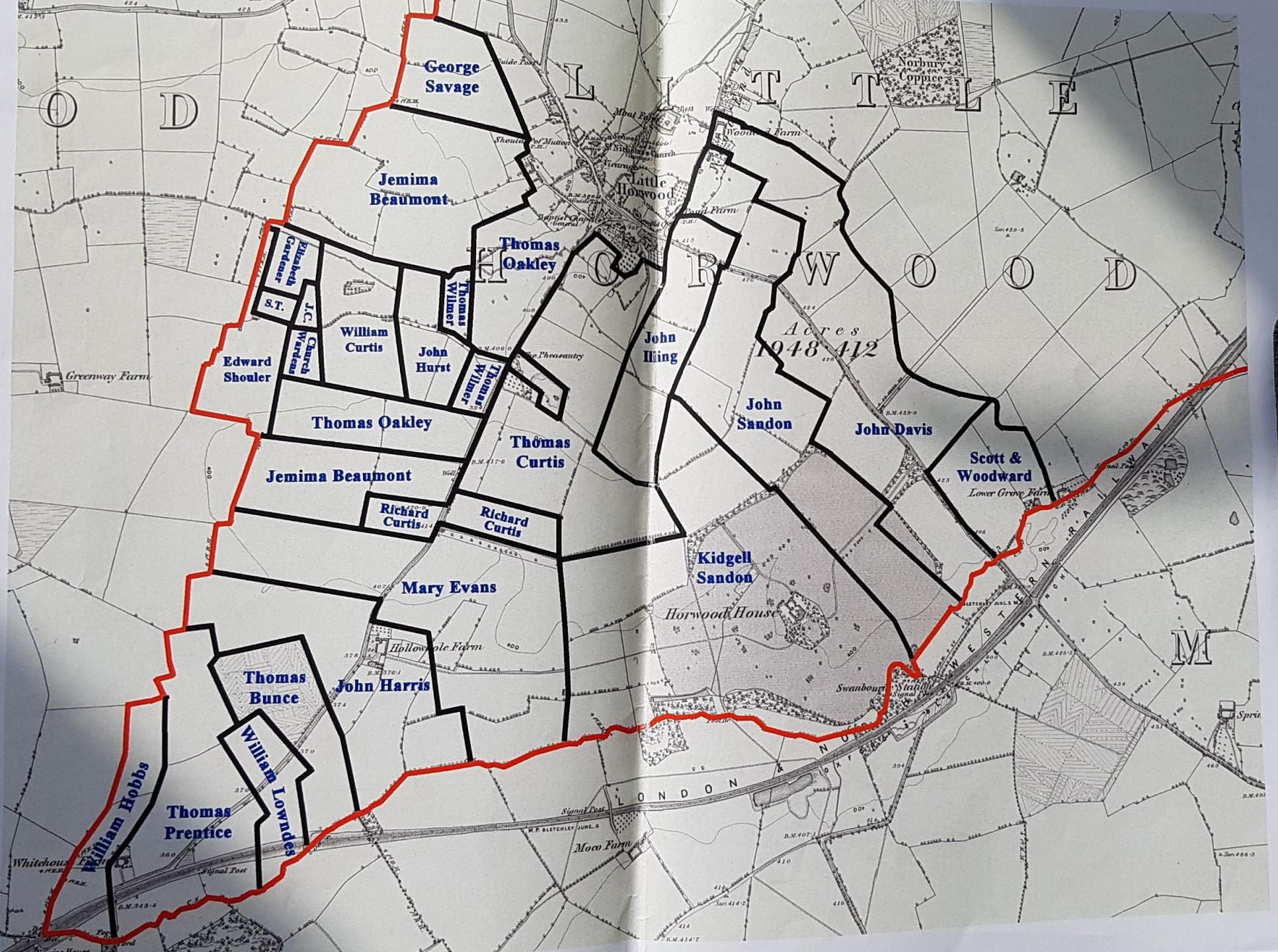
A Hogarth cartoon on the marriage of the Prince of Wales and Mrs Fitzherbert in 1785.

The King and Queen are shown entering his bedroom with the Act of Parliament forbidding the marriage of royal princes without the King's consent.



What was Little Horwood like in 1818?

- It was before Swanbourne Station in 1844 where the Dauncey's Home Farm produced Butter to go on the 8.30am train to Queen Victoria and 15 Farm Wagons converged on the Station with Milk and Produce and 3 Coal merchants operated out of the Station Yard.
- It was only 51 years after the Open Field system was enclosed in Little Horwood in 1767 when people with their own strips could grow food for subsistence although still poor. Enclosure brought the country agricultural efficiency but those not awarded land became a labourer class with much poverty
- Great Horwood was not enclosed until about 1860 so the road ceased by Sunny Hill and broke out into Great Horwood Common and they still operated the 3 field system in 1818



How one man transformed a town

WINSLOW 1640-1770
AND WILLIAM LOWNDES

David Noy



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

LOCAL LOWNDES FAMILY CONNECTIONS

William Lowndes of Astwood Bury
1688 – 6/3/1775
(Son of William Lowndes Senior &
3rd Wife Elizabeth Martin)
23rd August 1711 married Margaret Layton
At St Pauls Cathedral

William Lowndes Senior
Secretary to the Treasury
Auditor of the Exchequer
Died 20th January 1724
4 Wives & Numerous children

Robert Lowndes of Winslow 1678 - 1727
24th June 1703 married Margaret
Atcherley
At St. Stephens - Shoreditch

Richard Lowndes of Winslow 1706 – 1775
Baptised at St Martins in the Fields
1730 married Essex Shales at St. Pauls Cathedral
(Descendant of the Duke of Clarence)
High Sheriff of Bucks in 1738
MP for Bucks 1741 to 1774 (never elected)
Buried at St Lawrence Church Winslow

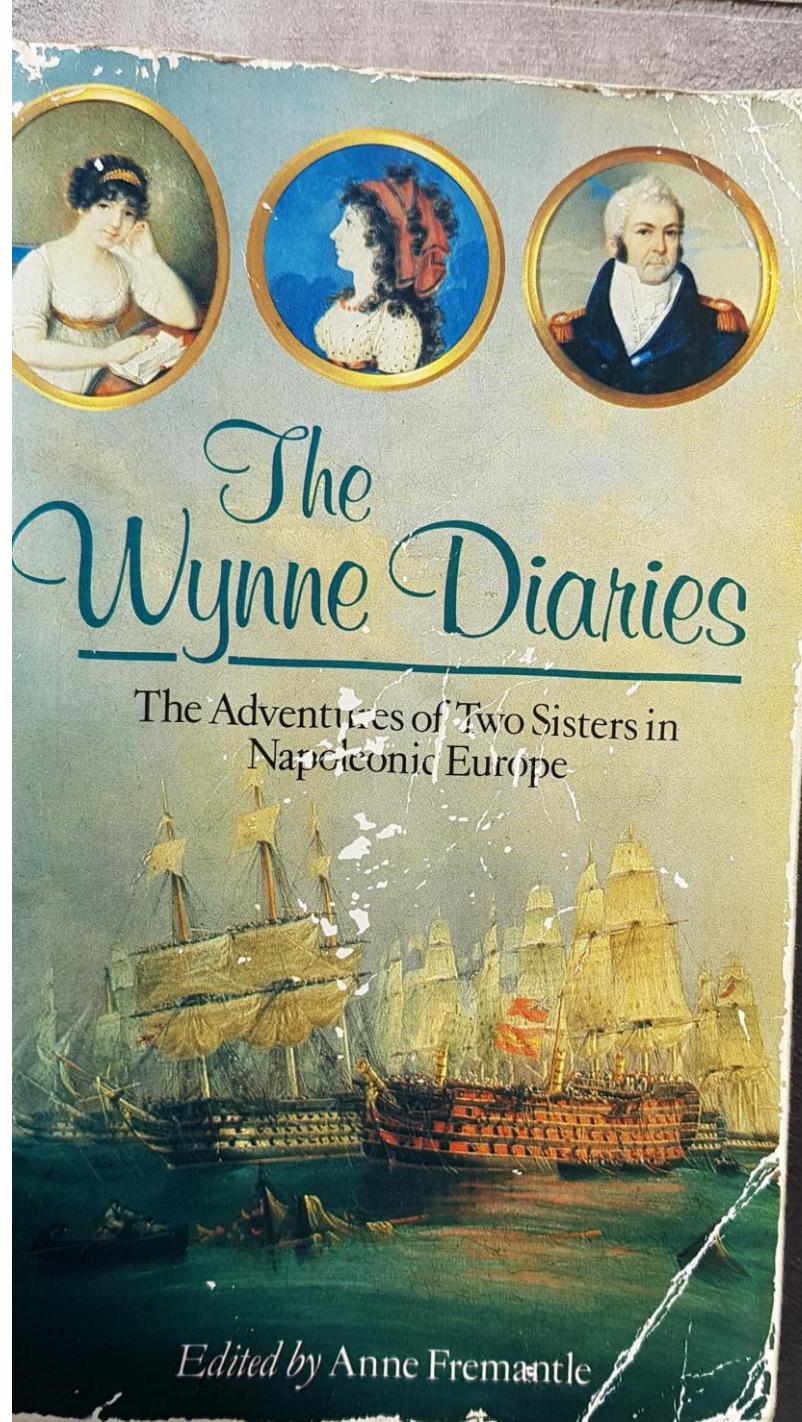
Elder Son
William Lowndes – died 1773
1744 married Catherine Lowe of
Brightwell Baldwin

Act of Parliament in 1755 to
change the name to Lowndes Stone to
take advantage of an inheritance by
Catherine

Younger Son – (unmarried)
Thomas Lowndes – died 1797
Vicar of Astwood 1752
Rector of North Crawley 1771

Will residue to Henry Lowndes of
Westminster

William Selby Lowndes 1734 – 1813 of
Whaddon and Winslow
Married 1766 Mary Goostrey
Instigator of Winslow Enclosure Act



Betsey Wynne

- Her father Richard Wynne a friend of Casanova was a charming and irresponsible rogue, in 1796 sold his estates in Lincolnshire and spent the rest of his life travelling with his 5 daughters, Betsey being the second.
- When the French invaded Italy in 1796 he fled to Leghorn to seek the protection of the British fleet. The family boarded a frigate commanded by Thomas Freemantle one of Nelson's "Band of Brothers"
- They married in Naples at the house of William Hamilton, whose wife Emma became Nelson's mistress. Betsey was given away by Prince Augustus the youngest son of George 3rd.
- Within a few months she almost lost her husband and Nelson with an attack on the Spanish at Santa Cruz during which both were hit in the arm with musket balls. Nelson lost his arm but Freemantle's was saved. God bless you Freemantle said Nelson

Betsey Wynne

- On returning from Spain in 1798 they bought Swanbourne where the Freemantles have lived ever since.
- Her 1st son Thomas became an MP, while the 3rd son sailed to Australia and had the port of Freemantle named after him, together with it's suburb Cottesloe , and the now notorious nudist beach, Swanbourne beach.
- Her husband Thomas who distinguished himself at Trafalgar in 1805 was promoted to Admiral but sadly died of a fever in Naples whilst in his mid 50's
- Betsey remained a widow for over 30 years at Swanbourne but continued writing her diaries until a few years before her death in 1857 with trips to grand Balls at Stowe and trips to Scotland and Haymaking in Swanbourne.

Sarah Hurst

- William Hurst married Sarah Grizzel on 5th October 1815 at St Nicholas Little Horwood probably by the then Curate J G Foyster.
- By 1818 the marriage was not a happy one. Was he chasing that fluesy in The Shoulder of Mutton ? We are not sure, we don't know who the landlord was but in 1843 it was a certain Ishmael Mumford.
- On Christmas Day 1818 she went to the Church service with her husband William which was taken by the then vicar Joseph Bosworth who had only been instituted on 16th August 1817 on the presentation of Rebecca Langston. Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford
- Later she went round to a neighbour to borrow some rat poison for a problem she had at home

Sarah's Epiphany

- Neighbours heard a noisy row after Church but this was not unusual
- She baked her husband a nice cake, which he must have had quite a bit of because it contained the rat poison and he was to die an agonising death over several days.
- 50 years old Sarah was arrested on 28th December 1818 in Little Horwood and taken to prison in Aylesbury later faced the Aylesbury Assizes Lent Court .
- At her trial she was found guilty and the sentence given as
- “Death- to be hanged on 12th March 1819, and her body to be Dissected and Anatomised according to Statute”
- This was the statute that permitted the bodies of hanged criminals to be given to Surgeons and anatomists. A very heavy sentence as the other bits of her body could not be buried in consecrated grounds. Sir Astley Cooper surgeon to George IV and Queen Victoria was quite open about the use of bodies from Bodysnatchers when legal hangings “dried up” to help develop life saving procedures. A good price was paid.

Sarah's Execution and Quartering

- On 12th March 1819 Sarah was publicly hanged on a “hangmans drop” which resembled a 4 poster bed, with black curtains on 2 sides and a chain in front built on a balcony at County Hall Aylesbury.
- Huge crowds in Carnival spirit would have been jostling for position from early morning.
- Was she hung on a long drop rope which gave a quick death ?
- Or on a short drop with slow strangulation requiring hangers on to hang on her feet to complete the execution?
- We do not know but it was a very heavy price to pay for an unhappy marriage with a reputed abusive husband. Women were effectively “Chattels” belonging to their husbands which continued in tax law until 20th century when “separate assessment for taxation ” was allowed for the first time allowing women to keep their financial details to themselves without disclosing it to their husbands.

The Bells at St. Nicholas Church, Little Horwood

I first became aware of Little Horwood bells on my wedding day in 1973 when they rang Sheila and me out of the church. It was all the more memorable as my step-grandfather, who was well into his eighties, rang for us. Incidentally, he rang up to the age of 100, then ringing a short touch of Grandsire doubles, 120 changes. Also, my late brother-in-law, Bernard* managed to get home to be at our wedding and ring. That was, I am fairly certain, the last time he visited home. He had learnt the skill of bellringing as a boy from Reg Savage, tower captain at that time.

It was 11 years further on that I decided to take up bellringing in the village of Maids Moreton in the very capable hands of George Holland and Bill Yates. As my ability progressed I ventured into different towers in the area, Little Horwood being one of them. At that time, the bells were a ground floor ring and not rung very regularly so visiting ringers were always made very welcome by Albert Smith. The band from Maids Moreton aimed to ring there just before Christmas and we achieved several quarter peals. In the early days Albert would join us after ringing in The Shoulder of Mutton for a pint or two and tell us some very interesting stories – always a very good storyteller. One Christmas we were invited back to Albert and Marys' for drinks and supper. Those of you who knew Mary could sing, will not be surprised to hear that it wasn't long before she started singing Carols and soon we were all joining in. It was just so lovely.

In December 1995 we rang a quarter peal to celebrate the life my late mother in law, Joyce (Hosking). I was ringing the tenor and could see into the church. As we progressed with a well struck quarter this man appeared in the church. At that time, I didn't know if he was a local who had got fed up with the ringing. For the non-ringers, a quarter is continuous ringing to a method for forty to forty five minutes and it is not unheard of to have complainers. Fortunately for us, this bearded gentleman sat down in a pew and patiently waited for us to complete the ring. We stood the bells and the man came in the tower and introduced himself as Paddy McCowen. Rather than complain he complimented us on our ringing, expressing an interest to learn! When you find someone so enthusiastic to learn you don't let them go! I invited him to join us for a practice night at Maids Moreton. This he continued until he

became a competent ringer, ready to re-start a band at St. Nicholas'. His enthusiasm quickly generated so much interest from within the village and he soon had a good band of keen ringers. Quite a remarkable achievement.

Going back to the Christmas ringing, Maids Moreton tower continued to take a band over to Horwood and join in with the local ringers. The hospitality was now offered by Paddy and Jette in their old farmhouse. Mulled wine, homemade nibbles and a roaring fire welcomed us. Making the occasion extra special, Albert and Mary would get there before us and listen to the ringing. The numbers had now grown considerably from those early days and once again Mary would lead us all in song, not forgetting an appropriate Christmas poem or solo performance.

These evenings I treasure as something very special and for me, it was the start of Christmas.

Memories of some very special people all made possible through the bells at Little Horwood.