

## The Moyes family of Landulph



Nowadays there is no one living in the parish of Landulph with the name of Moyes, but in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries there were more Moyeses in Landulph than you could shake the proverbial stick at, and they were an integral part of parish life. There have been Moyeses living in every hamlet in the parish, mostly as agricultural labourers, or farm or house servants.

About three or four years ago a gentleman I met in the churchyard at Landulph told me the last person with the name of Moyes in the parish was one George, who lived in Cargreen (more about George, later). At the time I was wandering around the churchyard looking for the graves of ancestors of mine and was at the beginning of my journey into the past and I had never heard of George.

Since then I have delved deeper into my family history and have found the process frustrating, enlightening and absolutely fascinating. Not only have I uncovered a large family tree but have become fascinated with the social history of the times and have a huge interest in the local history of the parish. On the journey I have also discovered descendants in Canada and Australia, although my own branch of the tree has remained firmly rooted in the south of Britain.

This article describes some of the possibly more interesting characters who lived and worked in Landulph in the past.

The first record of a member of the Moyes family in Landulph occurs in 1737; Humphrey Moyes (Moas - spelling wasn't a strong point then) married Lucretia Timlet (Timblot) on 8<sup>th</sup> February in Landulph parish church. Lucretia was baptised in Landulph on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1714 making her about 22 years old when she married but, so far, it has not been possible to find where and when Humphrey was born.

When I first found Lucretia's name I thought it was Tinblot. My husband and son are spectacularly disinterested in family history but even they were mildly amused by the notion of an ancestor with the wonderful name of Lucretia Tinblot! Alas, it was not to be and further scrutiny of the records showed the more sensible option.

Humphrey and Lucretia had four children but the first, John, who was born around 1738, is the progenitor of all the subsequent Moyeses in Landulph. He

moved across the river to the Bere Ferrers, possibly to become a silver/lead miner there, and married Thomasin Lang. They had three sons, John, born in 1772, Thomas (b. 1774) and Humphrey who arrived in 1779. All three sons eventually came back to Landulph and are buried in the churchyard.

The first son, John, married Dorothy Barrett at St Stephens by Saltash on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1806. Dorothy was a Landulph girl; she was the daughter of Richard Barrett and Mary Lee and was baptised on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1777. Dorothy is a distant ancestor of the modern day Barretts still living in Landulph and the surrounding area. The Lee family are also interesting. Landulph's probable biggest claim to fame is the presence of the monument to Theodore Paleologus in the church. He was a descendant of the last Byzantine emperors and lived some of his life at Clifton. He also died there and is buried in Landulph church. According to some (rather antiquarian) authors the blood of the Byzantines could have run in the bargemen of Landulph as one of Theodore's descendants may (or there again may not have!) married into the Lee family of the parish. At least two Lees have been progenitors of the early Moyes clan and it could be that we have some Byzantine blood in our veins too! Hmm, a case for DNA testing, methinks. Mind you, I can't see the Duke of Edinburgh, who is a descendant of Theodore Paleologus, agreeing to do this too!

John and Dorothy must have lived in Saltash parish after their wedding because the children who followed were all baptised at St Stephens by Saltash church. However, John and Dorothy were back in Landulph by 1817 as at least two of their children were apprenticed in the parish.

Little more is known about John and Dorothy's lives apart from the significant events of births, marriages and deaths. One of their sons, Thomas, born in 1815, married Mary Evans on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1836 at Stoke Damerel (now part of Plymouth) church. At the time Thomas was around 20-21 years old and Mary was about 47 or 48 years old, according to estimates based on later census returns. Is this the first instance of a "toy boy" in the Moyes family, or indeed Landulph? The marriage of Thomas to Mary is one of the family mysteries; a 26-year age gap seems extraordinary.

Thomas (b. 1774) and the second son, was my great, great, great grandfather and married another Barrett. Honour was born in 1779 and was the daughter of James Barrett and Margaret Lee, as well as the first cousin to Dorothy. They married at Landulph on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1802 and had eight children.

Thomas was recorded as a bargeman on two of his children's baptism records. He would have been a crewmember of one of the Tamar barges, which would ply up and down the river collecting produce to sell at the markets in Devonport (then known as Plymouth Dock) and Saltash, and returning with generous loads of limestone, which was delivered to and then burned at several places on the river and its tributaries, or dock dung which was used as manure. The soil of the Tamar valley is acidic and the lime, once burnt and applied to the fields, neutralised or 'sweetened' the soil. His hours of work would have been interesting to say the least, as very often the men

were up early to catch the tides. At this time Tamar barges did not have a deck and were large, open boats with one mast and a very broad transom (back end to landlubbers). They acquired decks later on in the century but were always crewed by two men only.



A Tamar barge, 1810, near Cotehele

The period from 1815 to 1819, following the battle of Waterloo and the end of the Napoleonic wars, with the subsequent recession as well as the poor summer of 1816, was a hard one for agricultural workers throughout the country. At some point in those years Thomas and his brother Humphrey (b. 1779), who was an agricultural labourer, were both unemployed as there is a record of a Landulph parish vestry (or business meeting) having been held in 1818, during which some of the better off members of the parish agreed to employ them, with others in the same situation, until Christmas 1819. Interestingly, many of the other names mentioned are the fathers of some of Thomas and Humphrey's children's spouses! It is possible that Thomas continued to be employed as a bargeman by one of the local owners; Benjamin Snell, one of the local landowners mentioned in the vestry meeting, for example, left barges in his will.



This quay storehouse (now a private dwelling named The

Boathouse), built on the two-sided quay in Cargreen, has been there a long time, certainly since 1840 as it is on the tithe map; Thomas (1774) would have known it well. He undoubtedly launched his boat many times from the steps by the small beach in the foreground.

Thomas ended his working life as a waterman. Watermen not only rowed the ferry the short distance from Cargreen to Thorn Point on the Bere peninsular but also took passengers to various points up and down the river. Around the 1840s and 1850s the cost of a trip from Cargreen to the Barbican Pier in Plymouth was 3 shillings (in today's money 15 pence). Watermen's boats were various sizes but I imagine the ferry across to Thorn Point was a one-man affair and the boats taken up and down the river would probably have been rowed by at least 2 men.



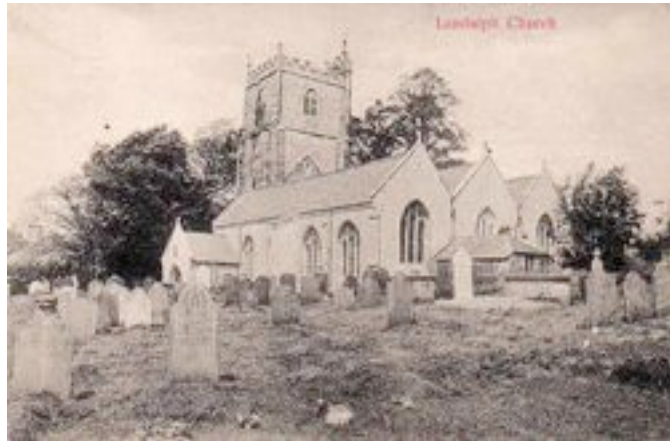
Thorn Point on the Bere peninsula – the causeway on which the ferry passengers landed can be clearly seen.

Thomas' wife, Honour, was the village post woman in 1851. At the time she was 71 years of age. Presumably there weren't that many letters (the postal service was only ten years old at the time) but my mind boggles at the thought of a woman of that age walking several miles to deliver a letter to one of the more distant hamlets of the parish. They must have been fit in those days. Honour lived to the age of 81 years, which was an achievement in Victorian times.

Most of Thomas and Honour's children moved away from Landulph to Plymouth. His oldest son, another Thomas, became a Master mariner and spent his life sailing barges in the Tamar valley and coasting vessels around the south coast. The youngest surviving son, Nicholas, was a dairyman in East Stonehouse, supplying the Royal Marines Barracks there with milk. Nicholas's youngest son became a shipwright and moved to Portsmouth, where (many years later!) I was born. This shipwright was called James Barrett Moyes, was named after *his* great grandfather and was my great grandfather.

Humphrey, the third of the brothers, married Mary Jeffery Daw on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1805. He had nine children. At the christening of his youngest child, Henry,

who was born in 1822, Humphrey was recorded as the parish sexton. As such he would have been responsible for maintaining the church and churchyard, ringing the bells for services and possibly digging graves. He must have continued to perform this role for the rest of his life as his burial record in 1846 describes him as such. One wonders how many graves Humphrey dug over this 24-year period.



A postcard view of the church when all the gravestones were Still upright. Perhaps Humphrey dug many of these graves

In 1840 Humphrey was living at Penyoke. By comparing the tithe map of that year to the census of 1841 I have worked out that he was living in one of the dwellings now called Penyoke Cottages.



Penyoke Cottages; the cottage on the left as we look at them was where Humphrey and Mary were living in 1841

Most of Humphrey's children and grandchildren also left Landulph. One ended up being a tailor in Salisbury in Wiltshire and sired a line of journalists and writers. Another of the tailor's descendants, Winifred, became a famous spirit medium in the 1930s. Humphrey's descendants also seem to have got the adventure gene and these are the ones who now live in Australia and Canada.

However, the last Moyes to live in Landulph, George, was also one of Humphrey's descendants. George was one of his grandsons; he was born in 1865 and although he started his working life as a humble agricultural labourer, became a successful market gardener employing at least one other person. George died on 13<sup>th</sup> August in 1941 in Saltash. I haven't found a headstone for him in the graveyard at the church, so it sadly seems that he wasn't laid to rest here. It would have been fitting that the last Moyes in Landulph was also buried here.

My name is Maggie Watkinson. I live in Somerset and visit Landulph at least once a year to walk around the parish and explore the places my ancestors would have known so well. I am in contact with many distant cousins both in Britain and abroad, all of whom are deeply interested in this beautiful and peaceful place. You never know - we might arrange a family reunion one day and Landulph will be teeming with Moyses again, although only for short while.



This photo was taken in 1997 (I am camera shy!).  
I am now older, larger and more grey!