# Extracts referring to Bereleigh in F.G.Standfield’s ‘A History of East Meon’

p46. From Parliamentary Survey of the Manor of East Meon (1647, in preparation for the sale of the property of the Bishop of Winchester by the Parliamentarians) ‘There is also belonging to this Mannor a Parke scituate and lyinge near the town of Eastmeon and known by the name of Eastmeon Parke lyinge’ north east of the church and south of ‘the Mannor of Berley’

pp 59 – 60. (1775). By this time the Eyles family of East Meon, who were destined to become owners of Bereleigh, were acquiring local prominence and prosperity. Richard Eyles, appointed churchwarden in 1756, was already rated as occupier of Court Farm, and 10 years later became the parish’s biggest land occupier when also rated in respect of ‘Beerly Farm’. In 1775, Eyles, again churchwarden, had still further increased his land occupancy, but by 1780, Richard Eyels II, then aged 26, began taking over his father’s land, starting with Bereleigh and adjacent Tigwell and continuing with Court Farm in 1784, four years before his father’s death.

The date when ownership, as distinct from occupation of bereleigh, was qcquired by the Eyles family is unknown, though it must have been between 1775 and the beginning of the 19th century , when the old manor houose, which had probably fallen into decay, was rebuilt by Richard Eyles II in the Regency style and on quite a grand scale; the accommodation comprising, in additioin to spacious reception rooms, no less than 20 bedrooms. Richard II was a prosperous and locally important man, elected mayor of Petersfield in 1800, presumably owner or part-owner of Patrick Eyles and Co, the ‘Petersfield and Hants Bank’.

In 1809, though he continued as churchwarden and still occupied Court Farm and other property, he had either sold of leased Bereleigh to Jacob Fitt, who ws then rated as occupier.

(For more about the Eyles family, who also lived in Glenthorne House, visit <http://www.eastmeonhistory.net/house-histories/glenthorne-house/>)

p66 (School) The name of George Forbes of Bereleigh figures among the subscribers from 1852 onwards, and his name occurs a second time in the 1860 Treasurer’s accounts” “March 16th, G.Forbes Esq. Making waistcoat 5s.0d. Presumably the garment was made b ypupils and was considered successful, for a few months later we find ‘July 24th, Mrs Forbes for waistcoat, 5s 0d’.

p83. The greater part of the Bereleigh estate (790 acres) was bought by Francis Tyrwhitt Drake (formerly of Amersham, Bucks) from the Gerald Nicholson executors in 1958 and has been augmented by his son, William, acquiring Lower Bordean Farm (670 acres) from Edgar Wren’s executors, Garston Farm (300 acres) from Brian Blacker (Lady Peel’s grandson) and Riplington Farm (400 acres) from the Marks brothers, The total estate, now well over 2,000 acres (a small part in Langrish parish) carries a stock of nearly 500 catttle of which about 240 Friesians are milked at any one time, and 1,350 acres of cerals are grown, the balance being oilseed rape, grass and woodland. The farming labour force, excluding the manager, numbers nine, as against 67 on the same land as recently as 1958!

p90. In January 1863, the squire of Bereleigh, George Forbes, died, aged fifty-seven. His widow, Johanna Agnes Forbes, whose benevolence towards local children has been noticed, wasted no time in perpetuating her husband’s memory in a practical way. Before the year was out, she had purchased a cottage and land in Church Street, demolished the cottage, erected five almshouses on the site and executed a trust deed creating ‘The Forbes Almshouses Charity’ … Mrs Forbes survived till 1898.

pp 92 – 93. (1904 consecration of church enlargement, following purchases of land to the south.) … whilst Colonel Hudson, ‘the new owner of Bereleigh’, generously relinquished his right to use the well on one of the plots’.

Also in 1905, ownership of the Bereleigh Estate passed to Henry Curtis Gallup, a ‘well-to-do man of leisure’ and former Master of the Wilton Hunt. An improvement carried out to his newly-acquired property was creation of a ‘water garden’, whose striking feature was, and still is, a number of sarsen stones, some weighting several tons. They were hauled by a steam traction engine from War Hill, Tigwell, a part of the Bereleigh estate – their original use was possibly related to an ancient pagan sige of worship. Paving of the water garden consisted of tombstones removed from the graveyard of Winchester Cathedral as part of a tyding up operation.

p112. (1914 – Great War) Squire Gallup, without previous military experience and no longer in the first flush of youth, knew where is duty lay. Volunteering for army service, and persuading his gardener, Mark Neil, and his chauffeur, George Knight, to do lik ewise, they headed for Larkhill on Salisbury Plain, to be trained as gunners. Gallup also tok his favourite hunter, for those were the days when gentlemen were officers (and vice versa), and officers were mounted. Only later was it realized that officers, especially subalterns, were ‘first over the top’ in trench warfare, and least likely to survive for long.

… Major Reginald Nicholson, who was later to succeed Gallup as owner of Bereleight, spent the war as an officer in the Hants Carbineers …

After their training at Larkhill, Gallup, Neil and Knight (still with the hunter) and another villager, blacksmith Walter Lambert, were despatched overseas to join the British and Indian forces in Mesopotamia who were protecting the Toyal Navy’s oil supplies. By December 1915, these East Meon me )other than Lambert, who was sick with dysentery) were with many others besieged by the turkes in the town of Kut-al-Amara, situated in a loop of the River Tigris, a fact noted in East Meon’s magazine the following March:

 *We are sorry to hear that Mark Neil and George Knight have been wounded. It appears that they, with Mr. Gallup, are besieged in Kut-al-Amara, but we are told that all is well with the garrison.*

It was a blessing that those at home were spared knowledge of the garrison’s true predicament, for, weakened by disease and malnutrition, and having even eaten their own horses, they were forced to capitulate after four and a half months. They numbered over 200 British and a few less Indian officers, together with just under 13,000 rank and file. Of the latter, 2,592 were British, over 1,700 of whom were destined to die in Mesopotamia or Turkey. One of the first acts of the Turks after the capitulation was to separate officers from men, and as Gallup with other officers headed up the Tigris for prisoner-of-war captivity on board a river boat, he caught a last glimpse of his gardener and chauffeur, part of a huge, pathetic, sick and half-starved rabble of men shambling on foot toward Turkey, hundreds of miles across barren an dinhospitable country. They died in their hundreds from lack of food and from ill-treatment; that any survived at all is almost a miracle …. Nothing is known of the ultimate fate of Neil and Knight. Though the officers faced great hardships, their treatment was less severe, and Gallup survived, though, after two and a half years in a Turkish prisoner-of-war camp, he was a changed man.

Pp 114 – 115. Even before the war ended, it was widely realized that the old order had changed irrevocably, and few families could keep up the large, well-staffed establishments that were part of the Victorian and Edwardian scene. Thus is was not entirely coincidental that both Bereleigh and Westbury estates were offered for sale by auction in July 1918.

p131. (post WWI) … cars were now increasing. Their new owners now included ot only Colonel Le Roy Lewis, but also Dr Jones and Major Reginald Nicholson, the new owner of Bereleigh, who owned a Napier.