

Nynehead's Victorian Vicarage

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range of buildings which now house the visitor centre. It can be clearly seen that the fireboxes extend under the floor of the ware chamber but that on the west has suffered a meltdown of the brickwork on the north side blocking the end of one of the flues (Fig. 4). The original level of the dismantled floor of the ware chamber is clearly marked by the change between the stonework of the substructure and the brickwork of the lining of the ware chamber walls (Fig. 3). The kiln has suffered from subsidence probably consequent on the building of the new road and outbuildings to the Luttrell Arms c. 1850. Hence the distortion of the chimney and the probable loss of its upper courses of brickwork. The pierced vault over the ware chamber has similarly distorted (Fig. 5). The tile repairs carried out to the cracks in the ware chamber wall during conservation work in 2009 can be seen in Fig. 6.

The authors have deployed the technique of 3D laser scanning for recording two other pottery kilns, the remarkable 15th-/16th-century kiln base at Newport, Pembrokeshire, and the later 18th-century bottle kiln with 20th-century modifications at Wincombe, Gloucestershire (Dawson and Kent forthcoming). In both these cases laser scanning has facilitated recording the parts that are highly constricted and otherwise difficult to reach. The Dunster kiln does not share these characteristics in that the substructure beneath the ware chamber floor has been laid bare by its removal. However, this series of images demonstrates the advantages of the technique in recording those subtleties of construction that are difficult to convey effectively in any other medium. Dunster is special. It represents a transition between the medieval and post-medieval two-firebox kiln as at Donyatt site 13 and the ubiquitous fully developed bottle kilns of the late-18th to 20th century and it is still standing thanks to the conservation work initiated by the Exmoor National Park Authority (Coleman-Smith 2002; Dawson and Kent 2008; Dawson and Kent 2012).

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NOTE OF CLARIFICATION

There has been ambiguity and simple confusion published elsewhere, for example in Gathercole (2002, 22), in the interpretation of the documentary and archaeological data. These authors are clear that the pottery as built in 1759 on the site of what was probably a Civil War siege battery is physically and was almost certainly organisationally distinct from the estate brickworks which was located in the Warren.

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NYNEHEAD'S VICTORIAN VICARAGE

DAVID RABSON

The 19th century saw a remarkable transformation in the housing of rural clergy, in Somerset as elsewhere. The 'Buildings of England' volume for South and West Somerset records about one hundred parsonages (rectories or vicarages) built in the time of Queen Victoria, all but a few new builds (Orbach and Pevsner 2014). Among those not mentioned is the former vicarage in the small village of

Nynehead, just outside Wellington. In preparing this paper, which looks at how the house came to be built and some notable features of its construction, I have been inspired by 34 years of living in part of the former vicarage, and a childhood in a variety of clergy houses ranging from a house on the Becontree estate in East London to a listed 17th-century vicarage in an Essex village.

For 300 hundred years life at Nynehead was dominated by the Sanford family of Nynehead Court, to the extent that when William Ayshford Sanford died in 1902 his obituarist Charles Tite wrote that ‘Nynehead without the Sanfords during the last three centuries would indeed be the play without Hamlet’. As patrons of the church they played an important role in the provision of a new vicarage.

Until about 1810 the incumbent of All Saints’ Church lived in a thatched cottage close to the church and Nynehead Court. From then until 1834 the vicar was the Reverend John Sanford, younger brother of William Ayshford Sanford of Nynehead Court, who presumably lived at the Court, until he took himself to Italy in nefarious circumstances. He was succeeded by Thomas Tanner, the vicar of Burlescombe, just over the border in Devon, a church also under the patronage of the Sanfords. Tanner’s son, also Thomas, was the curate at Nynehead (like the author of this paper he was an alumnus of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge). However, Edward Ayshford Sanford, then head of the family, decided in the 1860s that the village should have a resident incumbent and that a new parsonage house should be built (Fig. 1).

The new site chosen was glebe land, at the top of the Hollow Way, the cutting on the road between the church and Court and Higher Nynehead, as shown on the accompanying map (Fig 2). Its construction was so important for the village that the *Wellington Weekly News* gave a detailed report of the celebrations that accompanied the laying of the foundation stone on 20th June 1867, a report worth quoting in full as it gives a good picture of social life in the village at that time:

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF NYNEHEAD VICARAGE

Thursday last being the fourth natal day of Master Henry John Seymour Sanford, the occasion was deemed a fitting opportunity to lay the foundation stone of the new residence for the Rev. W.H. Walrond, the vicar of the parish. Hitherto Nynehead has not had the advantage of a resident minister and since the rev. gentleman who administers to their spiritual wants has been among them, he has so endeared himself to his parishioners, both young and old, that the determination of E.A. Sanford, Esq. to erect a vicarage was received with great satisfaction. The site of the new building lies about



Fig. 1 The former Nynehead vicarage today (Photo: author)

a quarter of a mile from Nynehead Court, and is situated on a fine piece of land at the top of the Hollow. It was in the tenancy of Mr. S. Bailey, and was known by the name of Crosslands. The site commands a most magnificent view of the surrounding country, and altogether is an excellent position for such an edifice. The erection of the building is entrusted to Mr Davis of Taunton, from the designs of Mr John Hayward, High Street, Exeter, both gentlemen being present at the ceremony on Thursday last. Some members of the band of the 8th Somerset V.R.C. were in attendance, and preceded the schoolchildren from the school house. They were followed by Masters H. and A. Sanford on horseback, with E.A. Sanford Esq., and Mrs. W.A. Sanford in an open phaeton. On arriving at the ground a trowel was handed to young master Harry, who having adjusted the mortar beneath the stone, and tapping it gently with a mallet, assisted by his eldest brother, declared the stone to be truly laid.

After the ceremony, E.A. Sanford Esq. made a few remarks to the effect that they had not had hitherto a resident minister among them, but they had been that day engaged in a work which would ensure them one for the future. He believed that the vicar was beloved by them, and worthily so, and concluded by asking them to give him three cheers. This being effected, the Rev. W.H. Walrond said they had a representative of the State amongst them in the person of Mr. Sanford, as a magistrate of the County, and when he (the vicar) came to reside with them, they would have a representative of the Church, and as upholders of the Church and State, he trusted both would be found doing their best to uphold the higher state of God. He thanked Mr. Sanford and those present for their kind manifestations. Three cheers were then given for the Masters Sanford (the juvenile masons) who had so effectively performed their task, the eldest of whom thanked the company. Three hearty and ringing cheers were then given for the worthy Squire, who said he was always happy to do anything for their benefit, and he knew of no act more gratifying than the one they had that day been engaged in.

The children of the school then sang the Old Hundreth very prettily, and after the band played 'God save the Queen', the School children proceeded to the lawn in front of the house where tea was kindly provided for them, and likewise for the old people of the parish, who took tea in the conservatory, which had been decorated for the occasion, the initial letters of Master H. Sanford and other devices forming a very pretty effect. During the tea the band played, and subsequently proceeded to the extensive grounds adjoining the mansion, where dancing and various games were indulged in, the

Squire lending his presence and seeing after the wants and comforts of his poor but delighted guests. The amusements were engaged in till day had nearly become night. Among the company present we noticed Mrs. and Miss Goddard, Mr. Ambrose Goddard. Captain and Adjutant Peard and lady, the Rev. W.H. and Mrs. Walrond, the Misses Walrond, the Rev. T.C. Tanner, late vicar of the parish, Miss Warren, besides many members of the Squire's family.'

The Sanfords were fortunate in being able to secure the services of a very reputable architect and a prominent builder, both of whom attended the ceremony.

JOHN HAYWARD (1808-91), ARCHITECT

John Hayward was the nephew and pupil of the architect Charles Barry, and a member of the Camden (later Ecclesiological) Society, which sought to apply the principles of mediaeval Gothic to the design of modern buildings. He moved to Exeter in the 1830s where he became the leading architect of the area and architect to the Diocesan Architectural Society. He worked mainly in Devon but occasionally went over the border. The revised edition of Pevsner's 'Buildings of England' for the county gives 67 references to Hayward (Cherry and Pevsner 1991). He designed a few new churches (e.g. at Bicton) but was responsible for many more repairs and restorations, including work at Milverton in Somerset in about 1850 and Langford Budville in the late 1860s. Outside the ecclesiastical field one finds his work in a variety of buildings, such as a school in Bramford Speke, in the Exe valley to the north of Exeter; a large extension to Holcombe Court and parts of Exeter Prison. His most prestigious design was that for the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter. Significantly for this paper Hayward also designed parsonage houses, including those at Woodbury and Upottery in Devon and Langford Budville and Nynehead in Somerset (Fig. 3).

How the Sanfords came to employ Hayward is not yet known. It is possible that he was recommended by one of their landed gentry contacts, but it is also likely that William Sanford (1818-1902) knew of him as a fellow member of the Camden Society. In addition to his role as landowner (he took over the Nynehead Court estate on the death of his father Edward in 1871) William was a natural historian, palaeontologist and, relevant in this context, an architect, at least in a small way. When Colonial Secretary in Western Australia in the 1850s he designed schools in Fremantle and Perth. Later, on his return to England, he was responsible for the extensions to Nynehead Church in the 1860s.



Fig. 2 Extract from 1st edition OS 25" map (1887)



Fig. 3 Hayward's Langford Budville vicarage (Photo: author)

HENRY DAVIS, BUILDER

Henry Davis was a leading builder in Taunton in the 19th century whose work can be seen for example in a terrace in Park Street in Taunton where he worked with the architect C. E. Giles. Davis was also a fine stone carver whose work included the font in Bathealton church.

THE BUILDING

The archetypal parsonage of the period is said to be that at Coalpit Heath just to the north of Bristol, dating from 1848. Designed by the distinguished architect William Butterfield it established the pattern for such buildings, both in their visual appearance and their accommodation, adapting the typical gentleman's residence to the needs of the country clergyman, and reflecting his position in rural society. In addition to the usual reception rooms and domestic offices there would be space for servants and a study.

It is fortunate that some years ago Hayward's specification and plans for the Nynehead house, along with other relevant documents, were deposited in the Somerset Record Office (now the Somerset Heritage Centre) (Fig. 4). Nynehead follows the same pattern as Butterfield's design, although on a slightly smaller scale.

It was not only the house itself that was important: a survey in 1884 showed that the property then consisted of the vicarage house and offices, a lawn, a partially walled garden, a fowl house, a pottery shed, a pig sty, two small stables, a coach house with a loft over and a tool house.

From the specification and plans some of the main features of the house can be seen to be:

- The use of bricks from, it is assumed, the Poole works of William Thomas and Co. only one mile away, although the specification does not mention the source. Letters between the architect, John Hayward, Mr Sanford and Mr Walrond (the first occupier) show that the original idea was to build the house in stone, like the new vicarage at Langford Budville. However Mr Walrond preferred brick and this was chosen. Unusually for this time the walls had a cavity (9" outer leaf and 4½" inner leaf). They sat on a stone plinth with a tar and slate damp proof course. The specification states that the decorative floor tiles in the hall were to be provided by Maid and Co. but one wonders whether in fact they came from Thomas and Co.
- Stone was to be 'Langford' stone, probably from quarries on Sanford land in or near the adjacent village of Langford Budville. However letters



Fig. 4 The façade as shown on the original plans

show that ‘Bishops Lydeard’ stone was used for the dressings on the chimney and the hood over the front door, which was carved probably by Henry Davis (Fig. 5). The front doorstep is Blue Lias.

- A roof of 45-degree pitch, of Portmadoc slate with local clay ridge tiles. The substantial roof timbers came from Russia – Memel fir for all the carpenter’s work and Archangel or St Petersburg deal for the joiner’s work. Rainwater from the roof was channelled to tanks in the loft to serve the toilets.
- Wood was to be chestnut, notably for the front door and the main staircase. The seats in the family’s toilets were also to be chestnut, but the servants had to make do with ‘plain deal’!
- The estimated cost of the works including architect’s commission and travelling expenses was £1,324 15s 0d, paid by the Sanfords.

The 1871 Census records that the first occupiers were the Reverend William Henry Walrond (aged 45, born in Hereford), his wife Patience (38, born in Stepney),

a cook, Charlotte Tickner (64, unmarried, born in Luggshall) and a housemaid, Sarah Ann Darch (32, born in Skilgate on Exmoor). The vicarage was used as such until 1948. It was then let until sold to Thomas’s, builders from nearby West Buckland, who in 1958 subdivided the main house, converted the coach house to a dwelling and built three bungalows in the grounds.

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Fig. 5 The stone hood to the front door (Photo: author)