

**CAPTAIN JOHN WILLWAY PHILLIPS**  
**'LATE MASTER MARINER OF BRISTOL'**

**1783 – 1846**

**• HIS SICK-ROOM DIARY •**  
**APRIL – JULY 1842**

**• By Deborah and Peter Klein, 2008 •**  
**• Revised July 2009 •**





# Captain John Willway Phillips, Master Mariner of Bristol

## 1: Introducing Captain Phillips, the Willway family, and their world

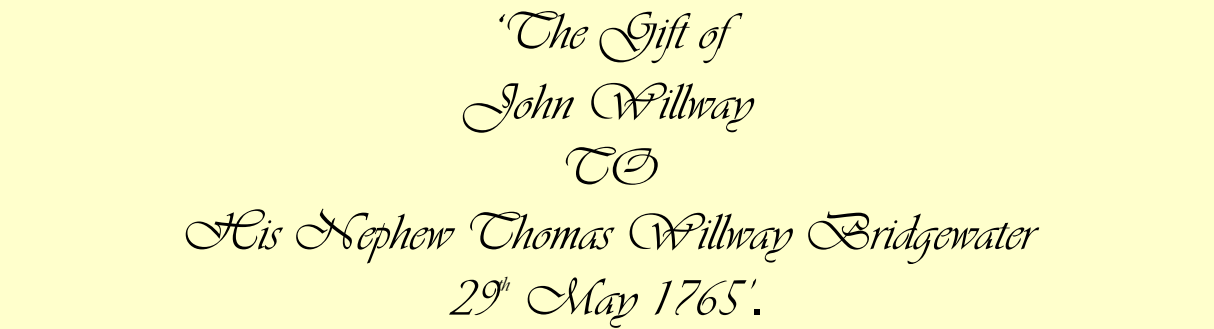


This is the story of a brief 19<sup>th</sup> century episode towards the end of the life of a maritime Bristolian. While confined to his room due to ill-health, Captain John Willway Phillips kept a diary to help him pass the time, and the part covering the period from Thursday April 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1842 has survived. In a re-used old ship's note book, Captain Phillips carefully noted all the minutiae of his daily life; in doing so he records the summer of 1842, refers to events occurring in the house and outside, and mentions friends and relatives who come to call. John was the son of Sarah née Willway and her husband James Phillips, who were married at St George on the outskirts of Bristol, on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1779. James was described as a 'Ship-carpenter', most likely meaning a designer/draughtsman and contractor responsible for fitting out ships. He would have been a skilled man of some status since his son was clearly literate and intelligent and the family were by no means poor. John would probably have been well educated and then apprenticed to a master mariner to learn professional seamanship. Little more is known of James but he died on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1826, aged 69, as inscribed on a pretty black mourning ring which survives among family treasures.

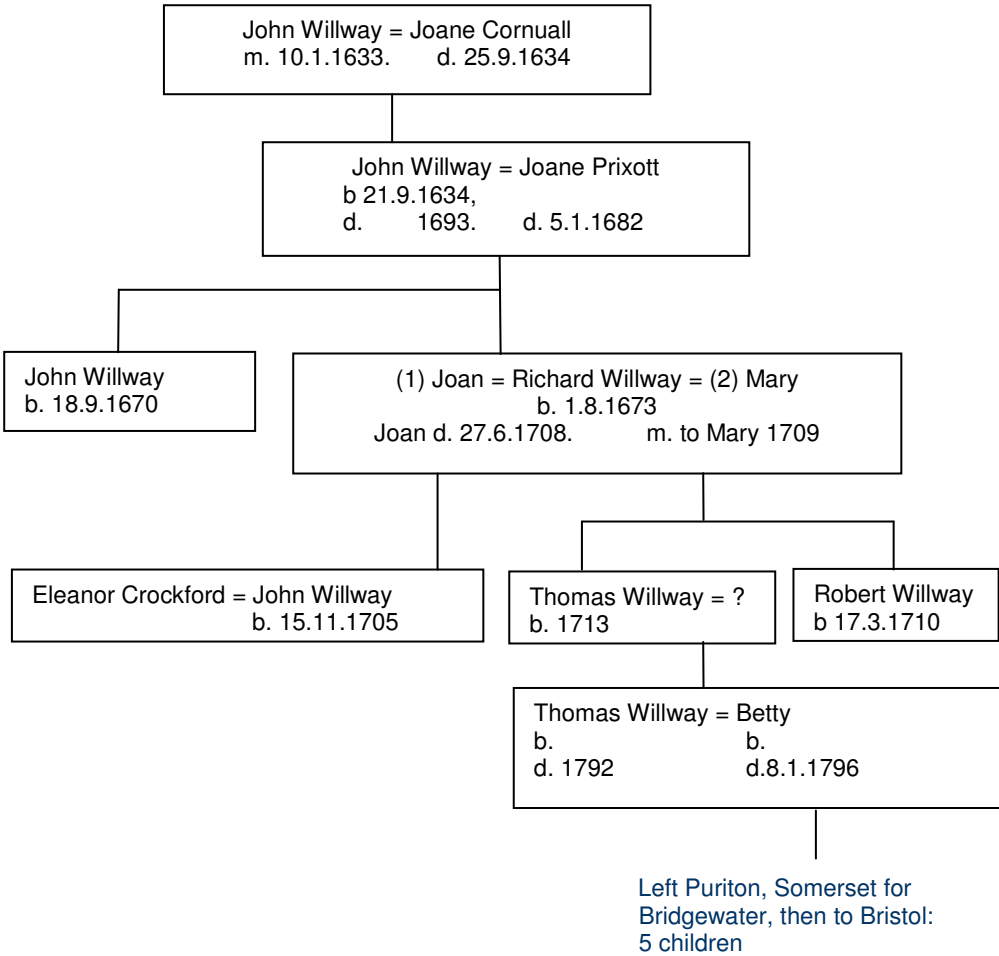
Mourning ring for James Phillips:  
Died July 1826



Sarah Willway's family was prominent in Victorian Bristol and Bath: it is not certain precisely when the first Willway set foot in Bristol, but research implicates a Thomas Willway and his wife Betty, both of whom died before 1800. Thomas's ancestry has been traced back to a John Willway of Puriton in Somerset, who had married Joan Cornuall (or Conuall) in January 1633 only to lose her in September 1634, four days after the birth of their only son, another John. It was however enough to set the Willway dynasty in motion. A large pewter plate or charger kept by Thomas's descendants bears the following inscription:



The circumstances of this gift - and indeed the identities of those mentioned - are not precisely known. The consensus is that some time in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Thomas Willway, probably a yeoman farmer, married Betty, left Puriton, and moved to Bridgewater. He does appear to have had an Uncle John. These earliest known Willways are as follows:



In 1781 Thomas's wife Betty inherited some property from a friend<sup>1</sup>, at St George on the eastern fringes of Bristol. The family must already have been living in Bristol however, because their daughter Sarah was married there in 1779. Dates and places for this period are vague but five children are known. Sarah was born in 1760, and her brother John (who later became a cordwainer [shoemaker]) in 1758. Another brother Thomas, also a cordwainer, married Sarah Craddick (of whom more below) on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1793. Their sister Mary Ann had married Bristol silk dyer Charles Chapman, but she had died before 1793. In April 1797 Charles married her sister Sibylla (or Sybella), thereby shrewdly securing the inheritance of both girls; this appears to have been the start of the Willway dyeing business. John must have abandoned shoemaking because later, in his will, he describes himself as 'Silk Cotton and Woollen Dyer'. He and his wife Susannah née Sweet (born 1764), their children and subsequent descendants, brought the dyeworks to prosperity in Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare. John died in 1825 and Susannah in 1835, and their lives and family will be discussed in more detail later. A George Willway and a William Willway, listed in 1790s Bristol directories, seem to be of an older generation of Sarah's relatives but not siblings. So far these two have not been identified.



Inscribed pewter charger, 1765

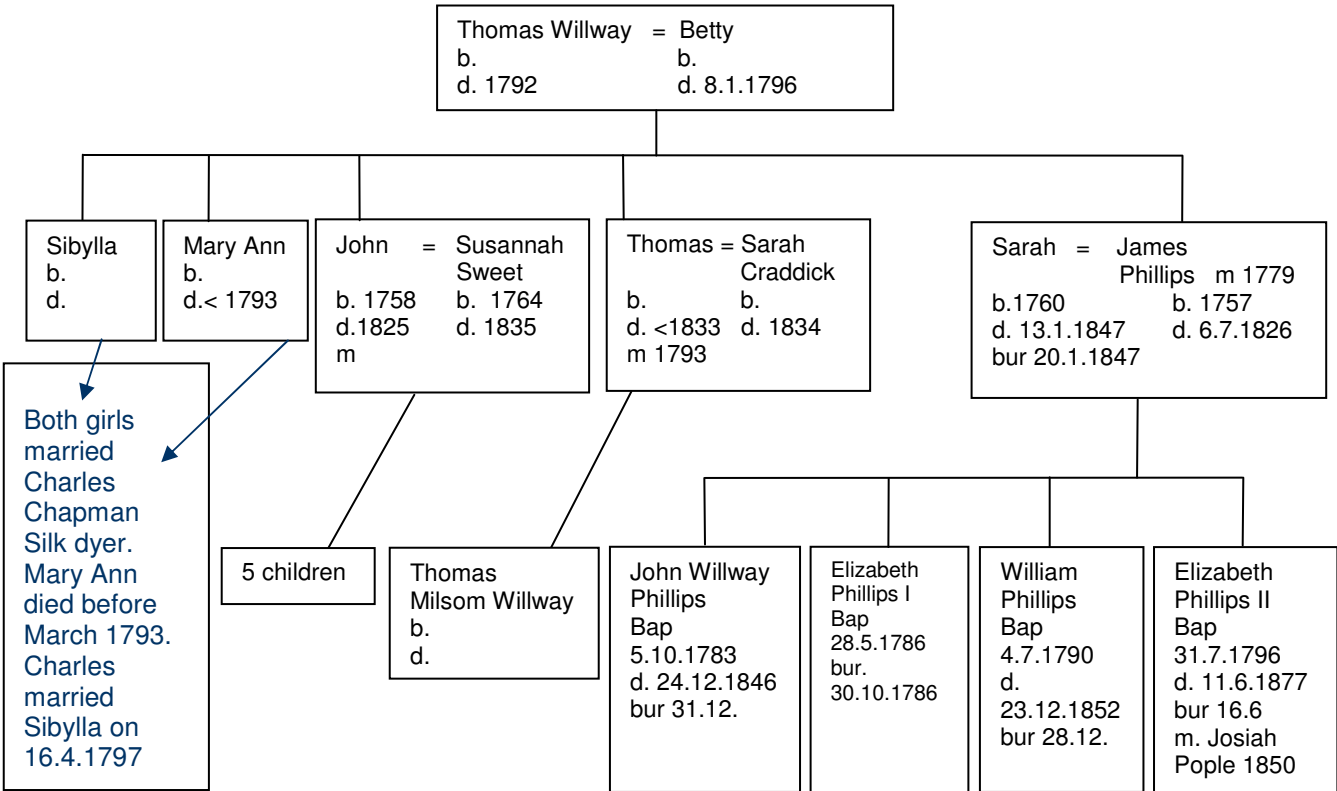
The property Betty inherited in 1781 comprised a 'new built' cottage, gardens, outbuildings, about ¼ of an acre of ground, and other buildings and paraphernalia. The legacy stipulated that on her death it should be divided between her 'dear children' and never sold out of the family. It is described as being in the parish of St George near '*a certain place called Don John's Cross*'. This old cross stood on the boundary of Kingswood Forest where the later William Butler Fountain now stands, at the fork between the A420 and the A431. The cross base was subsequently moved to the vicarage garden, and its location is a strong clue to identifying Sarah Phillips's family home and therefore the scene of John's diary. Betty's own will dated 18<sup>th</sup> March 1793 dutifully left the properties to her son-in-law James Phillips (as Sarah's husband) and her other children Sybilla (not yet married to Charles Chapman), John, and Thomas with a provision for Thomas's son in the event of his early death – perhaps suggesting ill-health. All Betty's clothes were to be shared by her two surviving daughters since Mary Ann had already died.

<sup>1</sup> Wates B A, 2005, A History of the ancestors of William John and Lydia Lucy Ainsworth; also documents in possession of Mary Ainsworth

One of the witnesses to this will was a John Phillips, but this is not our diarist as he would have been too young. Perhaps he was James's brother, but so far we know nothing of James Phillips's wider family. Betty died on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1796, and in 1798 James Phillips invested £42 in buying out the other 4 shared interests in the property held by his wife's siblings. Charles Chapman received £21 as his right to the shares of both Mary Ann and Sibylla, while John and Thomas received £10.10.0 each<sup>2</sup>. It seems reasonable to assume that this property was, or became, the Phillips's home; Section 3 below confirms its location.

The will of another Sarah Willway was dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 1833, and she died on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1834. In it she left John Willway Phillips a 'house and premises adjoining Redfield Chapel in the parish of St George' for his life – passing to his cousin James Willway, silk dyer, after his death. To John's brother William Phillips she left the house where she lived – '19 Redfield Place'; and to 'Sarah Phillips, widow of the late James Phillips', her premises at 'the two mile stone in St Georges parish'<sup>3</sup>. This will, proved on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1834, named Sarah Phillips as the sole executrix. The attached letter of Administration describes Sarah Willway as a widow. As already noted, Sarah Phillips' brother Thomas Willway had married Sarah Craddick in 1793. If so, then this Sarah Willway would be Sarah Phillips's sister-in-law and aunt to our John. The couple bore a son, Thomas Milsom Willway (mentioned in Betty Willway's will); however so far no more reference to him has been found and he is presumed not to have survived. The following chart clarifies this section of the family:

**Relationships between the early Bristol Willways and the Phillips's**



<sup>2</sup> Document: Mary Ainsworth  
<sup>3</sup> Document: Mary Ainsworth

From this we can see that Sarah and James Phillips bore four children of which three survived to adulthood. All were baptised and buried at the church of St George, which was opposite their home. Details of their lives are given in the next section. John's brother William we are soon to meet again, but Aunt Sarah Willway seems to be the only person to leave him any legacy, which is strange since he was certainly living with his family in 1841/4 helping to care for John, and stayed in the house after his death. Perhaps William was a little slow, although the census records him as a 'mariner' so possibly a one-time shipmate of John's. The Bristol shipping registers note a William Phillips skippering small coastal colliers on a few occasions but the name is quite common so identification is uncertain. Research continues in trying to tease out more about the identities of these members of our cast.

By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the now prosperous Bristol/Bath Willways numbered more than fifty individuals all descended from Thomas and Betty. Devout and industrious, they were the epitome of the protestant practicality that drove Victorian technological and social progress. Through diligence and prudent purchases they acquired property and wealth and expanded their dyeing and cleaning business, operating branches from a number of premises. As master silk dyers they specialised in 'black-dyeing' and feather-curling for the elaborate funerals and mourning dress conventions that dominated English society at the time. Other family members were cabinet makers, shoemakers, block and pump makers, scientific inventors, engineers and hatters. Later generations perhaps enjoying better formal education would build on these technical and professional skills, becoming photographers, solicitors and accountants as well as continuing the existing businesses. The dry-cleaning firm of 'Willways' lasted until the 1970s, but in recent times the name appears to have been bought out and split from the business. Future investigation may reveal more information from the possible survival of accounts or records in due course<sup>4</sup>.

Much of the family's history has been pieced together as a result of the combined efforts of a number of interested family members, including the writer of this piece, who together have been investigating the subject for half a century. Research has been considerably helped by the fact that the Willway name appears to be unique. There are Willways in Canada, the USA and New Zealand but they too seem all to be the descendants of emigrant members of this one Westcountry family. Recent years have seen the meeting of several distant cousins hitherto unknown to one another, and the forging of firm new friendships. Many of these people have carefully preserved details of different strands of our family history, and this account seeks to put these together for the first time, as a sequel to the important research undertaken by other family members. In England the Willway name now seems to be limited to one individual and his immediate family, but due to dedicated genealogical study the links with many other names are now well-established and therefore no-one will be forgotten.

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<sup>4</sup> Work in progress 2008 by Brian Wates

## 2. Captain John Willway Phillips and his family

John Willway Phillips, first-born son of Sarah and James, was baptised at St George, Bristol, on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1783. Although this date conflicts with his age as noted in the 1841 census, it tallies with that given on John's death certificate. A baby named Elizabeth Phillips with the same parents was baptised at St George on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1786, and buried 6 months later on 30<sup>th</sup> October. A brother William was baptised on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1790, again at St George and another sister Elizabeth on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1796, thus completing the little family. In 1842 when the diary was written, John was 58, his mother Sarah was in her early 80s, his sister Elizabeth 46 and William about 50. None of the children married, apart from Elizabeth much later in life, of which more later. John made several wills; in a surviving codicil of 12<sup>th</sup> March 1829 (to his will of January 1828) he added the bequest of a recently-purchased 'Messuage Garden Stable and premises' located in the parish of St George and occupied by his mother, along with an adjoining cottage occupied by a Mr Flower. John gives his mother a life interest, thereafter passing his properties to his sister Elizabeth, but no mention of William. He made his last will on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1839, stating that he was at that time 'of No 10 Thrissell Street, near Trinity church, in the parish of St Philip and Jacob, Bristol'. All of his (now undescribed) possessions were to go to his mother for her life and thence to his sister, both named as executrixes. Again William is not mentioned. This final will appears to coincide with the start of a fatal illness and the end of John's career.



Signature on John Phillips' codicil to his 1829 will



Thrissell Street in the 1970s

Thrissell Street is near what is now the roundabout at the north end of St Philips Causeway (A4320) northeast of Temple Meads station. In John's time the area was in the process of being developed, with industry and open fields beyond. William Thrissell had made his fortune in rope-making, and then turned his hand to house-building on the site of his old rope works, naming his new street after himself. Speculative building would have been profitable for some, at a time when Bristol was expanding rapidly, and shrewd men like Thrissell were keen to stake a claim. Old photographs show close-packed but comfortable two-storey terraced artisans' terraces with front doors opening onto a narrow pavement. N<sup>o</sup>. 10 would have been quite new in 1839, but sadly most of the street was demolished in 1970s/80s clearances to make way for modern business blocks. Bristol's working-class heritage in this area is still being swept aside in favour of grandiose 'mixed-use' development that ignores historic urban landscape.

John was not long in Thrissell Street because by the 1841 census he was living with his mother and siblings at St George. Sadly, he died on Christmas Eve 1846; his age is given as 62 years and the cause of death 'Chronic Hepatitis 7 years and Hematuria'. This diagnosis may or may not be entirely accurate, but it could account for some of the symptoms he recounts in his diary, his retirement from seafaring and the re-writing of his will.

We can only guess how and where John might have contracted this disease, bearing in mind that he was a sea captain known to have sailed to exotic locations such as Barbados, Antigua and Mauritius. John's death was registered by Susannah, the 21 year old daughter of his cousin William Willway, and John's will was proved on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1847, '*before the Judge by the oath of Elizabeth Phillips Spinster the sister the sole surviving executrix to whom administration was granted*', thus hinting at further tragedy.

Their mother Sarah's own will is annotated that she died 'on or about the 13<sup>th</sup> day of January 1847', just three weeks after John. It was proved a year later, again to Elizabeth as sole executrix. Sarah's death certificate confirms the date and her age at 87 years, making her birth year at around 1759/60 as expected, and the cause of death is given as 'Pneumonia 4 days'. Elizabeth was thus swiftly left virtually alone, inheriting all the little family's possessions and the care of her older brother William. Young Susannah Willway bravely registered the second death having been 'in attendance' at both, and we shall hear a bit more about her later. Both deaths are noted in the columns of the weekly Bristol Mercury and Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> January 1847 as follows:

*Dec 24, at his residence, St George's, Glo'stershire, Capt J W Phillips, many years in the employ of Messrs Daniel & Son.*

And

*Jan 13, at her residence, St George's, aged 87, Mrs Sarah Phillips, mother of the late Capt J W Phillips whose death we announced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> instant.*

Following her bereavement Elizabeth, having inherited the many properties owned by her brother and mother, apparently decided to sell up almost immediately. If, as suggested, the Phillips home was the property (or part of it) inherited from her grandmother Betty Willway in 1796, this would be contrary to the terms of that bequest which required it not to be sold off. Much more about the Phillips's home and other properties will be recounted in section 3, but several issues of the Bristol Mercury in July and August 1847 advertised the sale of the St George property, first by private treaty and then by public auction.

The 1851 census reveals that the property was by then occupied by a Josiah Pople, aged 52, married, and his brother in law William Phillips, aged 60. Mrs Pople was not at home on census night, but further research finds the marriage of Josiah Pople to Elizabeth Phillips, spinster, on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1850 at the parish church of St George. Elizabeth would then have been about 54. At her marriage she was given away by 'the worshipful Mayor of the City of Bristol John Kerle Haberfield Esq', who also happens to have been the family solicitor for many years. His name appears on both John's and Sarah's wills, and he is cited as Elizabeth's agent in the press advertisements when the properties were sold to Josiah Pople. John Haberfield (1785-1857) was six times Mayor of the city between 1837 and 1850 and was an exact contemporary of John Willway Phillips. The son of a successful Plymouth wine merchant, he amassed a large fortune as a solicitor, was extremely influential, earned widespread public respect and held a large number of public offices including the city's chief magistrate. On his appointment to this high office he is said to have accepted the post but declined to take the salary – an act which earned him the affection of the city. He was clearly an important family friend and Elizabeth would have undoubtedly taken his advice when contemplating such an important step as a first marriage in her fifties. He would also doubtless been aware of the 1781 requirement to keep the St George properties within the family, which may have influenced his views on Pople's proposal. A lengthy and elaborate settlement indenture was drawn up prior to the marriage, to ensure the proper administration of Elizabeth's financial interests and her independent control of her own assets.

Elizabeth's grief was not yet over however; her other brother William died not long after, like John aged 62 and again at Christmas, in 1852.



Mayor John Kerle Haberfield

Maybe this was a turning point. Josiah Pople was, like Haberfield, well-liked; a wealthy man of great reputation and standing, who for many years held public offices, was a Churchwarden and prominent Liberal. He may well have been already known to Haberfield. Seemingly, Elizabeth had cut her losses and maintained her grandmother's legacy by marrying the person who came forward to buy the properties. Josiah meanwhile recouped his investment in the houses and acquired a companion. He is described in the census as a 'proprietor of houses, fund-holder and annuitant' so was clearly a man of considerable means.

Josiah and Betsey enjoyed 25 years together and she remained close to her relatives. She was absent again for the 1871 census, but we find her visiting young cousins: Elizabeth Willway Thomas was the daughter of Elizabeth Tabitha née Willway, another of the daughters

of William Willway who regularly visited the Phillips household and was sister to Susannah who had registered John's death. She married John Dermott Thomas, a chemist and druggist living at St Paul's. Elizabeth junior married George Harding, described in the 1871 census as a market gardener with over 20 employees. They were living in Clifton with their 2 young children, when 'Aunt Pople', now in her 70s, came to stay. Family legends relate that Aunt Pople was in the habit of keeping entirely to her rooms throughout the winter, setting up a series of mirrors with which to keep a check on the servants. As the census was normally held in the spring, it may be that it was also her habit to set off to visit relatives as soon as the better weather arrived. She is thus rather elusive at census time.

Although 3 or 4 years his senior, Betsey predeceased her husband in 1877 aged 80, and was buried at St George on 16<sup>th</sup> June. Her will is long and elaborate, helpfully bequeathing a number of named artefacts to the family of her cousin William Willway. She left **'the portrait of my dear deceased Brother Captain John Willway Phillips'** to John Willway along with 'the smaller of the two writing desks'. She left **'the Rosewood writing desk known as the Captain's Writing Desk'** to John's youngest brother Henry Phillips Willway, who features prominently in the Captain's diary and is the subject of section 5 of this piece. These two legacies explain why the splendid painting and desk are where they are now, and who has custody of them. They are described in detail below. Various articles of jewellery were left to the wives and daughters of the Willway cousins. Betsey also left generous amounts of money totalling over £300 to a number of church missionary societies and other charities, including the Bristol Royal Infirmary, the General Hospital and the RSPCA. An investment was to provide income for the vicar of St George to preach a sermon, on the anniversary of her death, against cruelty to 'inferior animals especially Horse, Ass and Dog – the three most ill-used Creatures of the Brute Creation'. Captain Phillips' diary reveals occasions when her brother William thrashed Bowwow the family dog, which raises some questions as to the relationship between the siblings. A further £200 was to be invested to provide income for free hospital treatment and medical advice to deserving residents of St George, at the vicar's discretion. In all she left over £1,000 to charities and the children of her Willway cousins. A comparable sum today would be around £65,000. The residue was to be divided between those cousins who were closest to her (John, Henry and the three Willway girls). All the bequests were to be fulfilled within 12 months of the latter death of Josiah or herself.

In 1878, after a grand farewell dinner reported at length in the Bristol Mercury, Josiah left the city to join his sister in Islington, London. He died of a stroke in 1881 aged 82, and the

properties were finally sold; a Doctor Barton was occupying the old house in 1883, and was still there in 1903.

For many years only John Willway Phillip's name and parentage were known along with a few unconfirmed details and vague family legends relating to his career, held by different members of his family who were not aware of each other's existence until very recently. However, he is now confirmed to have been a merchant sea-captain skippering cargo ships out of Bristol. Contemporary Lloyd's shipping registers list him commanding the 'Britannia' and later the 'Victor'. The old notebook John uses for his diary also contains some pages detailing what is now known to have been the maiden voyage of the '*Ship Victor, from Bristol towards the Mauritius, sailed June 14<sup>th</sup> 1833*', listing dates, course, latitude and longitude, and other daily records. Other pages relate the return journey in November 1833. He carefully kept this notebook and later wrote: '*February 16<sup>th</sup> 1842 this book was brought to me from among my papers – being in want of such a thing to Cobby things in for my pass time &c.*'. Research into Captain Phillips's maritime career continues, and the results so far are included in much more detail in section 7 of this account, including the eventual fate of his two known ships.



John Phillips would have captained similar ships

As a brief introduction however, John commanded square-riggers; forerunners of the fast clippers of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century which only required small crews and were responsible for running cargoes around the British Empire in great numbers, to feed and supply burgeoning and increasingly affluent populations. As a captain he would have worked his way up and been well respected both aboard and ashore. In Georgian England, there were many ships named 'Britannia' at the time, including more than one based in Bristol; however John's ship is identifiable from her unique tonnage - 411 tons, built in 1829.

She was owned by John's employers Messrs Daniel & Son and seems to have been primarily undertaking regular voyages bringing sugar from Barbados – captained by John Phillips between 1830 and 1832, after which a Captain Davenhill took over. T Daniel is known to have been a supporter of slavery but there is no evidence to implicate John in trafficking human cargoes.

Meanwhile, John's next command is the 'Victor', a brand new ship although smaller than 'Britannia' at 338 tons. He is recorded in the Lloyd's Registers as her master from her first trip to Mauritius in 1833 until 1839, to be succeeded by a Captain J Ridley, although the Bristol shipping registers do not entirely correspond with this. The Bristol Mercury of the time gives some details:

*29<sup>th</sup> Jne 1830 Bristol. Came in – the Britannia, Phillips, from Barbadoes*

*21<sup>st</sup> December 1833 Bristol. Arrived – the Victor, Phillips, at the Mauritius.*

*8<sup>th</sup> February 1834 Bristol. Arrived – Victor, Phillips, from the Mauritius;*

*landed 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1834; Imports, 7557 bags sugar.*

However, in his late 50s John appears to have abandoned the sea, as confirmed by his will describing him as 'late Master Mariner of the ship 'Britannia' of the port of Bristol'. We don't know why the 'Britannia' is mentioned rather than the 'Victor', but something clearly happened around this time that ended his seafaring career, his health, and by Christmas 1846 his life.



Captain J W Phillips 1783 – 1846: Oil on canvas, unknown artist, probably late 1820s

Sometime during the late 1820s or early 1830s, John Phillips's portrait was painted at the peak of his maritime career, by an artist of some native skill whose identity is unfortunately not known as no signature has ever been noted. The painting is large, and shows a well-nourished, friendly looking round-faced gentleman in his comfortable prime. He wears stylish Regency dress consisting of a blue coat, cream waistcoat, white shirt and fashionably tied cravat. He is clean-shaven, his soft brown hair curls gently and intelligent blue eyes look out thoughtfully under strong auburn eyebrows. His right hand rests on a shipping chart. Later in its history the painting was unfortunately left propped in a damp cellar for a while, causing some damage to the lower portion. However the painting and its original frame have been rescued and carefully restored to their former glory. It is now a treasured family heirloom, having been handed down in direct line. John's gaze is compelling to an extent that pleads with us to reveal and respect his legacy.

### 3. Where did the Phillips family live?

Until now, nothing has been known about the whereabouts of John's family home. However the writers of this piece have tracked it down and teased out the exact location. The 1841 Census finds the Phillips household in 'Bath Road', parish of St George. It could have been the property John inherited from his Aunt Sarah Willway in 1834; but as already noted, it was more likely to have been the cottage, garden, buildings etc that his grandmother Betty had inherited in 1781 and then passed to her children at her death. As we have seen, John's father James had bought out the shares of his wife's siblings, and the property in question was close to 'Don John's Cross' otherwise the junction of the Bath and Chippenham roads. It might have been close to, adjoining, or part of, the property that John had purchased in 1829 and mentioned in his will, and the house and/or adjoining cottages may have been rebuilt by John at that time. Clearly, the Phillips's owned several properties in this immediate neighbourhood which were let out, and others nearby at Two Mile Stone and Redfield. In 1841 the Phillips household is recorded as consisting of:

- Sarah Phillips aged '80', head, of independent means,
- John Phillips aged '55', Master Mariner,
- William Phillips aged '49', Mariner,
- Elizabeth Phillips aged '40', and
- Ann Simmons aged '11' 'FS' (female servant?).

This was the first proper census however, and the details are sometimes unreliable. Ages in particular are doubtful, since adult women were not expected to divulge such information even if they were sure what their correct age actually was. The census enumerator, having established the head of the household, may not have interrogated all the occupants. Nevertheless, William would have been 50-ish and Sarah's age too is roughly correct, putting her birth as already established at around 1760 and her marriage at the age of 19 or 20. However, John would have been about 58 and Elizabeth about 45. Ann, apparently the only servant, was actually 12<sup>1/2</sup>, but more of her later.

St George is on the eastern side of Bristol, about two miles from the city, and the 'Bath Road' referred to is the A420/431, not today's main A4 route. It sets out easterly from the city ring road to the roundabout at the top of St Philips Causeway, continuing through Lawrence Hill and Redfield. This old Roman road forks at the former boundary of Kingswood Forest, which also marks the site of the parish church of St George. The northern road (A420) is the Chippenham road starting as Clouds Hill Road, while the southern fork (A31) starts as Summerhill Road and then Air Balloon Road, continuing southeast to enter Bath at Lower Weston. Early Ordnance Survey maps refer to it as 'Via Julia – Bath Road', while Clouds Hill Road is marked 'London Road'. The William Butler drinking fountain now stands at this junction. These two main roads, to the north of Crews Hole, lie at the heart of the district of St George. At the time, and even a century later, it lay in Gloucestershire outside the city limits. Apart from the new housing for factory workers which was springing up all around, St George would have resembled a village with a close community, and the character of open countryside. According to Lewis's Topographical Dictionary for 1845, St George was a relatively new parish, having been carved from the out-parish of St Philip and St Jacob (where Thrissell Street lay) during the reign of George II. The new church was consecrated in 1756. It was rebuilt in 1846 (the year of John's death) and again in 1879 after a disastrous fire in 1878. It was finally demolished in 1976, when the Bristol Church Housing Association built over the site of the church and its vicarage, which originally lay in the patronage of Bristol Corporation having a generous income of £530 (maybe £34,000 today). The graveyard was preserved as open space however. Close by was a National School, and later 19<sup>th</sup> century maps indicate a whole series of schools in this district. Several of John's

diary entries refer to large numbers of scholars on the road outside, especially on Sundays when they processed to church, apparently in their hundreds.



St George's Church in the 1860s, from an old postcard;  
John Phillips would have known the previous church on this site<sup>5</sup>.  
Elizabeth (Betsey) was married here in 1850.

The 1841 census entry does not give a house name or any indication of the precise location of the Phillips home. However, we know the general area because the entry is near the beginning of a census book in which the preamble reads:

*'That part of the parish of St George which lies to the north of the turnpike road from Bristol to Bath, to the east of George Lane and to the west of the road from Plummers Hill to Crofts End Tavern, and to the south of the road from Crofts end to George Lane'.*

The names Plummers Hill and Crofts End survive on modern maps but George Lane has gone, having been later redeveloped as Roseberry Avenue. We can identify the relevant sector on the map but, like the Census, John gives us few clues in his diary as to his actual location. Nevertheless, certain conclusions may be drawn: the Phillips house is on the north side of the Bath Road and John often speaks of the sun shining in throughout the day; therefore his window must face roughly south or southwest. He is able to watch pedestrians and traffic on the road, and hear people talking at the street door, but he can also see the garden where there are flowers, grass, fruit trees, vegetables, a swing, and enough space for the temporary washing lines to be put up on a big wash day. The Bath Road runs roughly northwest/ southeast, and John never mentions more than the one sash window, so arguably his room would have to be facing the road yet having a good view of the garden, which may be at the side of the house. He was extremely fond of his houseplants, and his diary reveals that he liked to have them put outside from time to time. There must therefore have been a tall window with a balcony or wide parapet/sill. He can also see farm animals and horses

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<sup>5</sup> Reproduced by kind permission of Derek Fisher 'Bygone Bristol'

distantly grazing so the area is not entirely built-up, and with these clues a picture of John's home and environment gradually emerges.

The Phillips's near neighbours are also listed in the census: next door was 'uninhabited'; then Thomas Smith, (schoolmaster), his wife Hester and 3 children; next Henry Copp (gardener) his wife Sidwall and their 2 children; Charles (an engineer) & Hannah Poole had 3 children at home; Henry Knapp was not at home on census night but his wife Hannah, her mother (?) Sarah Long, and 8 children were present, including twins Charlotte and John (a miner); next door, Hannah Gibbs aged 65 was at home with 4 Simmons children, siblings of the Phillips's servant Ann. Then another uninhabited property, followed by Thomas Simmons aged 39 (a labourer) and his wife Ann with 3 more children who also seem to be Ann's brothers and sisters according to a note in John's diary. The exact relationship between Hannah Gibbs, Thomas Simmons, John Simmons and the total of 7 children is uncertain. Perhaps the John Simmons noted as the tenant on the Tithe Map (see below) was not present and Hannah Gibbs may have been the children's grandmother: Maybe Ann's mother had died – only her father is ever mentioned in the diary.

Although John does not mention it, coal mining was a significant feature of this area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A tramway from Pucklechurch to Bristol passed through the parish and is now one of Bristol's long-distance cycleways. A little further south at Crews Hole and Troopers Hill there were numerous quarries, pits, brickworks, mines, kilns, and wharfs bordering the River Avon. These would have employed local people and produced the resources to build and maintain the thousands of new houses and premises that sprang up in Victorian Bristol. In John's time, the expanding city and its industries must have co-existed alongside open countryside and farmland in this area, as his diary reveals. Old photographs show that the area was home to large numbers of the burgeoning working-class poor, surviving in dreadful conditions in contrast to the Phillips's comfortable circumstances. The Avon would have been severely polluted by domestic sewage and effluent from these industries, including lead and chemical works, yet was also the water supply for washing and drinking.

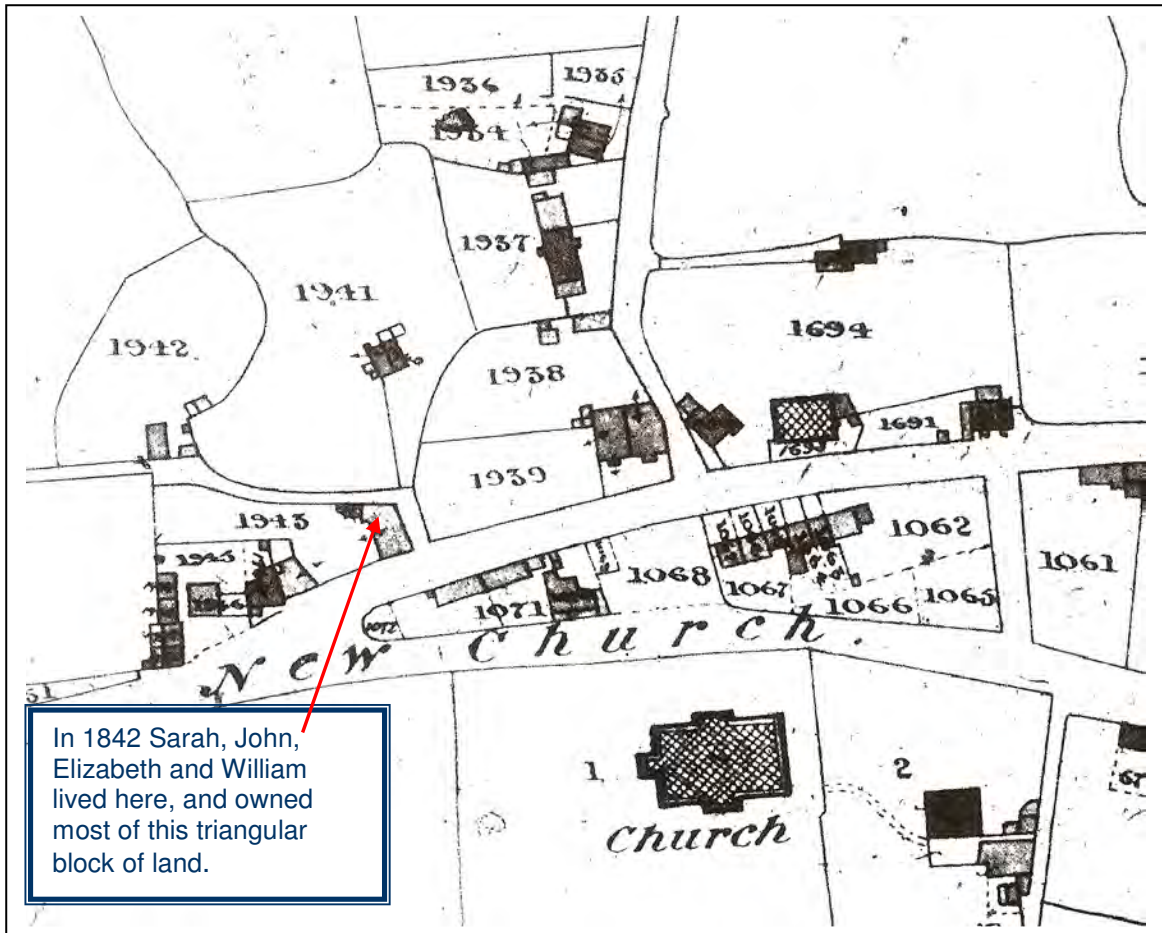
Of some of the other properties connected with the Phillips's, Redfield - mentioned in Sarah Willway's will - is the next district along the A420 to the east, towards Bristol. The reference to the 'two mile stone' might relate to the turnpike of the time, and the 1888 map does show a milestone at St George (opposite Summerhill House) marked 'Bristol 2, Bath 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>'. However, 'Two Mile Hill' is the name of another Bristol district further along this old Bath Road, and research continues as to the locations of the other properties mentioned.

St George was expanding rapidly at the time and has been repeatedly redeveloped since, but the 1842 Tithe map<sup>6</sup> covering this district has survived. It is extremely informative, and most fortunately it dates from exactly the right period. When Susannah Willway registered the deaths of John and his mother Sarah shortly after Christmas 1846, she gave the place of death as 'Newchurch in the parish of St George'. The Tithe Map is in poor condition and difficult to interpret. It shows a short stretch of the Bath road, close to that was then the recently rebuilt St George's church, as 'New Church'. Immediately north of this, just by the fork between the Bath and Chippenham roads (now the A431 and A420 respectively) lie plots 1943 to 1949. A total of twelve properties and plots are indicated as being in the ownership of either John Phillips or Sarah Phillips. Plots 1943 and 1945 are shown as being in Sarah's occupation.

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<sup>6</sup> Held at Bristol Record Office; a list, or 'terrier' of land ownership compiled by church authorities for the calculation of church taxes or tithes. Comprises maps and accompanying 'apportionment' listing landowners and occupiers for each plot.

1842



1842 Tithe Map of St George, detail of the area around St George's church

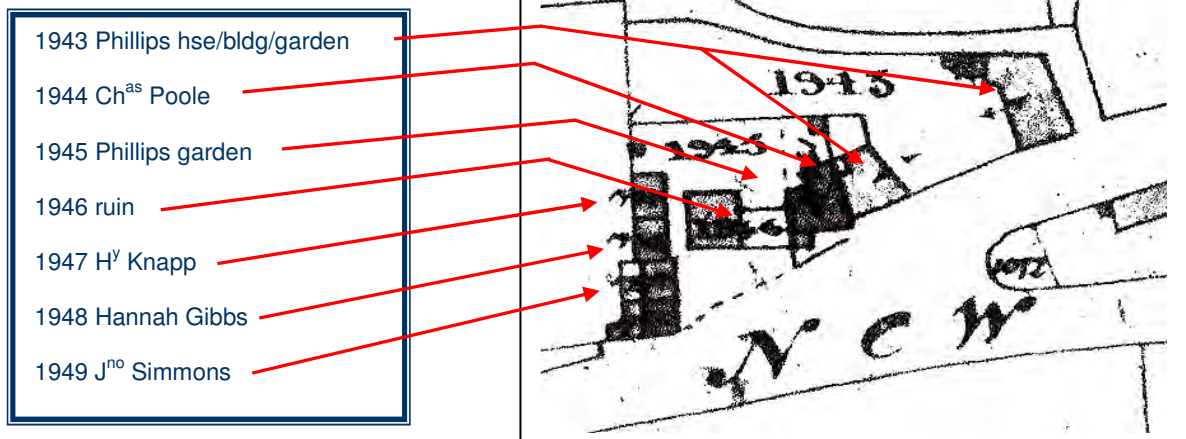
The Apportionment describes the ownership and occupation of these plots as follows:

Owner	Occupier	Plot no	Description
<b>John Phillips</b>	<b>Sarah Phillips</b>	<b>1945</b>	<b>Garden</b>
	Void	1946	House in ruins
	Henry Knapp	1947	House
	Hannah Gibb	1948	House
	<b>John Simmons</b>	<b>1949</b>	<b>house</b>
	Void	574	House & garden

<b>Sarah Phillips</b>	void	562	House & garden
	Thomas Jones	592	Malt mill, beer house, garden
	Martha Walker	593	House & garden
	<b>Sarah Phillips</b>	<b>1943</b>	<b>House, outhouses, garden</b>
	<b>Charles Poole</b>	<b>1944</b>	<b>House &amp; garden</b>
	James Bacon	2177	House, outhouses, garden

Apart from John and his mother Sarah the names of Simmons and Poole are of significance and feature in the diary. Plots 1943 and 1945, owned and occupied by John and Sarah, comprise a large house and outbuilding (John mentions a stable in the diary) with a garden running westwards from the corner of what was then a narrow lane and later became Park View, leading into what would later become St George's Park.

## Tithe Map plots in detail



Charles Poole's house (1944) was west of the house and south of the garden. Next door was plot 1946 described as 'in ruins': could this have been the cottage that Betty Willway inherited in 1781? Did John build or pay for a new house for the Phillips family on adjoining ground (see advert below)? Next came a string of back-built cottages at right angles to the main road (plots 1947-9). These were occupied by the tenant families of Henry Knapp, Hannah Gibbs and John Simmons. John's home or the site of it, is shown on later maps of the 1880s as 'Clouds Hill (or Cloudshill) House', with a substantial garden that fits very well with the descriptions in the diary; however Josiah Pople might well have remodelled it in the 1860s, since the profile on the maps looks different. This part of the A420 is by now known as Clouds Hill. Comparison between the 1842 map and the 1880s one below also shows the difference between the footprint of the original 'new church' of St George, and that of the second replacement built following the fire.

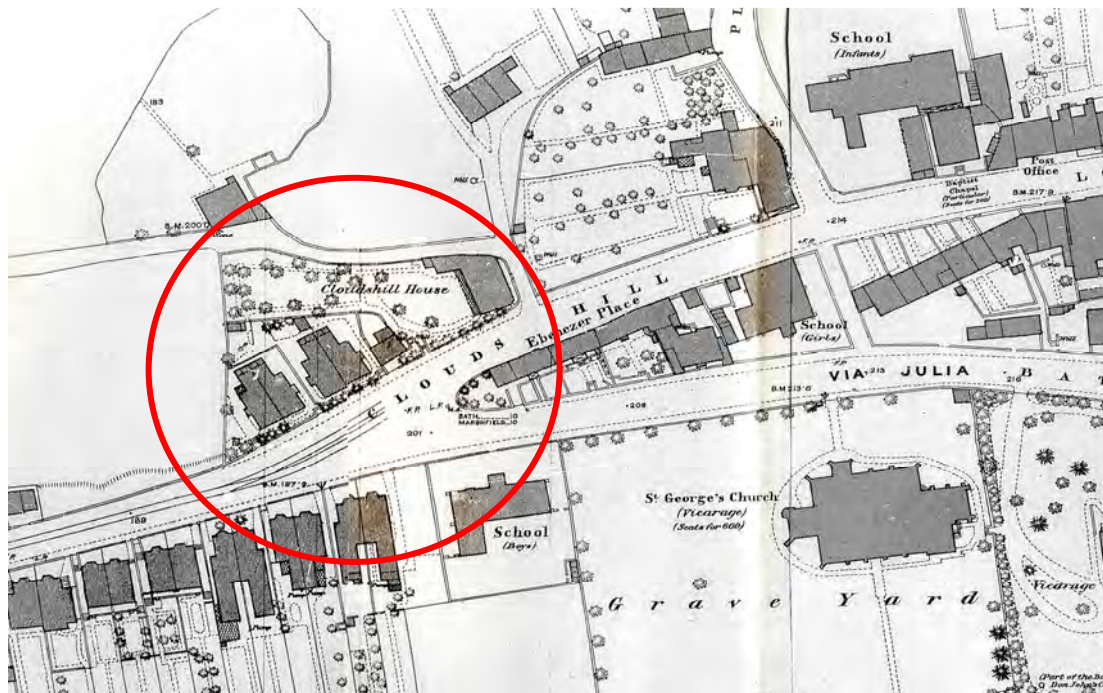
When Elizabeth sold up in 1847, the advertisements described the property as follows:

All that new-built FREEHOLD MESSUAGE or Dwelling-House, erected and built by Captain John Willway Phillips, deceased, situate lying and being nearly opposite the New Church in the Parish of ST GEORGE, in the county of Gloucester: containing a handsome entrance-hall, two parlours, with folding doors, china-pantry, and two kitchens; on the first floor four large rooms and three closets, on the second floor three large rooms and three closets, back and front stair-case and staircase communicating with the roof; three underground cellars, Washhouse, Coach-house, and three-stall Stables. A large garden, well stocked with fruit trees. The whole were late in the occupation of the said Capt John Willway Phillips, but now of Miss Phillips. They are well supplied with both sorts of Water, three wells being on the premises.

Also, the COTTAGE, with a lot of old BUILDINGS adjoining. A large quantity of BUILDING MATERIALS will be included in this Lot.

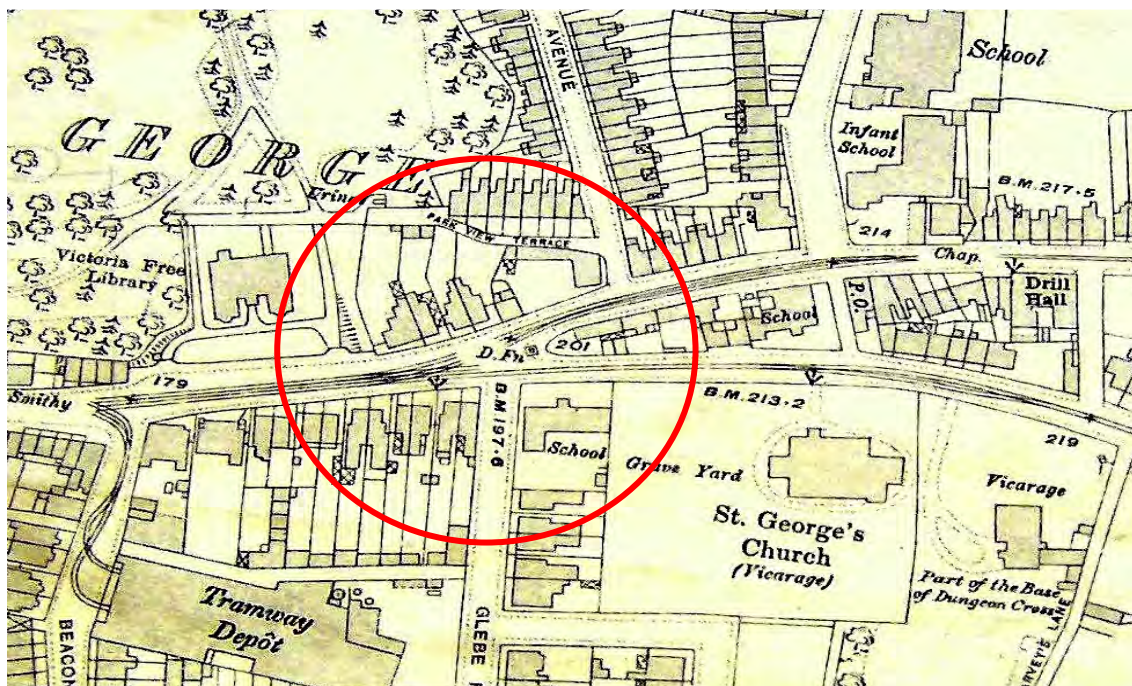
All that FREEHOLD COTTAGE, pleasantly situated, and adjoining the Land or Garden of St George's Vicarage, and known for several years past as *Homefield-Cottage*, in the tenure of Mr Marcus H. Holmes, but at present of Mr Stone, of Summer-hill-House, containing two parlours, two kitchens, a pantry, four bed-rooms, and a closet, with an underground cellar and out offices. The above premises are also well supplied with both sorts of water, and have a Garden attached, well stocked with fine fruit trees. The premises are subject to a yearly Farm-rent of 1s. For viewing the same apply to Miss Phillips, on the Premises, on Wednesdays and Thursdays; and for further particulars and Conditions of Sale to JOHN KERLE HABERFIELD, Solicitor, Bristol.

## Early 1880s



By the 1880s this map<sup>7</sup>, shows the 'ruin' and cottages have been replaced by two pairs of smart Victorian houses known as Cloudhill Villas. These were built around the 1860s, maybe when the family home was remodelled. Cloudhill House hangs on to its splendid garden for the time being. The stable/ outbuilding or maybe what was the Poole's house is also apparently still there. The tramway is still under construction and there is a milestone where the William Butler drinking fountain would later be installed.

## Late 1890s



<sup>7</sup> held at Bristol Central Library

Before the end of the century two of the smart villas appear to have been considerably extended, and the big old garden to Cloudshell House has been carved up, divided between the four new houses. The old house appears to have been extended westwards, but the outbuilding survives. The Victoria Free Library has been built immediately to the west (and since replaced), the lane to the north has become Park View Terrace comprising about seven modest houses, and then extended at the back of the library to an entrance into St George's Park, opened for the recreation of the working-class populace in 1894. A urinal has appeared for their convenience half way along the lane. In the vicarage garden is noted 'part of the base of Dungeon Cross'. Terraces have been built along what was previously a track leading north, and has become Clouds Hill Avenue. The tramway has progressed along both the Bath and the Chippenham/ London roads, and the William Butler drinking fountain has replaced the milestone at the fork. Housing has spread west of the church in Glebe Road. Thus these two maps demonstrate the accelerating sprawl of Bristol as the 20<sup>th</sup> century approached.



1939: Cloudshell House is the three-storey building behind the tram .<sup>8</sup> To the left are Pople's villas

On 7<sup>th</sup> July 1881 the Bristol Mercury advertised Cloudshell House and 1–4 Cloudshell Villas, to be sold at public auction in 5 lots at the Cherry Orchard Inn, St George. The sale was expected to realise about £1500, and coincided with Josiah's death; thus ending Clouds Hill's connection with the Willway and Phillips families after exactly a century, since Betty's inheritance in 1781. Today, the house survives much as it appeared in the 1930s. It is a tall narrow edifice; in 2008 rather down-at-heel but maintaining its dignity despite being in need of care. The two-storey twin bay windows on the back would appear to be later additions, probably by Josiah Pople in the 1860s or 1870s. This lends credence to the idea suggested by the diary that in 1842 John's room had a balcony, possibly of the fashionable Georgian type: narrow, with a lead canopy above and delicate iron railings. The theory is supported by the fact that the 1847 sale details state that the property had been recently built (or re-built?) by John, i.e. maybe around 1839 when he retired from the sea. One old building on the main road appears to be a survivor from John's time, now used as a garage. Was this the stable, Charles Poole' house, or even the ruin/Betty Willway's cottage; all noted on the tithe map?

The front doorway seems to be original, with its pediment, semicircular fanlight, bootscraper and low wall showing evidence of elegant railings presumably lost during WW2. The four villas built in the garden by Pople have also survived. Although generously proportioned in terms of bay windows and room size, they appear now to have strangely low-profiled skimpy

<sup>8</sup> Reproduced by kind permission of Derek Fisher 'Bygone Bristol'

roofs out of proportion with the overall design. However, earlier photographs show the bays originally had conical roofs rather than flat tops, and the main roofs were higher. They would have been typical of thousands being built across the city at the time.<sup>9</sup>



Cloudhill House in 2008



The rear, with added bays and western wing



Old outbuilding



Josiah Pople's new villas



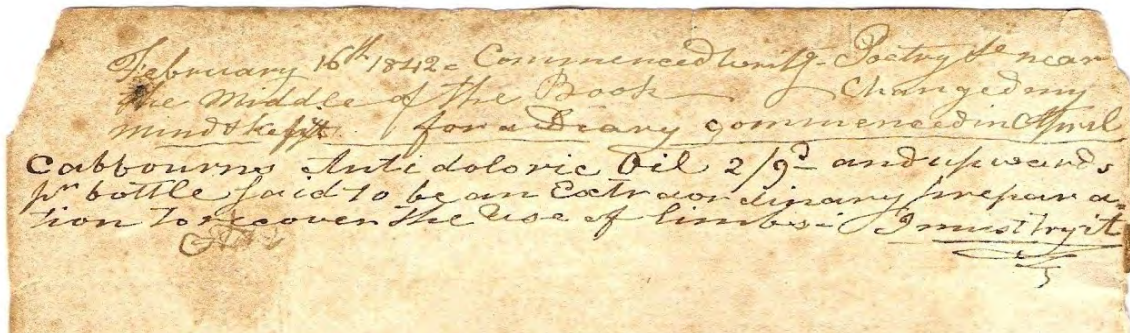
Wider street view and the Butler fountain



The front and side

<sup>9</sup> Photos – ©Deborah Klein: some street clutter has been removed.

## 4. The Diary



The diary opens with a typical comment

John tells us that he ‘Commenced writ<sup>g</sup> Poetry near the Middle of the Book’ in February 1842 but, the attempt being unsatisfactory, he changes his mind in April and contents himself with writing a journal, while making note of an expensive remedy ‘*to recover the use of limbs - I must try it*’; a sad hint at his condition and an affliction that had presumably begun some time previously. He jots his observations onto a slate through the day, later transferring them to paper – which was apparently very scarce as the writing is tiny, almost illegible, and close-packed to save space – and then cleaning the slate off each night, ready for the next day’s work. He uses a lot of abbreviations reminiscent of modern text message jargon: rain may be ‘pelt<sup>g</sup>’ his window, Ann might come ‘run<sup>g</sup>’ in with his ‘din<sup>r</sup>’, and he might take a little ‘b<sup>rd</sup> & b<sup>r</sup>’. The minuscule script is faded and virtually unreadable, but transcripts from enlarged scans reveal an intimate and colourful insight into Victorian Bristol family life. The diary sets the tone as follows:

Thu<sup>y</sup> April 7<sup>th</sup>.

Continued from the small book = A very neat short brass tube pen holder which I fit in a quill stump pen and find it work very pleasant. Betsey bro’t a lot of her pens for me to mend – as she prefers the quill pens to any other sort - at the same time we were talking about Wm W<sup>wy</sup> giving up his attending even<sup>g</sup> lectures – (and class I think) which any reasonable person would blame him for (during the summer months)

The first entry from John’s diary

John appears to be bedridden, confined to quarters, or at least without the use of his legs, and living in an upstairs room which he apparently never leaves. He has regular stomach upsets for which he takes medication, but does not complain of being especially ill or in pain. He does however frequently suffer from his mouth ‘continually filling with water’, and feeling nauseous. At first he takes ‘salts and senna’ presumably for constipation due to inactivity, but in the middle of May his cousin William Willway (the subject of the above observation) reminds him of ‘Seidlitz Powders’, a kind of forerunner to Andrews Liver Salts, Alka-Seltzer etc, and John commissions him to procure some. From then on he regularly takes this preparation whenever a supply can be brought to him, and it seems to make him more comfortable. He also takes something he calls ‘FT’ with water, but what this might be is not explained. His ‘disagreeable sick stomach’ comes and goes but affects him frequently and makes him very uncomfortable. Rhubarb and ginger seem to help a little, but there are many days when is cannot eat at all. By the end of the diary he is clearly unwell; he acknowledges that his appearance is ‘bad’, and takes his FT several times a day, sometimes as a weak

solution mixed with the Seidlitz. If the diagnosis at his death of 'chronic Hepatitis 7 years' is correct, he would have had a distended painful liver and jaundiced appearance, however it is quite possible that John's decline was due to something else – perhaps a disease picked up in the tropics, the result of inappropriate medication such as mercury, or following some accident or injury on board ship. He sleeps badly, waking several times every night and rising early at 3, 4 or 5 a.m., finally 'knocking' for assistance at 6 or 7 according to a pre-arranged routine that he calls 'p' order'. Then as now, living on a main road was noisy; the traffic often woke him very early. He keeps a sense of humour though, noting 'silent hints' to Ann to come in earlier than usual when he is restless. At no time does he mention wine or any other alcohol, despite its common usage for medicinal purposes. It is likely that the whole family were abstinent as were others of the Willways, many of whom attended strict chapel and had signed the temperance pledge.



92. SEIDLITZ POWDERS.—Seidlitz powders are usually put up in two papers. The larger blue paper contains tartarized soda (also called Rochelle salt) two drachms, and carbonate of soda two scruples; in practice it will be found more convenient to mix the two materials in larger quantity by passing them twice through a sieve, and then divide the mixture either by weight or measure, than to make each powder separately. One pound of tartarized soda, at 1s. 2d. per pound, and five ounces and a half of carbonate of soda, at 4d. per pound, will make sixty powders. The smaller powder, usually put up in white paper, consists of tartaric acid, at 2s. per pound, half a drachm.

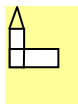
*Directions for use.*—Dissolve the contents of blue paper in half a tumbler of cold water, stir in the other powder, and drink during effervescence.

'Seidlitz Powders' - a popular remedy for many years

While he is thus indisposed, John is cared for by his mother Sarah, his sister Elizabeth (always referred to as Betsey), and his brother William. There is Bowwow the dog and Puss the cat. Next to his bed John keeps a caged songbird called Goldee – possibly a Goldfinch or other native species, since at one point another 'Goldee' in a tree outside attracts the bird's attention. Early every morning John and his companion 'set too', on a daily routine in which breakfast ('Bkft'), washing and morning exercises figure significantly. 'My Goldee', John tells us, enjoys seeds and groundsel but also likes a share of John's food, including bread-and-butter, peas, beans and cake. He bathes regularly in his 'glass machine' – flapping himself dry, and sometimes sings beautifully in the evening. As well as his bedstead, John has a chair and stool, and he occasionally manages to 'sit out' to eat at his table or write, look out of his window, or to wait while his room and bed are being cleaned. This cleaning is a significant and regular operation, often involving a complete room clearance and the removal of 'every thing to the laths' including the carpets, scrubbing of floorboards and copious washing and dusting. It involves the participation of the whole household and even Mother attends to 'supervise the operation'. Poor Ann the young maid is expected to do the bulk of the work however. John has hothouse plants and flowers by his window which he carefully waters and sometimes his precious pots are put out to be 'sprinkled' by the rain – presumably on a narrow balcony as noted above. On one evening when William shuts the sash window for the night, they fail to notice that the plants are still outside and John notes that he has to call for assistance to get them in.

He reads the weekly Bristol Mercury when he can, but usually it is a week before anyone brings it to him. He also frequently 'peeps' in 'The Mirror'; which might possibly be a pious

periodical, as the Bristol Times and Mirror was not then in existence under that name. Whatever it was John mentions poetry and recipes. As a former master mariner he is almost obsessed with the weather, constantly recording the strength and direction of the wind at several different times of the day, often by noting the smoke from nearby chimneys. The smoke is also an indicator as to the efficiency and rising time of neighbouring households. He reports on the strength of the sun, the type of rain, the frequency of hail and thunder that year, and the level of cloud or 'fogg'. His sash window is kept open most of the time, and the number of inches it is up or down is carefully recorded. On Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April he reports hearing a cuckoo at 4.30 am, the first of as many as seven occasions, all spelt differently such as 'coukou', and then an engine at 5.16. As well as abbreviations, John uses symbols such as ☉ for the sun and ☾ for the moon and an indistinct little sketch that probably denotes 'church'.



Although frequently mentioning his digestive problems, John complains very little considering the discomfort he must have been in. Occasionally we get a glimpse of peevishness however, such as on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May when his restless day starts very early: *'<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> 4 and pelt<sup>g</sup> rain before 5 & Goldee sing<sup>g</sup> and the window whistle<sup>g</sup>. Ann came, & W<sup>m</sup> with Bkft & the school bell – about 6 minutes space between each – more heavy rain at 11.20'*

To cap it all there was a strong gale blowing, so his pettishness is understandable with all the noise and disturbances.

Ann seems to be the only servant and is later replaced by Sally, but it seems that Ann, Betsey and William undertake all the chores between them, with some help from other relatives from time to time for repairs and gardening. However, John only seems to concern himself and his diary with people he actually sees. There could have been other staff although no mention is made of this by John or the 1841 census. There may have been some distrust of servants with an invalid in the house. As noted above, Betsey took extreme measures to keep a check on servants later in her life. Nonetheless, on 26<sup>th</sup> April a washerwoman comes for a big washday after all possible clothes and linen have been gathered up. The clean things are hung out to dry on temporary lines in the garden the following day. With little else to punctuate his day, the times when John's food is brought, the nature of his meals, and the degree to which he is well enough to enjoy them, are of great importance to him and carefully noted. His record gives us a clear insight into eating habits of the time. He keeps stores of bread and butter in his room and sometimes 'plumb' cake or bread pudding, to keep him going during wakeful nights.

John's meals comprise breakfast, dinner and tea: He has cocoa with toast or bread for his breakfast when well enough, or just coffee on bad days, with perhaps a little gruel. It is not known who is preparing his food – possibly the indefatigable Betsey - but for dinner he enjoys 'young potatoes' and green beans, pease, parsnips and all kind of vegetables, likes pies, duck, herrings, sweet pork, corned pork, lamb, and calf's head – much of which he 'relishes' when he is well enough. 'Sweet mackrel' is a particular favourite, although on the one occasion it is brought to him during this period he is vexed at being unable to eat it. However at another time he has enough appetite for pig's fry and bacon – and sends down for 'an additional slice'. His visitors often bring him little treats and delicacies such as home-baked bread, rhubarb and ginger for his digestion, a bread tart with caraway seeds, gooseberries, a saucer of raspberries, or apple pie. Sadly, he is often unable to eat at all for several days, due to the nausea that allows him 'but little sleep'. Despite being such a small household with only one servant, the family do not seem to be at all in want and are apparently very well provided for. John mentions seeing Mother 'cutting sprouts' in the garden - suggesting that they grow their own produce, and the food he takes appears to be plentiful and wholesome. All the household members take care of John and bring him his meals and water for washing, shaving and drinking at regular intervals. They also get him to

help them with letter-writing and household administration in which John takes a strong interest.

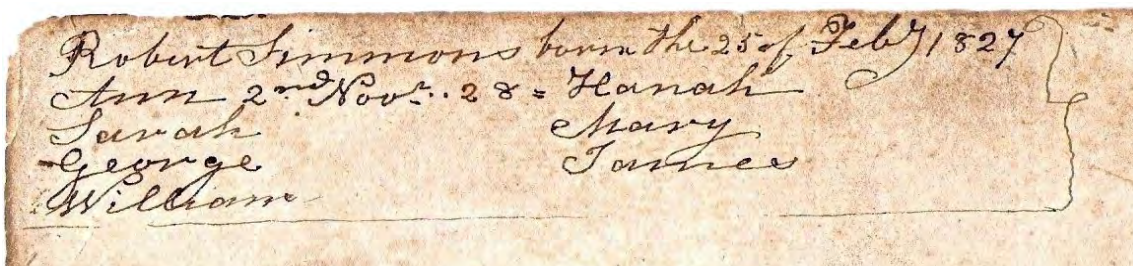
Tu<sup>y</sup> 19<sup>th</sup>

Very fine. Ann came for the things. Mother bro't Bkft and some paper for me to write an order for railroad shares as Betsey is intended to go to Town if she could get a lift in with the Emma's . I have the Mercury of the 9<sup>th</sup>. Saw a vast number of vehicles & people on horseback going up by my window. The ☉ shone strong. Goldee bath'd and soon dried himself. = with it and the air – with the window up I felt it with delight and by sit<sup>g</sup> on the bedside I can look down in the Garden where I saw Ann with one of her sisters on the grass. I wrote until I was obliged to rest – Wm bro't Tea & some excelent home bak'd bread & butter. – he came again at ☉set & shut the window with some Flowerpots out that I did not observe for some time after – and had to call.

John's entry for 19<sup>th</sup> April

The young servant Ann proves to be a difficult employee. She is accused of losing things, has arguments with William, and storms out one day at the end of May having called him a liar. Her father brings her back later in tears, and John notes that this episode has a detrimental effect on the whole household, seeing fit to speak to her of 'the impropriety of her conduct' and the bad example she has set, even though he is partially comforted by the news that 'she had one of her sisters with her while absent'. He primly observes to his diary that 'few know when they are well off in this uncertain world'. John clearly means well but the diary note below shows that in 1842 the poor girl was yet in her early teens; an age when emotional upsets are not uncommon. The middle-aged William may not have been the best company for such a young girl – certainly he takes it out on poor Bowwow on several occasions.

Nonetheless, the beginning of John's diary contains a relevant note that shows he took a close interest in the Simmons family. It shows that Ann was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1828, that her brother Robert was about 18 months older, and gives the names of the three other brothers and three sisters – confirmed by being all present in the 1841 census:



Robert Simmons born the 25 of Feby 1827  
Ann 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 28 = Hannah  
Sarah  
Mary  
George  
William

It must have been hard for young Ann, supporting this rather odd family of aged mother and three middle-aged unmarried siblings, plus caring for an invalid apparently as the only servant. The hours were long and the work heavy. The house was large and occupied 4 floors (with the cellars). There would be much toiling up and down stairs with plates of food and water whilst attending to John on the middle floor. Ann was expected to rise first with William, to start the household activities at 5 or 6 a.m., and work through until the evening. The diary reveals that John often 'knock'd' for her even earlier however, when he was restless. She and William undertook all the cleaning chores, under instruction from Mother

and Betsey. Predictably, Ann decides to leave by the middle of June, after having been at Cloudhill for (John says Betsey thinks) three years - which means she must have started at about 9 or 10 years old. Thinking she has another placement she gives notice, but this falls through. She then asks if she can come back - with an understanding that she could go again at 2 weeks notice if she wanted to, but this uncertainty is not acceptable so 'farewell Ann' says John. Later they hear that she has found work with a married couple but then Mother finds out she 'has not the place' and is 'lying low, playing hide and seek at her Aunt's house' because she has not told her father that she has left the Phillips household and is out of work. John says he feels 'sorry for him and the foolish child'. His general attitude to Ann and her siblings is however affectionate and caring throughout the diary.

A Captain Simmons who might have been Ann's father features among John's colleagues in the Lloyds shipping lists and is also named in the Bristol ship register for the time as master of the Britannia in 1836 following Matthew Davenhill. Sending daughters out to a neighbouring household to learn housewifery was a common means of training for adult life. Ann's father may have been the John Simmons shown on the 1842 Tithe Map as a tenant of the Phillips's, occupying one of the cottages adjoining their house. However there is room for doubt as noted above; the 1841 census shows the other 7 Simmons children, but divided between two cottages and in the care of Hannah Gibbs (aged 65) who may have been their grandmother, and Thomas Simmons and his wife Ann, both in their late 30s, who could have been the parents or maybe an Aunt and Uncle, but if so - who was John Simmons, and had his wife (Ann's mother) died? Was he indeed a sea captain and away on a voyage? After the disastrous day of truancy Sally appears to take over permanently, and no more is heard of poor Ann. It is just possible that Sally was Ann's sister Sarah; like Ann she would only have been about 9 or 10 years old as the census indicates she was 8 in 1841. There was another possible candidate in the 21 year- old Sarah Greenaway, living two doors away from the Simmons's, but 'Sally' remains an unknown identity.

#### Fr<sup>y</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> Old May Day

I awoke in time to see & hear the Clock strike 3 and at 4 gave a silent hint to Ann to turn out as I had arranged the Ev<sup>g</sup> previous - at 5.30 drew down a small portion of my window to let in a little of the early SE air that was pass<sup>g</sup>. at 7 the bell struck out for a female = Ann came just after and increased her welcome by bringing a Rhu<sup>b</sup> pye. We saw the man milk<sup>g</sup> in the roadfield = a cool NW<sup>ly</sup> breeze at 11 and most of the afternoon. I hear the scrubb<sup>g</sup> brush below at 4:30 - I did not sit out in my chair but up in bed many hours - thro the day = fresh cool NW<sup>ly</sup> breeze at Tea time and my window 2 inches down = a new pen and it goes very pleasant

A Friday 13<sup>th</sup> entry for May 1842

The diary often mentions people going both down and up stairs from the floor on which John was confined, which makes sense if he was on the middle floor with the balcony or bay window. From here he spends much of his time looking and listening. Inside the house he overhears conversations and listens out for the doorbell, visitors, and people moving about early in the morning. Much of his life is spent interacting with Mother, Betsey and William - to whom he frequently offers advice about shaving and at one points lends his razor. He recommends William to shave on Wednesdays and Sundays, while he himself shaves on Tuesdays and Saturdays. This appears to be mainly so that William can present a 'clean chin' when attending church or chapel, whilst John of course is unable to go and therefore does not need to shave on Sundays. Outside, John can see the grass, vegetables and fruit

trees in the garden, and the main road. He makes a point of noting when he overhears tradespeople chatting, laughing or 'spinning a yarn' with Mother or Betsey at the front door. Of the known neighbours Mr & Mrs Poole are mentioned, the Holmes family and Mr & Mrs Flowers - all of whom are tenants in the family's other properties. Also 'a fine plump family' of friends called Emma, but so far these have not been identified. Births and deaths in the immediate vicinity are carefully noted. John clearly enjoys a bit of gossip himself, but is quick to comment on '*some woman talk<sup>9</sup> to mother – Mrs Hodges was spoken of not over favourable in regard to Gossip & Veracity*' [veracity? (truthfulness)].

The tripe woman and the milkmaid deliver goods, the coalman is told that 'if he did not bring better coal they would not take any more from him', and someone knocking on doors to collect junk is handed out a bench and an old tub by William. Along the road large numbers of people and vehicles regularly travel to a nearby factory, schools, chapel and church, but John can also see a stable, fields and livestock close by. On weekdays the factory-hands, whom he calls 'the Pedestrians' or 'Emblems of Industry', start moving along the road by about 4 am, and vehicles wake him by rattling past. Ann tells him one morning that the factory engine had broken down and that all the workers had to go home. The next day John hears the 'pedestrians going down as usual' and charitably hopes that the engine has been repaired. He notes a young lad he has seen before, 'trotting a nag and wearing a jacket and white trousers'. He also finds a 'bug' on his pillow and puts it in a bottle of water to show his mother – when she points out it is just a 'ladycow' (ladybird) they set it free, since it fortunately has not drowned. His initial concern is understandable since Victorian households needed to be especially vigilant in eradicating bed bugs and other pests. They were a constant threat and generated a good deal of heavy cleaning work for young servants. John is also particularly concerned about the dangers of strong sun. As early as April 22<sup>nd</sup> he is perturbed to see Ann and one of her sisters 'standing against a wall and the sun burning them without bonnets or any thing over their heads'. He is obliged to 'have them shouted'. Later we will find him worrying about the health of his cousin William Willway, who regularly fails to wear his sun hat when out riding or walking. Despite these concerns John himself enjoys the heat - providing he can get at a cool breeze from his window, although noting in June that mother says it makes her feel languid.

John give details of all observed events occurring outside; cows and horses grazing in the fields opposite the house; which chimney smokes first in the morning (which would also inform him as to the timely rising of that household - a matter of moral judgement at this time); the movements and clatter of tradespeople; men and boys going up or down the road on foot or horseback; people going to the races in smart carriages and a 'tandum'. On a warm April day he jokes about his dress, telling us 'my apparel is short flannel & long cotton drawers in addition' in which he sits out at the foot of his bed to watch Ann in the Apple tree with bowwow and puss, and later Mother, William & Ann in the garden with a 'watering pot spout<sup>9</sup> over some plants'. On Whit Sunday (15<sup>th</sup> May) John is somewhat preoccupied with his nausea, although still able to note about 150 school children and their teachers going to church. Next day, Whit Monday, he hears gunfire and is excited to see a parade with a band marching past, '*down and round to the other road*' bearing '*two blue and one red clear coloured flags, blue cockades and sashes or diagonals*'. The following day at 8 am he sadly notes hearing '*a small band playing our national air which reminds me of old times*'.

The diary reveals that Sundays regularly bring large numbers (over 100) of scholars, both girls and boys, gathering in 'clusters' before marching in line to church. The Sabbath is also a regular day for John to receive visitors and various people who, on returning from worship, bring him their sermon sheets and other religious texts for him to read. On May 29<sup>th</sup> John is pleased to receive a text read by Rev G N Barrow, who had lately married his young cousin Elizabeth Tabitha Willway to chemist John Dermott Thomas, brought to him by her brother

William Henry. The Phillips family are generally church-goers; unusual among the Willways and other branches, who are non-conformist almost without exception. Some household members go to chapel and others church, but John is interested in all of it. Betsey attends church, and later is married at St George like her mother before her, while brother William goes to chapel. On June 26<sup>th</sup> John notes that Betsey brought back the text of a Mr Milner, who had preached on 'behalf of the unemployed sufferers', and sat reading with John until she had to 'go and let Wm in from Chpl'. All three siblings were baptised and buried at St George. Apart from the parish church, there were a large number of chapels and very many schools in the immediate vicinity; preaching and learning were clearly much in vogue.

May 24<sup>th</sup> is noteworthy in the diary as 'Her Majesty's birthday and not doubt a gay one is kept by all Loyal Subjects.' Later that day the ladies of the house and their female visitors entertain John in his room by 'trying their Vocal powers – as it is now the rage'. John is extremely interested in literary and musical skills, and spends much of the 29<sup>th</sup> of June engaged in attempting to write poetry until a whirlwind of young cousins descends upon him – 'they take me by surprize, but not allarm<sup>g</sup>.' They tried playing his flute, sang a little ('pitched a few vocal notes'), took some supper and left as quickly as they had arrived.

Apart from the problems with young Ann, late May/early June seems to have been quite a difficult time in other ways. John had a very close relationship with the family of his cousin William Willway, about whom we shall hear a good deal more in due course, and he reports with concern that William's daughter Martha was unwell with a sore throat for at least a week. Then on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June John manages to jam a pair of compasses in a drawer, and poor Bowwow gets a thrashing from William. The next day and for several days around this time there is 'thunder far and near' and William is clearly not on friendly terms with Bowwow, who is 'complain<sup>g</sup> of ill-usage', and Bowwow disgraces himself further on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Things seem to settle down after this, with John reporting 'Waterloo Bells' pealing at 5.30 am on 15<sup>th</sup> of June, a 'famous rain' falling on the 20<sup>th</sup> and the following day he sees 'a phaeton with a bonnet in it' bowling down the street at speed. However William and Bowwow are heard quarrelling again on 13<sup>th</sup> of July. Since Betsey's will indicates a passion for preventing cruelty to animals, this episode is a shocking revelation about the character of William, although John does not pass any judgement.

In mid-July, he eagerly watches crowds coming back on fine horses from an 'Exhibition of Extraordinary Cattle' including a strong-looking cart carrying a 'show beast that could not walk far' - reminiscent of the bizarre fashion for over-developed farm animals at this time. This craze was extensively demonstrated in contemporary naive British art, when farmers and breeders regularly commissioned exaggerated portraits of their prize animal exhibits. John observes that his sister Betsey had been fortunate enough to attend this notable exhibition, remarking wistfully that it was '*a great treat no doubt to all that could go*'.

Th 14<sup>th</sup>

NWly fine. Betsey went in the Van to see the Exhibition of Extraordinary Cattle a great treat no doubt to all that could go.

Fr<sup>y</sup> 15<sup>th</sup>

low fogg. cleard at 5 ½ gave Goldee some crumbs. Wm came at 7. I had a peep through the bushes & saw one of the fine horses return from the exhibition and a strong look<sup>g</sup> carryge for Cattle or a show beast. that could not walk far.

Entries for 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> July – the cattle exhibition

The event was part of a week-long Royal Agricultural Society show, for which the Bristol Mercury ran a four-page supplement in recognition of its importance, and John is sure to have read this with pleasure. It gave all the minute details of the arrivals of visiting aristocracy and attendance on them by civic dignitaries, reporting on the extensive dinners, speeches, and sales of livestock and produce. It was a major occasion attracting huge crowds from town and countryside for miles around.



Grand Exhibition of Cattle etc, of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, Bristol July 14<sup>th</sup> 1842: Hand coloured aquatint, J Harris 1842, published by Messrs Fores, 41 Picadilly. Museum of Rural Life Online Exhibition. ([www.reading.ac.uk/merl](http://www.reading.ac.uk/merl))

To help him to occupy his time John's family and friends bring him chores. He apparently does quite a bit of skilled sewing, presumably learnt from his seafaring days. He spends much time ripping seams, mending pinafores (including turning the sides into the middle where they had worn thin), attaching hooks, buttons and loops and other repairs. He also makes himself 'light fancy summer caps' from silk cast-offs. When required he mends gruel strainers, clothes pegs and quill pens, sharpens needles, and makes pretty little boxes, covering them and his books with 'extra fancy paper'. When Ann quits the household John takes care to have her boxes sent on to her; first carefully removing a 'special pin' of his mother's from one of them. He had also made Ann a velvet bag, and many young female friends appear to be in receipt of these trinkets, either as gifts or on commission.

The ladies often come up to his room to chat, do their knitting or needlework and keep him company in the evenings. They sometimes read aloud or sing for him, which he enjoys. His mother comes and sits with him quietly, sometimes dozing or at any rate not speaking. However, soon he has a new occupation:

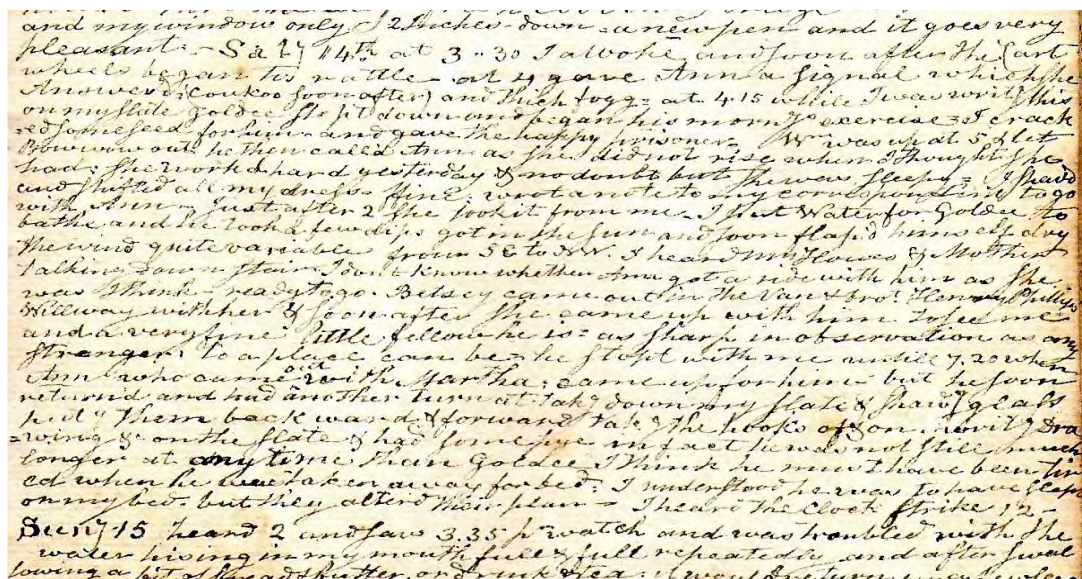
## 5. Henry Phillips Willway

On 14<sup>th</sup> April John's young cousin Henry Phillips Willway, aged 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, arrives with Betsey and his elder sister Martha 'in the Van'. He stays for several months, sleeping in John's room nestled in a corner by, or possibly in, a chest of drawers. Through wakeful nights John cares for him, and helps to dress him in the morning until he is taken away for meals and excursions. They keep stores of food and water in the room, sharing cake or bread & butter (br<sup>d</sup> & b<sup>r</sup>) with Goldee at all hours. Sometimes John watches Henry playing outside in the garden on the swing or at hide-and-seek with Ann and Betsey. The child seems to enjoy the sick sea-captain's company and John's life is clearly enriched by his laughter and lively enthusiasm.

Sa<sup>y</sup> 14<sup>th</sup>

at 3.30 I awoke and soon after the Cart wheels began to rattle at 4 gave Ann a signal which she Answerd = (cuckoo soon after) and thick fogg = at 4.15 while I was writ<sup>g</sup> this on my slate Goldee stepd down and began his morn<sup>g</sup>s exercise = I crackd some seed for him and gave the happy prisoner – Wm was up at 5 & let bowwow out. He then calld Ann as she did not rise when I thought she had = she work<sup>d</sup> hard yesterday & no doubt but she was sleep<sup>g</sup> = I shav<sup>d</sup> and shifted all my dress – Fine. Wrote a note to my correspondent to go with Ann – just after 2 she took it from me – I put water for Goldee to bathe and he took a few dips. got in the sun and soon flap'd himself dry. the wind quite variable from SE to NW. I heard Mr Flower & Mother talk<sup>g</sup> downstairs. I don't know whether Ann got a ride with him as she was I think ready to go. **Betsey came out in the Van & bro't Henry Phillips Willway with her & soon after she came up with him to see me and a very fine little fellow he is = as sharp in observation as any stranger to a place can be.**

The arrival of young Henry Phillips Willway, aged 3, on 14<sup>th</sup> May



and my window only I looked down a new post and it goes very pleasant - Sa<sup>y</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> at 3.30 I awoke and soon after the Cart wheels began to rattle at 4 gave Ann a signal which she Answerd = (cuckoo soon after) and thick fogg = at 4.15 while I was writ<sup>g</sup> this on my slate Goldee stepd down and began his morn<sup>g</sup>s exercise = I crackd some seed for him and gave the happy prisoner – Wm was up at 5 & let bowwow out. He then calld Ann as she did not rise when I thought she had = she work<sup>d</sup> hard yesterday & no doubt but she was sleep<sup>g</sup> = I shav<sup>d</sup> and shifted all my dress – Fine. Wrote a note to my correspondent to go with Ann – just after 2 she took it from me – I put water for Goldee to bathe and he took a few dips. got in the sun and soon flap'd himself dry. the wind quite variable from SE to NW. I heard Mr Flower & Mother talk<sup>g</sup> downstairs. I don't know whether Ann got a ride with him as she was I think ready to go. **Betsey came out in the Van & bro't Henry Phillips Willway with her & soon after she came up with him to see me and a very fine little fellow he is = as sharp in observation as any stranger to a place can be.** Ann who came with the Van, came up for him, but he soon returned and had another turn at taking down my slate & shav<sup>d</sup> & a bowl of water on the slate & had some eye in fact he would still much longer at any time than Goldee. I think he must have been tired when he was taken away for bed. I understand he was to have slept on my bed, but they alter their plan – The clock strikes 12. -  
Sun<sup>y</sup> 15 heard 2 and saw 3.35 p watch and was troubled with the water rising in my mouth full & full repeatedly and after swallowing a bit of bread & butter, or milk & tea. I want to return in a couple

The corresponding diary entry scan

From now on the diary reports on their daily activities, and a few days after Henry's arrival some young friends come for a party. We are carefully told they are Anne and Agnes Holmes, Millicent Taylor and Harriet Wilcox. Despite Henry's sensible sister Martha being there to 'keep them within bounds', they are 'enjoying themselves with high Glee' and after 6 o'clock 'since Tea they are in higher glee'. John watches from his window and then Betsey brings Agnes up to see him. But Bowwow comes too and jumps about, frightening the child. The Holmes girls lived at Homefield Cottage, near to St George's Vicarage just down the road; Agnes was about 4 and Anne about 7. They and their 3 brothers and sisters were the children of Elizabeth and Marcus Holmes, described as an Artist and a tenant of the Phillippses. Sadly both parents were dead by 1854, leaving a young family to shift for themselves.

As the excitement of the party suggests, Henry is a bit of a handful: after the first night he has to sleep in John's room, mainly so that he doesn't disturb Mother, and John sagely remarks that 'I am awake too early for him to disturb me for I think he will sleep sound after the continued exercise he takes all day. He gave Ann trouble enough to dress him with his fun'. Henry must have been very advanced for his young age however, for the very day he arrives he amuses John by *'tak<sup>d</sup> down my slate and and shav<sup>d</sup> glass put<sup>d</sup> them backward & forward tak<sup>d</sup> the hooks off & on, writ<sup>d</sup> & drawing on the slate and had some pye and in fact he was not still much longer at any time than Goldee.'* In a few short weeks he gets into terrible trouble for being rude to Mother and Betsey; he plays with John's things; he teases Bowwow, who promptly bites him on the cheek; at the party he hits Agnes Holmes on the neck with a stick that 'he was flourishing'; he loses his caps, frequently has to change his clothes, encourages Bowwow to pull at brushes and broom handles, and breaks the scythe stone. Some mornings John awakes early to find Henry reading his books or 'strutting about with a pair of my net drawers for trousers', but he also enjoys 'exercising himself on the furniture with a duster'. The pair of them take regular 'knaps'; sometimes together 'as it is easy work', but if Henry misses a meal he expects to catch up by having two when he wakes, and cheeks Mother about it.



Carte de Visite Photograph of a serious-looking adult Henry Phillips Willway, probably taken in the 1860s

Henry celebrates his 4<sup>th</sup> birthday on 25<sup>th</sup> May, but not until the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> does John finally receive a piece of Henry's cake - a day late but, as he acidly observes, '*better so than never*'. They were still enjoying this cake the following day; John finding that a taste of it was useful to bribe Henry out of being 'loath to rouse & dress'. This is a tactic frequently employed by John using a variety of sweet things to pacify the child, including 'half a jam cake' at 3.45 am on 11<sup>th</sup> July, after which Henry slept until 6 when he ate the other half. Hardly any wonder then that Henry was later 'complaining of his bowels'. The previous week Henry had been to the Holmes's for tea and must have 'overloaded his stomach with fruit & or I know not what else' as he was restless that night. The next day Henry feels sufficiently better to show off his 'new neat slippers' despite them being 'too small even without socks'. John is very thoughtful about Henry's clothes, mending them and replacing buttons as necessary, sorting out his shoelaces, helping him to dress and finding his caps for him. Henry's father comes to see him now and again, bringing him toys such as a little wagon with which to collect the weeds while his father did some gardening at the house. John is highly amused to hear that Betsey had taken Henry out and met Mrs J Emma, who's baby daughter had pushed Henry over while trying to kiss him – 'and she is not ½ his age'.

Goldee too gets all kind of treats, including beans, peas, potatoes 'and almost everything I do [eat]'. John takes great care of his bird, whom he regards as a particular friend; he thinks nothing of getting up to prepare his 'Bkft' in the early hours when necessary, consisting of seeds, nuts or bread-and-butter, with clean water. When the cage is in the window, a paper cover is used to shade Goldee from strong sun, and sometimes the cage is taken down to be hung in the tree so he can get some fresh air. In July, John notes that 'someone rung our doorbell at 2.15 am' but Bowwow did not take any notice. This put paid to sleep however and he was sharing 'good herrings and bread' with Goldee at 4.20.

Apart from the illness that keeps John in his room and his recurrent nausea and over-salivating, both he and Henry occasionally suffer from minor afflictions such as flea bites, itching skin, and toothache for which they have a 'bottle of stuff' or 'application'. Once he has discovered Seidlitz Powders John recommends it for anything and everything and cheerfully doles out doses to all who ail in his presence, including for Henry's stomach aches and Betsey's lumbago. He relies on people to bring him supplies, and carefully divides each dose into 3, keeping them in bottles to prevent damp. He says he is unable to take a whole dose at a time as it 'keeps coming back', so he takes it little and often.

This part of John's diary ends on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1842, reporting at midnight 'a manly voice singing for a long time'. We are urged to look to a 'large journal book' but alas it seems not to have survived.



## 6. John's 'visitors' – William Willway and his family

Various other members of young Henry's family drop in to the Phillips household from time to time, to chat and help out with errands and domestic chores. These two branches of the Willway family seem to be especially close. Young Henry's father William is a particular friend, although John roundly criticises him for 'giving up his evening lectures and class' that year. He was John's first cousin and seven years his junior, a silk dyer of 15 Christmas Street and other premises. William had married Hannah Jenkins in 1817, who seems to have come from previous generations of Bristol dyeing families. As 'Mrs Willway' she visits the Phillips's now and again, and several of her and William's ten other children (then living) either come to the house or are mentioned from time to time. William was born in 1790 and outlived John by nearly 20 years.

On William's death on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1864, the Rev W Rose penned a eulogy to be read at the Gideon Chapel on February 28<sup>th</sup>. In it we are told that William had turned to prayer following the sad death of his wife Hannah in 1852, when he had bewailed that '*My earthly prop is gone!*' In 1856 William was laid up for several weeks by an injured leg after a fall, during which time the Rev Rose persuaded William to 'leave off all stimulants' for a trial period. Success led to William signing the temperance pledge later that year, fully convinced of the advantages in terms of health, wealth, and spirit. His final illness started in the January of 1864 with much pain from rheumatic gout, which he eased through prayer, although he was convinced he would soon die. Acute bronchitis followed on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February, and he spent that night in earnest prayers for his dear children and beloved grandchildren, beseeching the Lord to '*bring them all to the Saviour, that we may all meet in heaven at last*'. This was his last utterance, and Rev Rose 'hastened to the chamber' on the Sunday morning for brief visit. William's daughters took turns to read prayers to him and Rev Rose reports that at 1 p.m. William cried '*I cling, I cling*' in response to a particularly poignant piece. The Reverend called round again in the afternoon but by then William was past speech. From then '*he sank rapidly, [and] about 4.30 his happy spirit took its flight*'.<sup>10</sup>



Elizabeth Tabitha Thomas née Willway

The eulogy reports William's family attending his bedside round the clock, including many of his 7 surviving children. All of these also visit our bedridden captain from time to time and are mentioned during the time of the diary. They are: Elizabeth Tabitha born 14<sup>th</sup> December 1816, John born 17<sup>th</sup> March 1818, Charles William born 1821 or 2, William Henry born 1823, Susannah born 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1825, Martha Sybilla born 4<sup>th</sup> August 1828, and of course Henry Phillips Willway - born 25<sup>th</sup> May 1838. There had been 4 other children; an earlier Susannah Ann (1819-1820), an earlier Henry (1826-1833), Matthew born 1829 and Mary Ann born 1833. The latter two are presumed to have died young also, and none of these four are mentioned by John. However we do get some happy accounts of the dutiful actions and attitude of all the others. The three girls grew to be handsome and formidable Victorian ladies, as later photographs show<sup>11</sup>.

Three photos were taken together, around the 1870s. Is the mourning dress for Aunt Pople?

<sup>10</sup> The Christian's Penny Magazine XIX 1864, pp 160-163

<sup>11</sup> Portraits of Elizabeth and Susannah: Michael Willway

At the time of John's diary Elizabeth Tabitha, then aged 25, was newly married to John Dermott Thomas, a chemist and druggist two years her senior. On May 28<sup>th</sup>, John added a 'line or two' to a letter Betsey was writing to J K Haberfield 'in behalf of our relative Mr Thomas for his Interest to get a situation for him in the Custom House'. Haberfield was the influential family solicitor, who had already twice been Mayor of Bristol, had witnessed the wills of both John and Sarah Phillips and would preside over Elizabeth Phillips's marriage to Josiah Pople. We don't know if John Thomas got the job, but by the 1851 census he and Elizabeth Tabitha had two daughters Elizabeth and Mary aged 8 and 4, and were living at 45 Ashley Building in the out-parish of St Paul. Later there would be two more children; Ellen and Darby Dermott. On Sunday May 29<sup>th</sup> Elizabeth Tabitha's brother William Henry (see below) brought John the text preached that day by the Rev G N Barrow, who had officiated at her marriage.

In 1842 Martha was 13 and late in 1859, at the age of 31, she married Thomas Essex a schoolmaster of 43. In 1861 they were living in Hackney but then moved to Malvern Wells before 1871, by which time a son Herbert J and a daughter Sybil Martha had arrived. During the next ten years Thomas died and Martha went back to Bristol as a widow with her 2 children, described in the 1881 census as 'land and house owner' at 30 Apsley Road Clifton. Her daughter Sybil was 18 but still a 'scholar', which is unusual for girls at this time. Sybil never married, and living Willway descendants remember being told about 'Aunt Essex' in their childhood. By 1891 however, aged 62, Martha was living without the children in Hampstead, with her nephew Frederick W Willway then a 23-year old medical student – of whom a bit more later. She seems to have developed a lifelong habit of employing or taking in family members: Mary the daughter of Elizabeth Tabitha was living with her as a 24 year old governess at Malvern in 1871, along with Hester Bartley Willway (then aged 13) another niece and daughter to Martha's brother John. In 1891 she has two servants, Maria Milsom (cook) and Lily Bush (parlourmaid); both these surnames crop up in the family tree and may have been relatives of some sort. In 1842 however, young Martha in particular is a regular visitor to the Phillips house, coming to see her little brother Henry and play with him in the garden. She seems to be delicate however, and several times John's diary reports his concern that she is or has been unwell for several days. <sup>12</sup>



Henry Phillips Willway in genial old age



Martha Sybilla Essex née Willway

<sup>12</sup> Portraits of Henry and Martha: Mary Ainsworth

Susannah (Susan) visits the Phillips's on May 1<sup>st</sup> - John notes this is her first visit since March 17<sup>th</sup> - and stays until Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>. She comes again on 29<sup>th</sup> June, bringing John 'a famous plate of beans' for his dinner, and shortly followed by her sister Mrs Thomas and their father, who 'pitched a few notes' on John's flute. A week later Susan stays over for a weekend, leaving on the Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July presumably in a rainstorm as John quips 'I think by water as it was flowing here after', leaving instructions for the making of 'a box the size of my bible when she finds some pasteboard'. Susannah, then aged 17, would be married to William George Sleeman five years later on 11th November 1847. She was present at the deathbeds of both John and Sarah in 1846/7, and registered both deaths. She had two sons, her first-born in 1849 being named John Willway Phillips Sleeman after our diarist. In 1851 a younger son William was named after her father and/or husband. This shows just how fondly the family regarded the Captain, and the prime position he occupied Susannah's affection. Susannah was widowed before 1876 and herself died in 1890 aged 65.



Susannah Sleeman née Willway

On 20<sup>th</sup> July all three girls call in to see John on their way to a Dorcas meeting, looking 'well tho clad in mourning' before being escorted away by their brother Charles William, aged 20, who back at the end of April had brought some 'neat and strong looking' shoes that he had made for Betsey. At the 1841 census Charles was listed as a bootmaker's apprentice living at home, but by 1847 he would be set up as a boot and shoe maker at 29 Christmas Street, very close to his father's premises at number 15. In the same year he married Sarah Neate, and five children are known; Frederick Hook Willway born 1848, Rosina Sybilla born 1849, Jessie born 1852 and Martha born 1856. Charles Edward born in 1854 died aged 9 months, and Charles senior himself died on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1856 in his mid-thirties. In the 1861 census his widow and children were living with her parents

William Henry, then 19, comes in occasionally, bringing religious texts as noted above and also corresponding with John on business matters. He became an accountant, married Matilda Clarke on Christmas Day 1849, and emigrated to New Zealand from Gravesend on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1860 with his wife and their 5 young daughters, as steerage passengers on the 1106-ton ship 'Caduceus'. After experiencing adverse trade winds and drift ice she arrived with a 'clean bill of health' and full complement of passengers (described intriguingly in the 'Southern Cross' newspaper as '130 ½') on 12<sup>th</sup> October. Many of William's descendants remain there today, in particular as Allisons and Sucklings. Historic local newspapers reveal from regular advertisements that William Henry was also a dyer and cleaner for many years, as well as continuing in accountancy. He was a credit to the family and a prominent member of society in various towns; notably at Onehunga in the 1860s where he joined the Band of Hope and Total Abstinence Association, and Hokitika in the 1870s, where he had premises in Bealey Street. He sold his business to a Mr Upjohn in 1879 and by the 1880s he appears to have moved on to Waikato, where he was accountant to a Mrs Watkins and testified at length against Thomas Hall in a famous murder case involving the poisoning of a Captain Cain.

William's eldest son John, aged 24, arrives in June to 'glaze a window' on an upper floor and from John's room young Henry recognises his brother's cough as he goes 'up higher'. Two days later he returns, to report that 'some Irishmen had kill'd a policeman on Sunday'. John would marry Hester Antrobus Bartley a year later and go on to raise 9 children of whom 6

survived to adulthood and have living descendants. Sad little deaths are reported by the Bristol Mercury; Frank Taylor, John's youngest son on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1853 aged 2 ¼, Frank Walcan (or Malcolm) on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1854 aged 8 months, and on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1863 Hannah Jemima aged 3 ½. It was John's youngest surviving daughter Hester who spent some time living with her aunt Martha as noted above. His great-grandson Michael, a retired Lt Col of the British Army, seems to be the last surviving male Willway in England. With two married daughters the name (in England at any rate), but not the blood-line, appears to end here.

Mischievous young Henry Phillips Willway later became a dyer like his father William, and married Elizabeth Ann Olive on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1866. Henry and Elizabeth enjoyed a long and loving marriage, celebrating their diamond wedding in 1926. Elizabeth died in 1928 and Henry followed his beloved in 1934 aged 94. Henry is remembered with great affection by his surviving descendants, including his grand-daughter and great-grand-daughter. They report that he was beloved by all who knew him and that he never lost his loving and sunny disposition that the diary shows. He followed his father's example in the Temperance movement and although he had been baptised at the parish church of St Philip and St Jacob in Bristol was a member of the Methodist Free Church. He was made a Burgess of the City of Bristol and was well-known in his community. During their long and happy lives Henry and Elizabeth raised 7 children of whom 5 survived, and the youngest was Margaret Irene (Margie), born in December 1882 when her mother was 39. Margie was noted for her beauty and in 1906 she married her first cousin Reginald William Ainsworth, the son of Lydia Lucy née Willway, who was a grand-daughter of William Willway's brother James; also a Bristol dyer, about whom more will be given below.



Henry Phillips Willway



Margie



Margie, 1887

Despite the family's unquestionable charity and piety, there must at some stage have been some split or rivalry between these two branches. Bristol trade directories between 1827 and 1843 regularly show advertisements by both firms stating that they '*beg to observe they have no connections with any other Dyer in Bristol*'. Neither the cause of this rift nor its resolution is known, but the marriage between Margaret and Reginald brought the two elements back together. Their youngest daughter Rosemary is alive today and has shared her memories of her grandfather and parents, and other family members. A large number of photographs has also survived, some of which are reproduced in this piece.



Henry Phillips Willway and his wife Elizabeth in later years; his youthful love of cake appears not to have diminished

Many of Henry's descendants have been notable achievers, particularly in the field of medicine. In 1891 Margaret's brother Frederick William (born Christmas Day 1867) was living at 3 Ornan Road, Hampstead with his Aunt Martha Sybilla (or Sybil) while a medical student. After qualifying a year later, aged 24 he met Dr Grenfell, recently returned from St John, Newfoundland - which had been destroyed by fire. Dr Grenfell was extremely concerned about British ignorance of the poor health and living conditions of settlers on the Labrador coast who provided cod for English markets. He determined to establish 2 mission hospitals for deep sea fishermen: at Battle Harbour by the Straits of Belle Isle, and at Indian Harbour, an island settlement at the mouth of Hamilton Inlet or Grossewater Bay.



Captain Trezise and the crew of the *Albert*, en route for Labrador, 1894

Grenfell appointed Frederick Willway as his Medical Missionary for Indian Harbour, who set off with a team of colleagues, including two nurses, from Swansea in June 1894. They crossed the Atlantic in the 'Mission Smack' *Albert* under Captain Trezise, experiencing 'every sort of weather' and much seasickness. Caught fast by arctic pack ice, they spent several days of hardship trying to find a way around it. They strayed off-course some way to the north but finally managed to smash through the ice and head for harbour. After being further hampered by fog they eventually made land, to be greeted by gunfire and a rapturous welcome at Battle Harbour. The team worked tirelessly to set up the Indian Harbour hospital, building it by hand with scant resources. The work included successfully saving the building from a fire during construction, and Dr Willway has left a vivid account of his great adventures in an article in the mission periodical 'Toilers of the Deep'.<sup>13</sup>



Dr F W Willway and Ellie

Frederick survived and returned safely to England and in the summer of 1898 he married Indian-born Ellie Marion Channing, at Hampstead. She was the daughter of Francis Chorley Channing, a Somerset Solicitor working as a District Commissioner in the Punjab. In 1901 Frederick and Ellie had moved from Hampstead to 6 Orwell Road Grimsby, with their baby son Frederick Julian, born a year earlier. Sadly Ellie died at Grimsby in the summer of 1902 at the age of 29.

Dr Frederick's second wife was Margaret, and more children followed in due course. Alison Margaret was born at the end of 1905, and Francis Wilfred, the young boy on the right of this 1914 Christmas family portrait, was born in the autumn of 1907. He would later become a pioneer brain surgeon, involved in treating mentally sick people in Gloucester and Bristol hospitals. He also wrote many articles for the *British Medical Journal*, including notably one on how best to send medical assistance to bombed towns during the blitz. He suggested that a rapid response team on standby alert was key to saving lives; a paramedic concept now regarded as essential, but less credited at the time (*BMJ* 7.11.1942 pp 552-554). A fourth child, Harold Phillips Willway, was born a year later but died in the spring of 1910. In 1937 Dr Frederick and his wife Margaret, then aged 69 and 61, landed at Southampton on the SS 'Indrapoera', from Soura Bay, Indonesia. Their voyage had taken them via Batavia, Singapore, Columbo, Port Said, Tangier, Marseilles, Gibraltar and Lisbon. They appear to have broken their journey at Tangier.



Dr F W Willway and family, Christmas 1914

Frederick's sister Olive M Willway born 14<sup>th</sup> April 1870 married Fred Fisher in 1890 and produced 5 children. There are living descendants who remember Henry P Willway, some of whom are in Australia. Of Henry's other children, Frederick's brothers were Henry Hayes born 17<sup>th</sup> October 1866, and Alfred Ernest born 4<sup>th</sup> January 1869. Two more boys George and Frank had both died in infancy. Henry (Harry) emigrated to Canada in 1887, to become

<sup>13</sup> Document: Mary Ainsworth

a farmer in Saltcoats, Saskatchewan. He married Annetta, another immigrant who had arrived in Canada two years earlier. Eight children are known of, born in very quick succession between 1894 and 1909. Henry's brother Ernest also emigrated to Saltcoats Saskatchewan, in 1912. His wife was Ester, but only one child was born, Frederick in 1909.



Henry Hayes (Harry) Willway



Alfred Ernest Willway

John Phillips's notebook also contains the drafts of two letters to 'my dear William', little Henry's father. Although somewhat rambling, these letters are enlightening as to John's concerns and some of William's hobbies and activities. The first is dated May 14<sup>th</sup> 1842 ('next after Old May Day'), and starts by thanking William for supplying paper. John hopes William has 'recovered from the effects of riding' and suggests he take lessons from some experienced friend. When he is proficient, William should be able to 'ride 20 or so miles with more ease than you can now 3 or 4'. John gets a little dig in by mentioning again his regret that William has given up his lectures for the summer, but acknowledges he will therefore have plenty of time for exploring the countryside. It seems William is also learning to sing, as John expresses a wish to hear 'your parties vocal performance which was always a great treat to me as well as instrumental music'. John hopes to see 'our young visitors' – presumably William's children - before long. He goes on to describe how fascinating the country is from his window (when there is no fog), concluding with a hope that William will find time to visit soon ('you will be allowed some holy days I suppose').

The second letter is dated 28<sup>th</sup> May, and acknowledged receipt of William's reply of the 21<sup>st</sup>. It seems William is spending a virtuous holiday at Marshfield 'teaching and doing good' to some poor colliers' children – 'an undertaking that should not be trifled with'. Marshfield is about 10 miles east of Bristol along the A420 'London Road' towards Chippenham, and John hopes William enjoyed the ride. He thinks such exercise is healthy, provided 'care is taken after being heated – not to stand or sit in Draughts of windows & doors', and again exhorts William to 'practice the art of Equestrianism' so he may ride without fatigue. The diary entry for the 27<sup>th</sup> April expresses John's concern for 'that Equestrian W<sup>m</sup> Will' who has called in on his return from somewhere looking 'well scorch'd with ☉'. John recommends he should wear a white hat and is clearly worried that William lacks basic common sense. In the letter, John also mentions a recent trip to Tintern made by William's son Charles and a party of friends, observing that they 'had a pleasant time as it does not app<sup>r</sup> they had cause to hurry through the Scene'. After making some arrangement for borrowing some of William's books, John remarks that it is 7 am and young Henry is stirring awake, to receive the kiss sent by his

father and send thanks 'for think<sup>g</sup> so kindly of him so far away as he is from you'. John closes with 'Wish you all well I rem<sup>n</sup> y<sup>rs</sup> JWP'.



Hannah Willway, née Jenkins



William Willway, 1860s

Speculation is irresistible as to whether William's fall ten years later in 1852, which was commented on by the Rev Rose in his eulogy, had something to do with his apparent lack of horsemanship skills and judgement in appropriate sun wear. If so, then William probably failed to follow his cousin's advice on these matters or indeed on the dangers of standing about in draughts. The close friendship between these two men is clear, as is John's affection for little Henry who may well have taken after his adventurous father.



Henry and family on holiday, Newquay

## 7. Other notable Bristol relatives

The Willways were a deeply religious family, attending chapel and supporting each other in many charitable and spiritual ways. Considerable detail is now known of the lives of various other family members, some of which are given here to help put John Phillips's diary and life into context. We have seen that John's cousins William and James were the sons of John Willway and Susannah née Sweet, and grandsons of Thomas and Betty who first brought the Willway name to Bristol. James became a master dyer with premises in Denmark Street, and in January 1822 he married Mary Gilbert Cock, daughter of William Cock. William Cock lived at Hillgrove Street and was a noted Bristol cabinet maker who claimed to have invented the 'folding camp writing desk'. He journeyed to America to collect mahogany, and family legends claim that while there he presented examples of his work to George Washington, and possibly other top brass. Also in America he re-married after the death of his first wife Betty during the trans-Atlantic voyage. Between 1774 and 1802 the two wives produced at least 17 children, of which Mary Gilbert was the youngest. One of her brothers was Henry Cock, another Bristol sea captain, reputed to have served under Nelson. Another brother was Josiah, who had a number of trades including cabinet-making, who later settled in Swansea as a grocer and property dealer. Josiah has living descendants. William lived to be 92, dying on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1843. Two portraits of him in old age exist, one of them held by Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. As well as desks, William made exquisite mahogany cases for grandfather clocks. He also made robust folding writing desk that belonged to Captain John Willway Phillips (his name is inlaid in brass on the top). This is the desk that the Captain's sister Betsey bequeathed to Henry Phillips Willway in 1877. It has survived and remains in the family, along with a Cock mahogany long-case clock.



Captain J W Phillips' Cock 'folding camp writing desk',



William Cock's business label.

James and William's father John Willway had died in 1825, after which Susannah and her son James continued the dying business at Denmark Street and advertised themselves as 'S & J Willway', in competition with her other son William at Christmas Street. Susannah died in 1835 and the wills of both John and Susannah are held at Bristol Record Office. Susannah's will in particular is very full and gives considerable insight on family members and the possessions and property held. She leaves the income from various properties to her daughter Elizabeth, wife of Henry Pallin a Bristol Solicitor, taking care to ensure that she should have sole control and that on her death her children would inherit, not her husband. Susannah also left a long list of clothes, furniture and other items to Elizabeth, including 'one painting the likeness of her father' (what happened to it?). To William, the father of our little Henry and the other young people mentioned in the diary, she leaves a freehold dwelling in Bath and 'one painting a Sea Storm by Robert Chapman and a Silver Tablespoon marked J.S.W.' along with other money and property. William's eldest son John is to inherit her watch. To James she leaves her dyeworks and business including the freehold premises in

Denmark Street, on condition that James ‘maintains and supports my son George during the term of his natural life in a suitable and brotherly manner’. She also leaves James the remainder of her domestic possessions and cash, provided he purchases an annuity to support her other son Thomas. One quarter of her residual property is to produce income for James with which to provide for George’s upkeep – suggesting that George was an invalid of some kind, or certainly in need of care, and Thomas also appears to have needed support. William was born in 1791, James in 1793 and Elizabeth in 1795, so these last two are unlikely to have been born much after 1800. Therefore by their mother’s death in 1835 they must have been adults.



The closed desk with ‘J W Phillips’ on the brass lid plate



A William Cock clock case



William Cock, cabinet maker (1751 – 1843)

James and Mary produced 5 children; Mary Henrietta died age one, but the other four reached adulthood. Only a little is known about the short life of the youngest child Mary Elizabeth (1841-1869). She married Frederick Gover Powell in 1864 and two daughters were born; Minnie in 1865 and Lydia in 1866. Fred re-married, had 5 more children, and survived until 1899 however; the eldest two girls attended his funeral at Arnos Vale in Bristol, Minnie (an artist) summoned in haste from Paris. Fred, like John Phillips, was a master mariner and had served on the ‘Morning Star’ with Captain Allen, going on to the White Star Line and the Royal Cape Mail Service. Also leaving the sea after an illness, he survived and became Bristol agent for Jamieson & Pim of Dublin (spirits), proprietor of Hutchings vinegar brewery and a prominent Freemason. He loved theatre, and collaborated with his brother Rennie in writing drama, their works being nationally acclaimed.



Probably Mary Elizabeth Willway (1841-69)  
Married Frederick Gover Powell



Tabitha Willway (1822-63)  
Married William Morrison Jack

By contrast, Mary Elizabeth's brother John Sweet Willway (born August 1826) was the longest-lived, surviving until May 1914 when he was in his late 80s. He had various trades and technological interests including being an ironmonger, engineer, gasfitter, and agent for the 'Wheeler-Wilson noted lockstitch sewing machine' at premises in St Augustines Parade. He worked at the cutting edge of the new gas and electrical technology. He was a great experimenter and invented 'atmospheric electric bells' (for doorbells and summoning servants) and pneumatic fountains for gardens. Like his relatives he spurned alcohol, and the Bristol Temperance Herald reported in 1854 that the 'useful and venerable' Mrs Carlisle, after 'a period of twelve weeks devoted and successful labour in this city' had taken her departure back to Dublin. The occasion was marked by 'special addresses, recitations and melodies' including Mr Willway who 'kindly exhibited some valuable apparatus for cooking etc by gas'.<sup>14</sup> The programme was instigated by the same Rev Rose of the Gideon Chapel who a few years later would minister to William during his illnesses between 1859 and 1865. In 1857 John Sweet Willway patented an 'improved apparatus to act as a gas valve' which involved mercury and India-rubber<sup>15</sup>. This improved valve featured in an exhibition of inventions at the Society of Arts, and was reported in April 1858<sup>16</sup>. In November of the same year 'Willway's Patent Apparatus for Ringing Bells' was described in intricate and baffling detail<sup>17</sup>. Throughout the 1860s the directories describe him as 'gasfitter and cooking apparatus mfr' at 16 and 17 St Augustines Parade, but by 1904 he had added 'electrical engineers and cycle agent' to his list of skills. He was briefly married to Ann Healey, who presumably died soon after, because he then married Sarah Bush in 1850 and the couple produce five known children. His two sons Alfred and Herbert joined the business but Alfred died in 1912. Herbert continued however and by the 1920s was advertising as 'motor and electrical engineers, cars for hire, tyres'. There is a family grave at Shirehampton cemetery.

<sup>14</sup> Bristol Temperance Herald August 1854, p 121.

<sup>15</sup> Mechanics Magazine April 10<sup>th</sup> 1858.

<sup>16</sup> Patent Abridgements Publ October 1860.

<sup>17</sup> Mechanics Magazine November 12<sup>th</sup> 1858, p 466/7.

James and Mary's first child was John Sweet's elder sister Tabitha, born in 1822. She married William Morrison Jack in January 1848, the fourth of eight children of the Rev John Jack (1797-1863), a Scots Independent minister who had travelled across Russia as a protestant missionary to the Muslim ('Mohammedans') Cossacks, Tartars and 'Circassians' in the 1820s with his family.



William Morrison Jack (1824–1881)



Tabitha Willway, (1822–1863) 'The Belle of Bristol'

The Reverend Jack stayed at what was then known as Karass for several years with his wife Elizabeth, a Scottish and German mission station high in the Caucasus mountains close to the border with Georgia. It is now a district of Georgiyevsk, near Pyatigorsk. Some of Rev Jack's exploits were related by Robert Lyall in a travel book after meeting John Jack on one of his expeditions<sup>18</sup>. During this time, Elizabeth Jack bore three children. The eldest, Adam, was born at Astrakhan and two daughters at Karass. Then in 1823 Czar Alexander I, under pressure from the Orthodox Church, took steps to expel western missionaries and the family found themselves having to travel right across Russia from Siberia to escape. Their exact route is not known; they might have got to the Black Sea coast and then by ship to Istanbul and the Mediterranean. However they were heading for home in Scotland, suggesting a likely overland mule trek via Moscow to St Petersburg – no trains at that time. From there they may have boarded a ship bound for Scandinavia. Whichever route was taken would have been extremely arduous for a pregnant wife with young children at the beginning of the Arctic winter.

Nonetheless, William Morrison Jack was safely born in December 1824, near Bergen in Norway, where the family was forced to overwinter on the long journey home, due to bad weather. They finally landed safely at Leith, but the Rev John Jack's calling soon took him and his family to London. He preached to the poor at Acre Lane Independent Chapel, Clapham from 1826 to 1834, before settling down as minister at Castle Green chapel in Bristol from 1834 until 1856 or 7. During this period he was extremely active on the chapel circuit, and barely a week passed without some report of his energetic works in the Bristol Mercury. Among his many interests he was a fervent promoter of the Sunday School movement for Bristol's poor children, an active anti-slavery protestor, and member of many virtuous committees. He laid the foundation stones of a number of new chapels, during this period of rapid industrial and population expansion, and accompanying deprivation and squalor. He preached tirelessly for temperance and abstinence. He officiated at the

<sup>18</sup> Lyall R, Cadell 1825, 'Travels in Russia, the Krimea, The Caucasus', Volume 1, chapter X

marriage of William and Tabitha, and baptised several of their children, in Bristol and Newport, where William started his career as a hatter and cap maker with a shop at 6 Commercial Street.

One of William and Tabitha's many children, Frederick Augustus, moved to London as a young man. In 1881 he was staying in Islington with his cousin Arthur Frederick (son of Adam Jack, a Bristol iron man, born at Astrakhan), and found work in a ladies fashion warehouse. In London he married Esther Pembruge Langston, of the very ancient Herefordshire Pembruge family, directly traceable back to the Norman conquest. This family formed a powerful dynasty in medieval times and included several Knights of the Garter. Frederick and Esther produced three daughters; the youngest Winifred, born October 4<sup>th</sup> 1900, married Bernard William Gill at Uxbridge on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1921, just one month after her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Bernard ('Birdie') was a young chemist from Nottingham who had fought bravely in the Army Medical Corps at the battle of Suvla Bay in Gallipoli in 1915. Bernard was a natural writer and has left an account of his experiences of the Great War. He and Winifred, always known as 'Toby' celebrated their Diamond Wedding in 1981 and both lived into their 90s.



F A Jack and family, pre-1900

Their daughter Mary has two daughters and now 5 grandchildren, and their son Michael was an artist and talented jazz musician/band leader in the 'Revivalist' period of British Jazz during the 1950s, but sadly he died in 1987. Michael had two sons and a daughter Deborah – the author of this piece.

Tabitha's other brother, James (1824-1860) was named after his father and was also a master dyer. He apparently had concerns over his sister's intentions to marry William Jack. In a fragment from his journal he notes on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May 1845 that he has received a letter from 'Tab' containing a note to her from William. She wants James's views on it as it is a 'declaration of love and a wish to be admitted as a suitor'. It is not clear why she seeks comments from James rather than her father but as they were close in age perhaps they enjoyed a good rapport. James observes that he 'admires [William's] candour and respects him as an individual' but he is not so sure about his material prospects. However, if Tab likes him then he would not interfere, remembering the maxim of his old friend Miss Tubb that 'money may be spent but industry cannot'. James then reveals his real anxiety: he says that the [Jack] family may 'look down from the eminence of station upon us', but he considers it would be the Willways taking the step down, or at least sideways 'although composed of different materials'<sup>19</sup>.

The Jack's reputation is seemingly built on 'superior intelligence' and spirituality rather than wealth, whereas the Willway's standing is built on prosperity 'by industry and frugality'. It would appear therefore that Tabitha and William's union was a meeting of mind and money, and in the event it paid off. William Jack proved himself hardworking and diligent as well as intelligent and caring. He was his father's son, and carried on the chapel and missionary

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<sup>19</sup> Brian Wates

work tirelessly, being a deacon of Highbury Chapel and secretary of the Bristol branch of the London Missionary Society. On his death in 1881, by now a prosperous man with a comfortable house in Park Street, the Bristol Mercury printed a long account of his funeral which glowingly praised his dedication, describing him as 'of immense energy and strength of character without being harsh, hard, or overbearing'. As a mark of recognition his fellow deacons requested that they be permitted to bear the cost of his funeral<sup>20</sup>. It seems William was as gentle and kind as his portrait suggests.

Despite his fretting, James must have already known the Jack family well enough, because exactly a month before receiving Tabitha's letter, he had written to Castle Green Chapel with a request to join their membership while the Rev John Jack was minister. It is of course possible that this is how Tabitha and William met; if so then James had some responsibility in the matter and this might explain Tabitha's application for advice from her younger brother. James was duly accepted, and preached his first sermon on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1846. He married Sarah Wallace in early 1847 and the couple lived in Bath where their daughter Emma Wallace Willway was born in May 1848. Sarah died in January of the following year however, but by November of the same year James had married again, to Lucy Hannah Davis then aged 17. There are unsubstantiated hints at some romantic connection between James and Lucy before Sarah's death, and varying accounts of the manner of their first meeting. However the full story may never be known, nor the fate of young Emma. James and Lucy Hannah ran the dyeworks in Bath, and the story of them and their children has been told elsewhere by Brian Wates, one of Lucy's descendants. Her daughter Lydia Lucy married William J Ainsworth in 1881. It was her son Reginald (1852 – 1926) who married his cousin Margaret Irene Willway and continued the Willway line if not the name. Reginald's sister Lucy married George L Wates and was Brian's grandmother.



*Champion of the Seas;*  
she carried James to Australia in 1860<sup>21</sup>



James William Cock Willway (1842-60)  
with (possibly) Lydia Lucy

<sup>20</sup> Bristol Mercury, Thursday November 17 1881 (British Library)

<sup>21</sup> Chase M E, 1959, *Donald McKay and the Clipper Ships* Houghton Mifflin Company Boston, /The Riverside Press Cambridge

By 1853 however, poor James had contracted tuberculosis. With failing health he agreed to travel to Australia with Lucy's sister Sarah and her husband Ezra Goulter, in the hope of curing himself. In March 1860 they sailed on a famous McKay clipper of the Black Ball line the 'Champion of the Seas', arriving in Melbourne in the September, but his condition deteriorated and he determined to go on to Sydney. Unfortunately James died on board ship on 8<sup>th</sup> November and strangely, due to some misunderstanding, he was buried in the Jewish cemetery, the secretary of the Sydney synagogue writing to his father to inform him of the death<sup>22</sup>. On hearing of this tragedy, his sister Tabitha Jack wrote what was clearly intended to be a spiritually comforting letter to Lucy, containing a string of stirring biblical quotes. Lucy Hannah, who was then still under 30, lived on for another 45 years until 1905. Her family and descendants, along with the Jacks, have thoughtfully kept a large number of photographs, memorabilia and affectionate accounts of their relatives' lives.

This material has been extremely important in providing colour and interest to this family history. Of particular interest is the points at which the stories of the various strands of the Willways' world overlap and corroborate what might otherwise be disregarded as apocryphal. For example, the assortment of vague stories about Captain Phillips, the different people involved, and the connections with the Jack family through marriage, the dyeing business, abstinence and chapel. This account brings these primary sources together into a coherent account of a large and prosperous family, who travelled the world and fortunately valued photographs and memories.

Captain Phillips' diary is a brief remnant; he suggests that there was an earlier and a later journal but unfortunately these do not seem to have survived. Nevertheless, he packs a host of daily detail into these few pages, giving an entertaining and intimate insight into the handsome face that gazes out from his portrait, and the circumstances of his life. It is hoped that more will still be found out, about him, his life, and ultimately the nature of the affliction he suffered from - and which presumably ended his life, only four years later.

The diary, though virtually unreadable, has been carefully kept by the descendants of Henry Phillips Willway, marking the time he stayed with his uncle John Phillips as a child; thanks are due to them and to the memory of John for letting us 'peep' (as he would say) into a tantalising fragment of his life. As this piece demonstrates, the simple fortuitous preservation of a short account of an episode in one person's life has inspired further research. This has produced a huge amount of detail which brings to life the *dramatis personae* of an ever-expanding family tree.

All the new relatives I have met in the course of this work are now much valued. In particular, the following people have been more than generous with their time, memories and archives:

Mary Ainsworth  
Michael and Yvonne Willway  
Alison Bishop  
Rosemary Jones née Ainsworth  
Brian Wates

**Deborah Klein, Pembridge, Herefordshire, 2009**

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<sup>22</sup> Wates B A, 2005

February 16<sup>th</sup> 1842 this book was brought  
to me from among my papers bei-  
ng in want of such a thing to copy  
things in for my paper. Three &

4  
14  
20  
2  
F) April 7<sup>th</sup> Continued from The small books & very neat short  
brass tube pen holder which I fit in a quill Turkish pen,  
and find it work very pleasant. Betsey bro't a lot of turkeys for  
me to mend. as she prefers the quill pen to any other sort  
at the same time and were (talking about 82<sup>nd</sup> 83<sup>rd</sup> 84<sup>th</sup> 85<sup>th</sup> 86<sup>th</sup> 87<sup>th</sup> 88<sup>th</sup> 89<sup>th</sup> 90<sup>th</sup> 91<sup>st</sup>)  
up till after 10<sup>th</sup> evening. Even I could not find any reason to  
would blame her for (during the summer months)  
Fri 8<sup>th</sup> light SE 8<sup>th</sup> bro' Bkft and FT. a warm & springy  
morning. The clouds in opp<sup>n</sup> and my goldie being beauti-  
fully. Betsey came in with some flax for me to spin. I  
Am bro't tea early & said she was going to town instead of Sat<sup>y</sup>. I have  
been just the first in the middle of old spin before for 3<sup>rd</sup> time  
other heavy drops - I turned out and worked my head steady  
Close at the head wall with the exception of 3<sup>rd</sup> of an inch  
on one side which I observed when I returned to it and got 8<sup>th</sup>  
to complete it when he came in some time after. My  
get on the opp<sup>n</sup> side. I slept better for my days exertion  
Sat 9<sup>th</sup> knoeked at 5<sup>th</sup> for order. 8<sup>th</sup> bro' Bkft & rather the flax  
of it. he told me when he bro't Bkft and had been for the want  
at 7<sup>th</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> and I saw a man milking soon after in the road  
wrote and sent a short note by return. 8<sup>th</sup> bro' Bkft  
mended a half doz pens for Betsey - after dinner I took  
them away & strong put water for Goldie to bathe - had my  
window open. The air was very fresh. I returned in  
time to bring my tea and W<sup>m</sup> bro' a decanter of water - as a  
stand by to help out the hobble and supply Goldie without trouble  
any one else.  
Sun 10<sup>th</sup> light SE and a beautiful clear morning. I came for the  
writer - W<sup>m</sup> with Bkft. The flowers in my window are open  
ing most rapidly. The ☉ is very powerful after  
a long time. Through the glass I could see  
but from this time it will be up most of the day  
unless rain beat in prevent it.  
Mon 11<sup>th</sup> D. fine. Get too at 5-30 - to make the most  
of the weather gave Goldie Bkft - & then  
apple at 7.30 - Mother bro' Bkft & Ann FT. Had a paper  
in the Mirror and just before 4<sup>th</sup> Mrs. M<sup>rs</sup> away came to see me  
for a few minutes - Martha & Henry she said had been poorly & all  
the rest of the family were well. cloudy Evng.  
Tue 12<sup>th</sup> Easty strong. The dust flying high. After dinner for this day  
and bro' Bkft. Betsey the Mercury of the 2<sup>nd</sup> set in my dinner  
she had been to town & observed stars all night from my sight  
& 13 light SE & cloud & Ann bro' Bkft & first app<sup>n</sup> this  
morning of anyone. 20-9 - my pot - horse flowers are put  
forth with astonishing rapidity. 20-9 - Mother called in  
to see all was going well. It has been a cold day

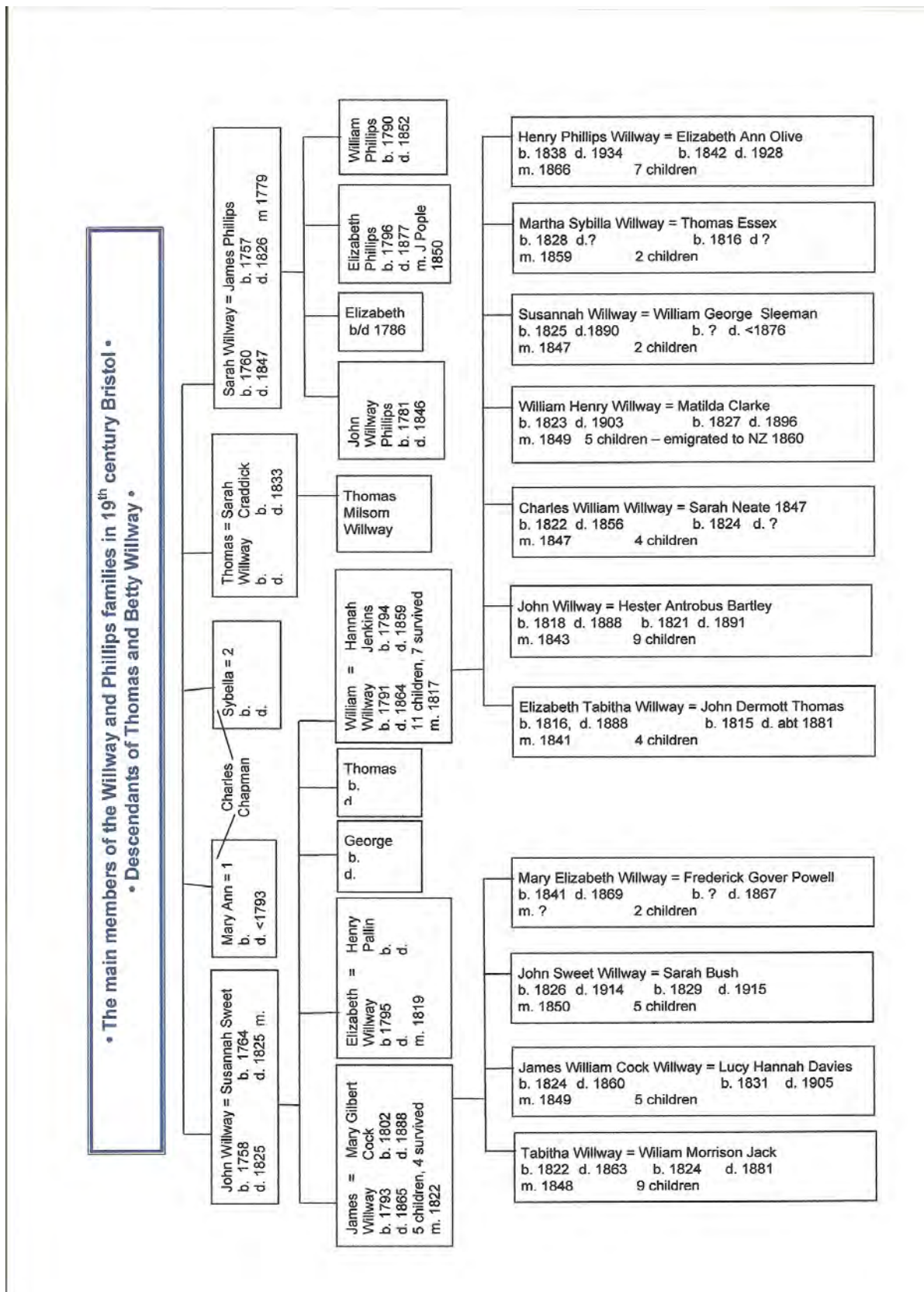
First page of Captain Phillips' diary

## 8. Time-line and Family Tree

### (a) The Phillips Household 1750s-1880s

<i>YEAR</i>	<i>WHO</i>	<i>WHAT</i>
1757 abt	James Phillips	Born
1760 abt	Sarah Willway	Born
1779	Sarah Willway & James Phillips	Married 6 <sup>th</sup> Nov, St George, Bristol
1781	Betty Willway	Inherited St George properties from a friend
1783	John Willway Phillips	Born. Bapt St George 5 <sup>th</sup> October.
1786	Elizabeth Phillips 1	Bapt 28 <sup>th</sup> May. Bur 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct. æ 6 <sup>mths</sup> - St George
1796	Elizabeth Phillips 2	Born. Bapt St George 31 <sup>st</sup> July.
1790	William Phillips	Born. Bapt St George 4 <sup>th</sup> July.
1796	Betty Willway	Died: Properties inherited by her children
1798	James Phillips	Bought out shares in the property from Sarah's siblings for £42.
1799 abt	Josiah Pople	Born
1826	James phillips	Died 6 <sup>th</sup> July æ 69
1829	John W Phillips	Codicil to will
1834	Sarah Willway, widow	Died: Sarah, John and William were legatees.
1839	John W Phillips	Retired from the sea, fell ill, made last will, living briefly at 10 Thrissell St
1841	Phillips family: Sarah, John, Elizabeth, William	Census, Bath Rd, St George
1842	Tithe Map	Property ownership, Clouds Hill, St George
1842	John W Phillips	Diary 7 <sup>th</sup> April – 22 <sup>nd</sup> July
1842	Henry Phillips Willway	Arrives to stay on 14 <sup>th</sup> April
1842	Ann Simmons, servant	Leaves the Phillips's house
1846	John W Phillips	Died 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec æ 62; bur 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec St George.
1847	Sarah Phillips	Died 13 <sup>th</sup> Jan æ 87; bur 20 <sup>th</sup> Jan St George.
1847	Elizabeth Phillips	Inherited estate, put Clouds Hill properties on the market – adverts July/August
1847	Josiah Pople	Bought the Clouds Hill properties
1850	Elizabeth Phillips & Josiah Pople	Married 3 <sup>rd</sup> January at St George parish church, bride given away by J K Haberfield, Solicitor and Mayor of Bristol
1851	Josiah Pople's household	Census Cloudshill House, Josiah Pople, William Phillips – brother in law; Mrs Pople not present.
1852	William Phillips	Died 23 <sup>rd</sup> December æ 61
1861	Josiah Pople	Census 1 Cloudshill Villas, married, Mrs Pople again not present.
1877	Elizabeth Pople	Died æ 80; bur 13 <sup>th</sup> Jun St George.
1881	Josiah Pople	Died March quarter æ 82
1881	Bristol Mercury	7 <sup>th</sup> July, advertised sale of the property after Josiah Pople's death
By 1883	Dr Barton	Living at Cloudshill House

## (b) Family Tree – descendants of Thomas and Betty



## 9. Captain John Willway Phillips and his ships



We know from at least three sources that John Phillips was a Master Mariner, and captain of a merchant ship; a position he would have reached after serving a long apprenticeship, firstly through training and then through experience as a chief officer or First Mate under another captain. By 1829, the year in which Phillips is first mentioned, he will have served on board a number of other ships, including some that he may have commanded but of which at present we have no record. Until we know their names, these are invisible to us in the earlier Lloyd's Registers of Shipping, compiled as reference for the benefit of the underwriters who insured the vessels.

John Phillips is known to have commanded at least two ships, the *Britannia*, and the *Victor*. In the Lloyd's Register published early in 1829, a new Bristol-built ship, the *Britannia*, appears for the first time. The entry is printed in the supplement at the end, indicating that the information had come in only shortly before the volume went to press. Divided into a number of columns and two lines, it can be interpreted as follows. The top line reads: **31** (the entry number); **Britannia S** (her name, the S denoting she was a ship, i.e. square rigged); **Phillips** (her master's name); **411** (her weight in tons); **Bristol** (her home port); **N** (she is new); **Daniel & S** (her owners, Daniel and Son); **18** (her draught in feet); **Br Barbados** (she was surveyed at Bristol, and is bound for Barbados); **A1** (her condition at survey - first class status). On the line below are a number of symbols, indicating that her bottom had been sheathed in copper from new, not only to resist marine worm and growth but to increase her speed; that she had a single deck with beams, and a deep waist; that her hold was lined with pine planking known as "ceiling"; and that knees and standards, angled components that held her frame together, were made of iron. She also had three "proved" iron bower anchor chains.

This information confirms that *Britannia* was a brand-new ship, of up-to-the-minute composite construction in that she was built partly of wood and iron; and her unique tonnage of 411 tons, among the sixty-three other ships bearing the same name, enables us to trace her in subsequent Lloyd's registers. Captain Phillips continued as her master in the registers for 1830 and 1831, but in the 1832 register another name is placed beneath his - Davenhill –

and this was to be her next master until 1838/39. It is not until the register for 1834 that John Phillips' next command is listed, the Victor. She was a slightly smaller ship than Britannia, although also a square-rigger, and had been newly built at Bristol in 1833. Early register entries are brief, giving only her master's name, her tonnage, and her home port of Bristol. Even her tonnage is misprinted as 238, when it should have read 338. We know from Phillips' note book, which is where the two first voyages of the Victor were logged, that she sailed on her maiden voyage for Mauritius on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 1833, leaving for home again on the 17<sup>th</sup> November. John Phillips was still listed as her master in June of 1838, but in the supplement to the Register for 1839/40 the Victor had been transferred to the new home port of London, sailing for India, and her master was now named as Ridley, who also appears to have been her new owner. This therefore may have marked John Phillips' retirement from seafaring because his Will, made in February 1839, speaks of him as then being a "Gentleman and late Master Mariner of the Ship Britannia [sic] of and belonging to the port of Bristol". Why only the Britannia should be mentioned here is puzzling, as his last recorded command was certainly the Victor.

Search of the daily "Ship News" in the Times newspaper adds a little to our knowledge of the voyages of the Victor during Phillips' time as captain. One should remember that news from distant ports was quite often printed in the Times some two months after the event, as no undersea telegraph cables yet existed, and the information could therefore only come via another returning ship. Ship-owners and underwriters would nevertheless carefully check through these reports on a daily basis. Having departed from Bristol on her maiden voyage on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 1833, Victor arrived at Mauritius on the 17<sup>th</sup> September, a voyage of 95 days. This would however have included stops at other ports of call, particularly Madeira, St. Helena, and Cape Town. After leaving for home on the 17<sup>th</sup> November, she was reported as having reached St. Helena on the 18<sup>th</sup> December. On the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1835 she arrived at Table Bay, Cape Town, outward bound from Mauritius; and on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1836 she sailed from Gravesend, bound for Madeira, arriving back at the Custom House at London Docks on the 19<sup>th</sup> September.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1837 she was cleared outwards with cargo from the London Custom House bound for Antigua, and this seems to mark a change in her destinations. As Lloyd's Register lists no other vessel at this time called Victor, this must be Phillips' ship, and she sailed from Gravesend four days later. Further voyages were reported during 1837/38 between London and St. Vincent's, presumably in Newfoundland. It was shortly after this that Victor was acquired by her new London owner, and John Phillips appears to have retired from the sea. She was re-rigged as a barque in about 1843, and continued in service for some years, still listed in Lloyd's Register in 1852, although from the entry her future was clearly uncertain. Victor disappeared immediately afterwards, perhaps sold and given a change of name, although the average natural life expectancy of a wooden vessel was about twenty years.

Britannia had a similar career, although she was to continue on the Barbados run until the end. She disappears from time to time from Lloyd's Register while put in dock for repairs. In 1841 she was given a new deck; and other repairs were made between 1844 and 1848, and in 1846 her bottom was re-sheathed in copper. In 1848/49, however, the entry is annotated "Wrecked". Although both ships outlived him, Phillips' precious Britannia had come to a more dramatic end than the Victor; and in the Times for the 23rd January 1849, we read her obituary:

*Wexford Jan 19. - The Britannia, from Bristol for Barbadoes, came on shore near this place last night, and is full of water. Crew saved: part of cargo may be saved.*