

'Return of the Native' The Fonthill by-election of 1992

By Mark Wareham

In 1992 I stood in a by-election for the Fonthill Ward on Salisbury District Council. This was in a seat previously held by the Liberals but which the Tories were targeting in a strong campaign and which they eventually won. Never having stood in an election before, I decided to cut my political teeth and to stand in this least promising of areas for a socialist. I was not expecting to win and I had already secured a place at college to start full time study later that year. I had hopes of a decent result but in the end I secured a massive 32 votes, about 6% of the total, and needless to say I was rather disappointed. But at least I would have saved my deposit, had there been one!

The interesting thing about this story is that in 1992 I used the fact that my grandparents used to have a farm at nearby East Knoyle to claim some kind of connection with the ward. It was a tenuous link. But little did I know at the time that I had ancestors from the village of Fonthill Gifford going generations and the line in a local newspaper story about 'return of the native', a reference to the book by Thomas Hardy, was in fact more true than I understood at the time. It is one of those wonderful things about the study of family history and one of the rewards of the research. It is fascinating to find such ancestral family connections and being able to link family history to the history of the country and an area.

Not that I have such plans, but if I were to run again for Fonthill Ward 15 years later I could claim family connections to the village which has changed so much over the years. When knocking on doors asking for votes I think I would be more interested in seeing if distant cousins still live in the area than whether they'd vote for me!

By-election news story - Salisbury Journal

Labour selects its man for Fonthill by-election

THE LABOUR party has nominated Mark Wareham, a 21-year-old tax advisor and one its local officials, to fight the by-election at Fonthill next month.

The August 13 contest has been called to fill the vacant seat on Salisbury District Council.

It was created by the resignation of Liberal Democrat Clive Wilton, who captured the Fonthill seat from the Independents as last year's elections.

As reported in last week's Journal, Mrs Anne McGrail will be defending the seat for the Liberal Democrats and the Tory challenger is Mr Michael Fowler.

Mr Wareham works locally for a life assurance company and holds office with Salisbury Labour Party as its youth officer.

He views his fight for the Fonthill seat as the "return of the native" as his parents come from nearby East Knoyle.

MAIN THEATRE
JULY 20 - AUGUST 1
ANITA HARRIS in Daphne du Maurier's
MY COUSIN RACHEL
A romantic thriller also starring Steven Pinner from *Brookside* and Ill Greenacre from *The Brittas Empire*.
Sponsored by Midland Bank, Salisbury Enterprise Centre

AUGUST 6 - 29
Arsenic and Old Lace
A black comedy by Joseph Kesselring

JULY 23 - AUGUST 1 SALZBERG STUDIO
ACTING UP A festival of Stage '65's work.

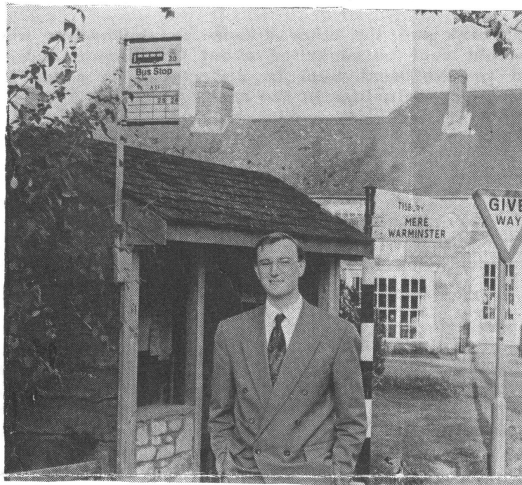
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Mark Wareham, Labour candidate for the Fonthill by-election, is pictured at a new housing development in Chilmark. We need more low cost homes for local people to keep our villages alive.

Mark Wareham is 21 years old and was born in Shaftesbury. He lived there for 18 years and attended local schools. He works as a tax adviser for a well known life assurance company. Mark has been active in politics for six years, both in North Dorset and South Wiltshire, and is currently the local party's Youth Officer.



Mark Wareham is pictured outside the bus shelter in Hindon. Buses are few and far between and are too expensive for many people. Mark believes that a community bus would help to improve public transport in the area.

Vote Mark Wareham, Labour's candidate on Thursday.

* For a councillor who will listen to local people and act to get things done.

* For a younger voice on the District Council.

My Fonthill Gifford ancestry

The Fonthill Gifford connection starts with Sarah Trew (or True) who married George Burt of Berwick St John in Wiltshire in Fonthill Gifford on 12th October 1841. George and Sarah were my great x 4 grandparents on my father's mother's side and they ended up living at Berwick St John which is near Shaftesbury, where I was born and raised.

Here is Sarah's ancestral line –

Sarah True (Trew)
b 22/12/1822 Fonthill Gifford, Wilts
d 12/1/1905 Berwick St John (age 83)

m 12/10/1841 Fonthill Gifford
Wilts

George **Burt**
B 1810 Berwick St John, Wilts
D 3/1/1888 Berwick St John (age 78)

James True
b 11/6/1796 Fonthill Gifford
d 19/10/1823 Fonthill Gifford (age 26)

m 5/10/1818 Fonthill Gifford

Harriet **Vincent**
b 4/5/1800 Fonthill Gifford, Wiltshire
d 6/3/1889 Berwick St John bu ? (age 87)

|
John Trew
bo 1765 ba 4/8/1766 Fonthill Gifford
d 26/7/1819 Fonthill Gifford (age 54)

m 19/12/1791 Fonthill Gifford

Maria **Humphreys**
b 17/11/1771 Fonthill Gifford
d 8/4/1799 Fonthill Gifford

|
Thomas Trew
b bf 1747
d 19/6/1802 Fonthill Gifford, Wilts

m 2/11/1765 Stourton, Wilts

Patience **Markey**
b 26/12/1734 Stourton, Wilts
d 28/7/1805 Fonthill Gifford (age 73)

Sarah's mother Harriet lost her first husband James Trew in 1823 when he was just 26 years old and she was 22. In 1834 Harriet was on poor parish relief and according to the records of the overseers of the parish relief they gave Harriet 16 shillings to maintain her three children. Harriet's rent was 2 shillings and total cash she held was 14 shillings. Harriet later remarried another agricultural labourer, William Burt (see below).

Neither James or Harriet Trew were literate and on their marriage in 1818 they signed with their mark of a cross.

Harriet's maiden name was Vincent and her established line is –

Harriet Vincent
b 4/5/1800 Fonthill Gifford, Wiltshire
d 6/3/1889 Berwick St John bu ? (age 87)

m 5/10/1818 Fonthill Gifford

James **True**
b 19/9/1797 Fonthill Gifford
d 19/10/1823 Fonthill Gifford (age 26)

|
James Vincent
bo 1776 ba 30/5/1777 Fonthill Bishop, Wiltshire
d 18/10/1834 Fonthill Gifford (age 58)

m 26/12/1797 Fonthill Gifford

Susannah **Macey**
b 11/6/1775 Chilmark, Wilts
d 30/6/1802 Fonthill Gifford, Wilts

|
Samuel Vincent
b bf 1750
d 1/5/1789 Fonthill Gifford

m 30/7/1766 Fonthill Bishop

Alice **Targett**
b 1745
d 24/10/1819 Fonthill Gifford (age 74)

The Vincent line probably goes back further in the parish (as does the Humphreys family) but there is a gap in the registers between 1710 and 1750.

William Burt's story

Here is a weblink to an essay about Fonthill Gifford in 1851 –

http://sfcwebserve.com/HistoryWeb/Docs/Fonthill_Gifford_1851.pdf

and on pages 5 and 6 and appendix 3 is the fascinating story of my great x grandmother Harriet's second husband and she is directly referred to in the article. Harriet and her children were apparently 'wretchedly clothed' in 1840 and the children 'almost destitute, not having a shoe to their feet'. They were a family in dire poverty and on the brink of starvation. William was imprisoned in 1840 for failure to pay the poor rate, despite attempts to pay by selling all available belongings, and a petition was presented to the House of Commons on his behalf showing the extent of his families' poverty and pleading for his release. He was back in Fonthill with his family by the 1841 census and was employed as an agricultural labourer. William lived till 1875 and Harriet till 1889.

Updated May 2010