

The 'Return of the Native' my family connections to the Fonthills

By Mark Wareham

Updated 17th July 2011

In 1992 I stood in a by-election for the Fonthill Ward on Salisbury District Council. 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. But I had hoped for a decent result only to be disappointed by the 32 votes, about 6% of the total, I received. At least I would have saved my deposit, had there been one!

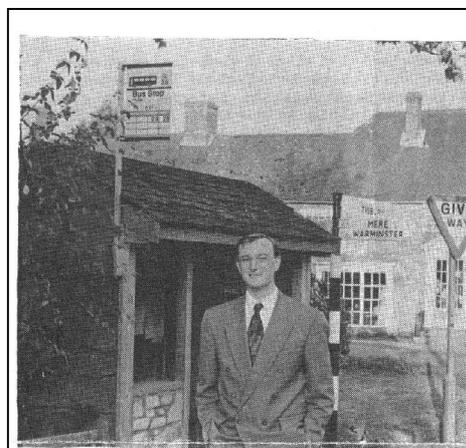
The interesting thing about this story is that in 1992 I used the fact that my grandparents used to have a farm at nearby East Knoyle to claim some kind of connection with the Council ward. It was a tenuous link. But little did I know at the time that I had ancestors from the villages of Fonthill Gifford, Fonthill Bishop and Chilmark going back many 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 discover such ancestral family connections and being able to link family history to the history of the country and an area.



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.

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 any distant cousins still live in the area than whether they'd vote for me!



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 ancestry

The Trew (or True) and Vincent families

The Trew family Fonthill Gifford connection goes back a few generations from my grandmother (father's side) Violet Hiscock. The connection starts with Sarah Trew (or True) who married George Burt of Berwick St John at Fonthill Gifford on 12th October 1841. George and Sarah were my great x 4 grandparents and they ended up living at Berwick St John which is near Shaftesbury where I was later eventually born and raised.

Sarah's mother Harriet lost her first husband James Trew in 1823 when he was just 26 years old and when she was 22. James Trew had married Harriet Vincent in Fonthill Gifford on 5th October 1818 and at the time neither were literate as they signed with a cross. In 1834 Harriet was receiving parish poor relief and according to the records of the overseers of the parish 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).

William Burt's story

Harriet's second husband was William Burt and this is weblink to an essay about Fonthill Gifford in 1851 which contains a fascinating story of his struggle with poverty –

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

My great x grandmother Harriet is referenced 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. A petition was presented to the House of Commons on his behalf showing the extent of his 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.

William Vincent

Harriet's father was William Vincent. William was baptised in Fonthill Bishop to Samuel and Alice Vincent of Fonthill Gifford, he being baptised there because that was his mother's home parish. In various census record William and family are recorded in Gifford –

1841

Fonthill Gifford, Wiltshire

William **Vincent**, 60, agricultural labourer, born

Wilts

Ann, 65, born Wilts

1851

Fonthill Street, Fonthill Gifford, Wilts

William **Vincent**, head, widower, 75, agricultural labourer, born Fonthill Gifford,

Wilts

1861

St Anne Street (5th house from Love Lane towards Brown St),

Salisbury, Wiltshire

George Vincent, head, 48, baker, born Fonthill Gifford, Wilts
Ann, 53, wife, born Emsworth, Wilts
Elizabeth, 15, daughter, born Salisbury
Henry, 13, son, scholar, born Salisbury
Kate, 10, scholar, born Salisbury
William **Vincent**, boarder, 82, gardener, born Fonthill Bishop, Wilts
Elizabeth Scammell, boarder, 69, lady, born Salisbury
Sarah Osborne, niece, 30, shop assistant, born Tisbury
Jon Carter, servant, 17, bakers assistant, born Langley, Wilts

William lost his first wife Ann Gilbert in 1822 when she was just 36 years old. He remarried in 1828 to Ann Kellow and she died in 1859 age 74. Before he died William moved from Fonthill Gifford to live with his son George Vincent at 37 St Anne Street in Salisbury (pictured to the right). George was at various times a baker and grocer. St Anne Street is not far from where I currently live in Salisbury.

William died in 1863 and left a will (see Hiscock spreadsheet for details) and he was buried back in his home parish of Fonthill Gifford.



Fonthill and Hindon connections

My ancestral connections to Fonthill and Hindon are shown on page 4. The earliest references to connections with the parishes are –

- Hindon – 1685
- Fonthill Bishop – 1719
- Fonthill Gifford – 1696

