

2014 HISTORY TALK ON THE VAUGHAN-JENKINS LORDS OF PRISTON MANOR
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Throughout the Middle Ages the Lords of the Manor of Priston were the Priors of Bath Monastery. Following the dissolution of the monasteries, the Longs of Wadden in Wiltshire became the new Lord of the Manor. Their chief Manor was at Southwick. Their arms can be seen on the font in our own (Priston) church. In the early 1700s the estate was sold to Lord Chedworth and to Simon, Earl of Harcourt, who later sold it in 1754 to William Jenkins of Welbeck Street, Middlesex, London, for the sum of £15,475 pounds of 'good and lawful money'.

To understand the connection of the Jenkins and Vaughan family we need to trace back the family trees:

James Vaughan of Skenfrith, Monmouth, Wales marries Elizabeth Davies, also of Skenfrith, around 1720.

Her brother, William Davies, who was appointed Controller of Ordinance and Agent Victualler of Gibraltar, and later became Esquire Governor to Sir John Gervis [Admiral of the Fleet and later 1st Earl of St. Vincent]. He married William Jenkin's daughter Elizabeth Jenkins at St. Mary Le Bone Church in 1774. William Davies bought the Combe Grove estate which included the village of Monkton Combe in 1782, he and Elizabeth unfortunately had no children, he therefore decided to pass the estate, on his death in 1798, to his brother-in-law James Vaughan.

James Vaughan and [his wife] Elizabeth had three sons, William, George and James. The older [child], William, inherited the estate. He was to marry Caroline Golding of Priston, daughter of Benjamin Golding, in 1812. He was also Agent Victualler of Gibraltar. They had four children: William, Caroline – who died in infancy at 14 weeks, Edward – who died in 1836 aged 21, and Frederick. William Vaughan [the elder] was to become High Sheriff of Somerset in 1812. He provided the clock on Priston church and our famous cockerel. He died in 1818.

[His] son William Vaughan assumed the additional name of Jenkins by Royal Licence in grateful remembrance of the original bequest of William Davies. He became a major in the first Somerset Militia, a magistrate and a well-known steeplechaser. It was he who brought the water to the village, set up a charity for the poor in Priston, set up a coal charity in Monkton Combe and paid for the rebuilding of the parish church in Monkton Combe. Known for his temper, but apart from that was a great benefactor to the two villages. As regards to the charities, these must have been of great benefit to the poor of Priston and Monkton Combe. He died unmarried in 1876.

His surviving brother Frederick succeeded to the estates. He had married Amy Harding in 1841 [and] he was also granted a Royal Licence in 1876 to take the additional name and arms. He and Amy had a son William, and two daughters, Agnes and Caroline. Caroline was to marry a William Martin [and] their daughter was later to marry W.H. Lovegrove, hence the connection to our current Lord of the Manor and Patron of the Church, Richard Lovegrove who lives in Liverpool. Frederick had formerly lived at the now demolished Odd Down Lodge before moving to Combe Grove. He died in 1892.

Frederick's son William Vaughan Jenkins now became Lord of the Manors of Priston and of Monkton Combe. He had married Lucinda Watts in 1878. They had a son William and daughters Mabel and Winifred. He died in 1897 aged only 44.

His son William took over and in 1899 festivities were held here in the village to celebrate his coming of age. William had a commission in the Devon Royal Garrison Artillery Militia as Hon. Second Lieutenant in the army. He married in 1901 Irene Miskin Miller, 3rd daughter of the late James Miller

of Glasgow. Captain Vaughan Jenkins promoted the North Somerset Light Railway from Midford on the Somerset & Dorset, to Priston. At a meeting of the Light Railway Commissioners, held in the Guildhall, Bath, over the course of two days, the pros and cons of the projected new railway were discussed. The outcome was that the Great Western Railway objected to the scheme, they agreed to continue from their long established station at Camerton and build a new line from there to a junction with their line at Limpley Stoke. This would give a connection to the colliery at Dunkerton. A junction from Dunkerton to Priston was surveyed but in the end this did not happen.

The sale of the [Priston Estate] village in 1919 took place - many estates throughout the country were being sold up at the end of the 1st World War. All properties were sold, except for the Manor House which was let until approximately 1935. [Then] sold to Frank Ingle as a wedding present to his son Reginald, incidentally they were cousins of the Vaughan Jenkins.

The Vaughan Jenkins had moved out of Priston Manor to St. Winifred's at Combe Down on the death of Captain Vaughan Jenkin's mother – Lucinda – in 1911. The house was extended at this time.

The Captain was for many years the Rector's Warden at Priston Church [and] according to his son, he would drive over to Priston church on Sunday mornings and stop on top of Priston Hill and wait for the five minute bell to ring and then would slowly drive to the church to make a late entrance which his son and wife would find most embarrassing. There was one particular instance when he arrived unannounced to find Reginald Ingle and family sitting in the Manor pew which caused some consternation. Reginald Ingle was told in no uncertain terms to remove himself from the Manor pew as he might live in the manor but he was not the Lord of the Manor! Which caused some embarrassment at the start of the service!

Bill Vaughan Jenkins [was] educated at Monkton Combe and St. Dunstons, Burnham on Sea; apprentice premium pupil at Stothert & Pitt; joined the Somerset & Dorset Railway at Bath as an engine fitter; later went to sea as a second engineer; moved to Malaya to work for the Penang Consolidated Tin Mines as an engineer in charge of boilers and engines on the railway; spent several years there before coming back to England and joining the LMS [London Midland & Scottish Railway?] at Derby. He later moved on to take up a job at his beloved Somerset & Dorset Railway at Templecombe as shed foreman, he finished with the railway on nationalization. He started his photographic business at Wincanton and later at Templecombe. He had been involved in taking R/W photographs since the 1920s. He became involved in setting up and running the well-known photographic company L&GRP [Locomotive & General Railway Photographs] which became one of the largest railway photographic libraries, now part of the National Railway Archives at York. He moved to St. Winifred with his wife in 1968 on the death of his father. His wife would often open the church fetes in Priston. He bought a 10 ton steam roller – names Ironside – which was often taken to local stream rallies and to the Priston Steam Nights at the Ring O Bells. He took a keen interest in Priston and helped considerably financially for the church and village hall. He also set up a new charity to boost the existing Major Vaughan Jenkins and Harriet Hamond charities in the village. He died in 1990.