Part 3

Professions and Services

1. **Parish officers: clerk, policeman and charity officers**

2. **Pubs and Inns**

3. **Road and Rail services**

4. **Religious Institutions**

5. **School Days**

6. **Welfare: Medical matters**

7. **Women's work: home and family**

Parish Governing Bodies.

Parish governance changed hugely over the centuries. At first, by custom, law and order was maintained through the local squire – but Keinton never had one – the lands were always divided between several holdings.
In 1242 it was described as a township, in 1315 as a hamlet. By 1327 it was assessed with Barton St David, while from 1560-mid-18th it was combined with Kingweston.

The **General Trade Directory of 1840** (the first to mention Keinton), states the village is situated in the
hundred of *Catash*,
county court district of *Langport*,
deanery of *Cary* and
bishopric of *Bath-and-Wells*.
The River Brew/Brue runs along the north side of the parish while the Roman Fosse Way lies on the southeast boundary. The parish is in the E Somerset electoral division and has 19 registered electors (1839): 16 are free, and 3 are occupational tenancies: the polling place is at Shepton Mallet to which must be sent 1 guard as needed.

Sadly, few *manorial records* or *court rolls* mention Keinton. Much of the land was under the religious jurisdiction of **St. John's Hospital Wells** till the dissolution of the monasteries from 1536.

The Tudor C16th **vestry** system of government (based on local church administration) evolved into formalised bodies in 1660 and eventually into Parish Councils in C19th. No records or officers are known in Keinton pre-1726 as records were unfortunately destroyed in a vicarage fire. Diocesan records, sent to Exeter for safe keeping, were destroyed by WWII bombs and further recent records were burnt in another fire, in council offices in Langport in 1962!

In most parishes, by the Tudor period, there were appointed **Vestry Officers:** particularly *Overseer of the Poor* whose main concern was to control poverty, vagrancy and bastardy as each of these led to increases in the locally raised Poor Rate – for life was even harder without a home/job or father (pregnant women were urged to swear the father's name so monies (as now!) could be obtained);

Collector of window and land taxes, who was allowed to keep 3% for his troubles as an incentive to be diligent in his twice yearly task on behalf of the county receiver of taxes;

Surveyor of the highways - responsible for the upkeep of roads which included getting money out of the local landowners over whose land the tracks passed and also rounding up the labour force who 'owed' a specified number of day's work for such purposes;

also *churchwardens* – who checked pubs during church services! and urged attendance especially at declared national *fasts* (for plagues, poor harvest, or protection of armed forces in war) or *celebrations* related to national events such as royal anniversaries, victories…

Interestingly, *petitions* were circulated and donations collected for individuals who had suffered extreme loss, to help them out of poverty so they wouldn't remain a burden on the Poor Rate – e.g. loss of a cow in local flood, a cottage fire. As an example, C17th nearby Butleigh records show:

2s 6d a wk for 50 weeks for Russell's children;
4s for doctor to attend Edward's wife;
4s 8d shirts and smocks for Owen's children;
5s for a funeral shroud, laying out,
5s for grave digger, 1s for a beer, 1s to toll the bell

Other duties of Vestry officers included finding money to meet a wide range of needs.
Further Butleigh records (1670s) tell how Vestry collected 5s for repairing paths and foot bridges, 2s to kill a fox.
Parishoners were also asked to make contributions to 'redeem one person from Ewill [Yeovil] out of Turcky [Turkey]'.
Note: Throughout the C17th *Barbary Pirates* off the north coast of Africa captured many seamen and even made land raids to grab prisoners and strike terror into the hearts of many villagers in the West Country.
Other contributions were collected for the Hospital at Bruton, building Chelsea College Hospital, mending the bells of St Paul's London, for the 'Turcky siege' of Vienna,1683.

So it seems small villages – Keinton would have been similarly involved - were not so parochial after all. They were woven into a web of actions and interests which extended far and wide.

In 1810, there were 2 *poorhouses* - opposite the current Methodist Chapel, and at the corner of Chistles/Queen Street - though in 1791 there was only one declared pauper in Keinton. In 1834 parish *poor rate*, however, was £74.

P for Parish Clerk
In 1840 a clerk was paid 50s a yr and in 1876 **Vestry** meetings were held in the *Church Rooms*: these evolved into a **Parish Council** which met from 1894.

In 1899 Vestries were abolished in favour of three tiers of Local Government Councils.

Parish Concerns: then and now
i. Health and Safety: The council pressed for the repair of a *drinking fountain?* in 1895, and about *unsanitary closets* in Castle Street.

Demands for a piped water supply were turned down in 1911 (because the quality of local wells was considered to be so good!). *Water mains* gradually came after '55 and *sanitation drainage* from '75, with *street lighting and gas* soon after.

ii. Transport and Traffic: Council requested a *rail link* in 1900 and a halt in '28; more recently, control of cars – parking and speeding are a greater priority.

iii Communications: A *Telephone Box*, of the *K6* design by Sir Gilbert Scott – known as the 1935 Jubilee Kiosk - was positioned on Castle Street, on land given to the council by *John Allen* for this purpose. Some of these boxes have even been given Grade II listed status (!) in an attempt to protect this iconic piece of 'road furniture'.
More recent concerns have been over the *siting of a letter-box* (after the closure of the Post Office), which has now been placed next to the Telephone Box.

iv. Sport areas: The sports field now receives a parish grant towards insurance and grounds maintenance while the committee raises funds for the care and maintenance of the pavilion and play area. The Keinton Sports Field was awarded a prize for best kept grounds in 2008.

v. Safety: An oft forgotten role for Council continued during the Cold War, till the late '60s, when a *4-minute warning system* operated, in case of H/A-bomb attack e.g. on Birmingham, and its feared aftermath - waves of escapees overrunning the village. Luckily, despite very real fears, it never needed to be implemented.

From 1940s Council met in the *Social Club Hut* till moving to the *School* for the 80-90s and, finally, to the new *Village Hall* in 1998.

Parish Clerks mentioned in the censuses**:**

1861 Charles Harris
1871 Caleb Ridewood
1881 Frank Windsor

Other 'notables', listed in 1861 include:

Francis Henry Dickinson (Kingweston)
Justice of the Peace
Rev. DW Morrice, Lord of the Manor - till 1894 (vicar of Longbridge-Deverill, Wilts)

More recently, long-serving *Chairpersons* have included:

1920s John Bailey
1970-75, 80-84 John Allen, also County Councillor
1984 - 2000 Theo Balance and George Chinnock
2004-10 Belinda Simpson

Other memorable C20th village concerns related to the priorities for electricity or for mains sewage, in the '70s. Electricity won the vote, and street lighting was installed (sewage came several years later. Questions in'70s re siting of landfill sites, give way to policies for recycling/reduction, waste; in 2005, siting allotments and need for (social) housing all regularly compete for attention. Perennial agenda items include a continuing watch on the condition of parish *roads and footpaths* – regarding the efficiency of pooper-scoopers, the fight against litter or the conditions of styles and paths.

P for Policeman

Parish officers used to include a village **Policeman** (we often shared with neighbouring villages) as well as the now lapsed **Poor Relief Officer,** and other posts now either merged into local government or national administration.

Being a village **Policeman** was as varied then as it is now, but the style was different!

From the census we can see that a policeman was not a resident in the village after the mid-C19th:

1861 John Snail Stanton Drew, '71 Joseph Ellis Winscombe

1881 Joshua Parfitt (32) Radstock, followed by
Edward Reed aged 30 from Wootton Courtney.

1906 PC Edwards,

1910 PC Webb who lived in a Police House, *Gifford Ho,* in Queen St, till the late 20s.

1927 PC Valentine (later police lived beyond the village)

Many villagers had fond memories for their local bobby – especially the lads!

Mick and Grace Ridewood remember*: **In the 40s** Mr Chivers, who lived in Charlton Adam, cycled around on his **push-bike** most days, just checking… At best he might find some children scrumping for apples. A quick flip round the ear often did the trick. Fear of getting caught again and being reported to parents who might perform even worse punishments, was usually an adequate restraint.*

Particularly, during the war years, strict time-keeping in the pubs was demanded.

Janet Pearce *(whose father, Harry Cabble, ran the Quarry Inn **1944-53**) recalls that all windows had to be covered by blinds not curtains but, during the day, two Coppers peered into the bar and saw a couple (of friends) sitting at the bar (eating a snack) after closing time. Harry Cabble was apprehended for selling alcohol after time. In court, the Coppers even said they saw the colour of the pound note and heard the till ring – though money was kept in a wooden box in a drawer and there was no till!*
Over enthusiastic (?), even without government targets to reach!

Mr Rossiter (moved to Lydford), **Mr Pearce** (Somerton) also adopted a down to earth approach to anyone out of order. A word in their ear - and to the parents and possibly the teachers - was nearly always enough ...

From push-bike to motor bike and an increase in the size of the patch to patrol.

***Copper Donald Pearce**, in the **mid-50s** progressed to a **motorbike** and thus lived further afield – in Long Sutton - and had a wider beat based in Somerton. He was a well-liked character and no harm to his reputation was suffered even though it was once rumoured that, while our Bobby was guarding a house of valuables overnight before a house-sale (often when the owners had died or were moving away), it appeared that some had gone missing. Nothing was ever proved, nothing was ever done! He was still a 'good bloke'.*

Boys will be Boys. *John Sutton remembers **Copper Ray Davies** on his **motor bike**, who lived in the police house in W Lydford, in the late 50s. Coming back from school, smoking cigarettes, the lads stuffed them in their pockets. Mr Davis stopped for a chat, a long one, then said "I should take those cigarettes out of your pockets before they burn a hole." It was an effective reminder that coppers see all, hear all, know all.*
On another occasion, lads didn't take the first hint to return home at night, so on re-passing them he firmly trod on a loitering foot. That did the trick too!

The job also involved guarding the welfare of animals especially at show-time. Before a local show, even the *dipping of sheep*, as at Coombe Hill House, had to be overseen by the local Bobby - all in the interests of health for animal and farmer alike…

From motorbikes to cars, and a still wider area: the 1950s.

John Allen remembers being asked to join the Special Constabulary, only a few years after moving into the village.

Other tasks included being on duty at public events, like the Village Summer Fete, local motor-bike scrambling events, or any other special occasion.

*One of my duties was to stand guard on the railway bridge, across Common Lane, every time the **Royal Train** went down towards the Duchy of Cornwall with any of the Royal Family on board going for a holiday – or perhaps – even on business. It happened about four times a year.*
I had to hang about on the bridge for a couple of hours before it passed in case there was anything to report.

But there was rarely any crime in Keinton – just a spot of poaching, apple-scrumping and school boy pranks. The worst that might happen was around firework night when some of the lads would throw squibs amongst the chickens to set them squawking and to harass some villagers - some of whom kept a store of rotten eggs ready to throw back if they saw the lads! In those days policing was done with a very light touch. Just a word, a look - and it was enough. The police were respected in those days.

There were also stints in the patrol cars.

This usually involved being called to do an 8-hour duty in the patrol car, driving around the whole area from Lydford to Somerton to Long Sutton. We had to be on the look out, just in case….
… Like the time a 30' dead shark was found in the weir at Lydford! (Ssh…rumoured to be a Cornish holiday prank?)

Another way in which a 'Special' might participate in village life and, in particular, to let the youth get to know him - as a person – was through involvement in the Youth Club.
This was held in the ex-Bible Christian Chapel on Castle Street (which served by day as the Infant section of the school).
A 'Specials' duty for Constable *John Allen* was to lend a hand at the Youth Club - run by an enthusiastic *Mr Arthur Clement,* assisted by the local coordinator *Brian Sutton*, with the Methodist Minister, *Dick Hayfield*. There were plenty of organised games like table tennis, judo and Friday night sing-songs. Plays were sometimes put on there as well.

(For several years 'Specials' regularly went to Yeovil for fortnightly Monday evening courses to develop policing skills and all-round community skills.)

PC Allen's long-service award

Mr Allen was a 'Special' from around the time of the 1953 *Coronation* till just after the *Silver Jubilee* in 1977. It was a long stint, and to mark the occasion he received a medal.

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'Specials' to 'consultative constabulary'

Nowadays, a 'community officer' holds 'surgeries' which formally encourages informal consultations and discussion of any problems residents may wish to raise. We are still lucky, and Keinton doesn't seem to suffer much 'crime'. Occasionally garden sheds are broken into, garden ornaments maybe stolen, litter left, litter bins destroyed, and dog 'poop-scoops' used inadequately. Though distressing for those directly effected, thankfully, it doesn't make major headlines. But we continue 'looking out for each other' through a Neighbourhood Watch scheme - which has probably always existed in all but a change of name.

Charitable Organizations:
Welfare had either relied on bounty from a 'Lady of the Manor' (which Keinton lacked) or from **a monastery foundation.** In many areas, on their dissolution from 1536, it was often a huge loss to the local population. The new **Tudor Poor Relief** system provided some basic help with food, clothing and shelter, but was often punitive rather than supportive. Poor Relief remained a burden on local rate-payers who tried to keep it as low as possible, but at the cost of the poor who were left unprotected.

In the C17/18th diarists tell of individual petitions that could be raised for money, food or help for any deserving and distressed person or family e.g. replacing a widow's cow that had met with accidental death, repair a roof damaged in a storm. Individual charity was expected: priests, landowners or businesses were targets for itinerant beggars, discharged servicemen, and other destitutes.

C20th help came from Friendly Societies: **Keinton Club** was formed in 1796 and met at the Old Castle Inn till 1812, then in a private house till 1831. A **Society of Tradesmen and Others** was formed in 1835 which merged into the **Union Society** in 1849 and then met at the Quarry Inn. There was a *women's* friendly society which also met there, from 1852.

The punitive policy towards the poor continued: so, Somerset had 6 **workhouses** for *able-bodied destitute*. About 50% of villages had a **poorhouse** for the *old and sick* (Keinton had two, though during the C19th only one pauper, while surrounding villages sometimes had several needing relief). Keinton also had a charitable organization - the *Royal Ancient Order of Buffaloes* - which provided festivities for children and support to members (meeting in the **pub** function rooms).

Friendly Societies…

KEINTON CLUB

ARTICLES

OF A

FRIENDLY SOCIETY

OF

TRADESMEN and OTHERS

HELD AT THE

THREE OLD CASTLES INN

IN THE PARISH OF

KEINTON –MANFIELD

SOMERSET

Made the Thirteenth day of February

1796

Printed for the Society
by M Cary, at the Post Office,
Shepton Mallet, 1809

This organisation was re-established in1835. Some members paid additional 6s a week [30p] as sickness benefit. However, after the initial enthusiasm for signing up, many faltered and some found the modest sums too much. Hence membership fluctuated.

Annual perks included a Dinner: in 1843 it was given for 67 members! In 1858 the Keinton Club consumed 107 gallons of cider at the notorious *Mason's Arms*, costing £4.6s.8d (or 4p a gallon) Landlord, *Thomas Young*, charged 2s (10p) a head for 120 dinners. A good time was had by all!

Every 10 years dues were divvied out amongst members …

ARTICLES OF KEINTON CLUB

Every member shall pay one shilling entrance and to pay three shillings a quarter, two pence of which is to be spent, and the remainder to go to the box;

Each member is to attend every quarterly meeting, between the hours of seven and nine, to clear up his quarter's pay, or else he shall forfeit one shilling or shall be excluded;

After the member has paid twenty-four calendar months they shall have benefit of the box: if they are taken ill or meet with misfortune (without fighting, or gamestering, or having the foul disease) shall have six-shillings a week for two months and afterwards three shillings a week for the duration of their sickness;

When any member of this society dies, the widow shall have two Guineas out of the box and one shilling of each member for funeral expenses; and each member shall be at the funeral to see that he is buried handsome; if a member's wife dies, each member shall pay him sixpence…

[extracts only]

The Club was thus another institution which played a focal role in community life, till the first World War, when its members were scattered, killed and were unable to reform and build up a fund again in the depression years which followed.

Pub, Inns and Publicans

Every village should have one, if not two or more. In fact Keinton once boasted three.

Three Old Castles - mentioned in 1793. How it got its name is a bit of a mystery. Various theories have been offered:

a. 3 castles could be seen from the village
b. castles were part of the heraldic symbols of the de Mandevilles.
c. there were once 3 castles in the village

a. on a clear day Glastonbury *tor*, the 'castle' *fort* at Penselwood, and with (much) romantic imagination Cadbury *fort* might be 'seen' or, the *castle* at Cary (destroyed in 1140s) ;

b. can be dismissed. The shield on a de Mandeville memorial in Hartingdon Mandeville church – an uncle's manor – includes no castles;

c. is more likely, if we stretch the meaning of castle to include 'any substantial building' (a common usage in the medieval period) e.g. a possible C13th 'castle' - with 6 monks - probably from St John's Hospital, Wells. [Oliver Chalker alluded to this, in Keinton, when giving a talk to the village in the '20s.]

The Three Old Castles was a *hostelry* where (usually single) men could live till permanent accommodation could be found. An upstairs room was for hire (where the **Royal Ancient Order of Buffaloes** met (and drank), and a downstairs restaurant area was added later.

> *1841 One Thomas **Cox** plumber (20) lodged here briefly, while John **Cox** cooper (55), and also baby Tom **Cox** (8ms) lodged at 2 separate addresses… (where were the womenfolk? hints of a sad tale? surviving members searching for work?)*

No such mystery surrounds **Mason's Arms**, a watering hole at the corner of Row Lane and High Street. This had only a brief (disreputable) life from 1841-1871 and no doubt absorbed many a stoneworkers' wages.

In 1943 Oliver Chalker wrote to his brother, *"It is a bad house, such drunkenness abounds amidst abject poverty."*
There were also plenty of other, unofficial, private 'front rooms' where home brewed cider could be imbibed and enjoyed – these of course are unrecorded…

Census returns show publicans:

1841 John Cock (aged 60) Anthony Hewiston (aged38)

1859 S. Franks at **Three Castles**
A. Clarke **at Quarry Inn**
Sampson Fry **at Mason's Arms.**

1861 Andrew Fank at **Three Castles.**
Alexander Clarke at **Quarry Inn**
Thomas Young at **Mason's Arms**

*1871 John Dyke at **Three Castles***
*Thomas Weaver, then John Gould at **Quarry***

*1891 John Dyke was still at the **Three Castles.***
*1902 George Udall landlord of the **Quarry** also a farmer…*

*20:30s Dykes continued at the **Three Castles** then Charlie Cabble,*
while in 1935 A Clarke added B+B facilities,
Joe Brinklys in the 40s then, Dave Million, Martin Higgin

Whilst at the Quarry
***From 1910 -late 30s** Frederick and Lotte Duckett held sway*
***Then in the early 40s :** Mr Bennet,*
*1944-53 Harry Cabble … **And later:** John Down,*
Carol and Ed Cranfield , Sue and Dave Moir…

The Quarry Inn has outlast them all - since the closure of the *Three Castles* in summer 2008. It has only recently become the main pub of the village - the publican having been part-time, with no lodgers apparently listed. The building is first mentioned as an inn in1813 (VCH) probably, then, recently built, including some stables along Fayre Rd now incorporated into the main structure. Interestingly, Janet Pearce reports there were two internal beams dated 1710 and 1845. Recycled? Renovated? By 1910 the Quarry belonged to a brewery.

The Quarry, like many pubs, made an upstairs room available for meetings. In 1830s a **Union Society** was formed and met there and a *female* **Friendly Society** from 1852. For a while a doctor's surgery was held there. Between 1940-1945 it became a meeting place for the **Home Guard**, as the then landlord was a key member.

Harry Cabble (also Home Guard) took over in the 1940s. His daughter Janet Pearce, recalls

> *At that time darts were very popular and The Quarry had competition teams for both the ladies and the men. Shove-ha'penny was played a lot at Babcary, and cards at Lydford but never seemed to take on in Keinton.*

Skittles took place but was not, at the time, well supported. Now it is the dominant game with teams playing almost nightly.

The *nine pins*, usually made out of *applewood*, are placed at the bottom of the 'alley' (lengths vary according to space available). The pins form a diamond pattern with the taller kingpin in the centre. The three *balls* are of heavier, denser wood, often *elm.*
Each member of the team plays consecutively (a 'hand'). After each team has alternatively completed 6 hands, the highest score wins. It is MEN only! though some separate ladies' teams have recently come into existence.

Action in the renovated skittle alley! Left, some keen local skittlers… Tony Holland, John Sutton, Keith Biggs, John Higgins, Nick Hodges.

Quarry Inn, with old stable block on right

Pubs and Inns had often been linked to coaching roads and new modes of transport allowed more travellers to stay.

R: Road and Rail : Keinton's transport connections

The turnpike road from London to Truro during the C18th, caused the village to migrate north to meet the new road where the *Three Castles* became the main coaching inn – on the turnpike formed around 1770s.The last stagecoach came through around mid 1840s, as remembered by Oliver Chalker (who died in 1940 aged 102). There was even a proposed **tramway** so Keinton lias could travel further more easily!

The railway also played a vital part in the life of the quarries as well as the village, from 1905 to its Beeching closure in 1964. In the '40s, *Harold Manning* from Fir Tree Villa, Queen's St cycled to the station each morning - wearing a fresh flower in his buttonhole - to take up his duties as station manager. He kept all the station flowers looking wonderful. Every station was planted with pine trees to alert the drivers they were approaching a station. They still stand at Castle Cary station!

Later, *Mr Morris* from Ebenezer Cottage, Castle St became station master. *Joe Willcox* worked the signal box. There were several others from Keinton who also worked on the railway, including *Bern Ridewood, Reg Atyeo, Bill Bailey, Mr Harwood*.

Mary Matthews recalls: *Several of my uncles worked on the railway. One of them, Uncle Frank, was sadly killed while laying lines between Charlton Mackrell and Somerton.*

Jessie Gambling (nee Squires) whose memories of the '20s (written earlier by Joan Harland) noted: *My father, Walter Squires, started as a platelayer and continued till he retired. He left school without learning to write his name but with 5 children he did many other jobs to top up the meagre wage – helped with breaking in horses, hay-making, cider-presses He grew food too, on strips alongside the track at Charlton Mackrell as well as on his village allotment. The men were allowed to set rabbit traps by the line! The skins fetched a bob or two as well (about 5p). It all helped. He set off around 6.00am taking an enamel plate with bacon, bread, an onion and cheese. The gang took turns to cook the men's breakfast on a clean shovel over a fire.*

(photo of platelayers courtesy Squires family)

Mrs Burt (also of the Squires family) recalls: *My aunt and I used a horse and cart, to take milk to the Aplin and Barrett Stilton cheese factory next to the station. There was a piggery and cattle yard on the other side – used by such as Mr Whitehead, a Lydford dealer.*

The service was very efficient. You could send anything!

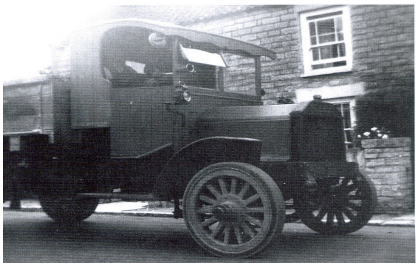
Kath Cross remembers*: I once helped father wrap a brace of rabbits which was posted to London for friends – arriving later that day and made a good supper the same night!*

Parkers, motor car proprietor (during '30s) had a 'parking' area at the east end of the village for the charabancs and motors he kept for hire – including village outings!

Ridewood Hauliers: This operated from the home of one of the Ridewood brothers whose house (called *Ridewood)* is opposite the turning leading to the Church. Starting with horse and cart, the business later became mechanised. *Uncle Tom* was very busy with daily assignments to take or fetch to and from the railway station near Lydford.

Megan Cabble recalls: *Items for the village stores were collected by the haulier. Individual packages for catalogue shoppers using Universal Stores where goods could be paid for, 1/- a week. Furniture was sometimes ordered and fetched from Cary. Any other large items which shoppers couldn't carry home were also brought on the cart.*
While Mick Ridewood remembers: *Uncle once went up to the station and brought home a large live parrot, from a relative in London!*

Webbs Haulier was a little way down Queens Street, on the right. There was also a petrol pump there, mostly for the Webb lorries. They were general transporters throughout the area. These lorries (below) date from around 1925, and 1940s.



The tradition of hauliers in the village lives on, with the *Beale* family who currently live on the High Street.

Cox's family petrol pumps and motorbike workshop.
On the right of the family home at Prospect House on High Street, were two petrol pumps. The Cox family were at first well-known as monumental masons. It was *Terry Cox* who became a motorbike enthusiast and champion racer. His passion led to two workshops at the back of the house, situated in the family orchard. The petrol pumps were also installed on the roadside for his own business and for passing motorists. Tankers in every era seem to be monsters – real kings of the road. This, below, was no exception!

R for Religious Institutions

The Church of St Mary Magdalen

There are references to a church in Chintine/ 'Kington' in 655AD, and in 925 of a building which was 58 x 11 feet. The present C13th chancel has 1 east lancet + 2 north lancet windows and, also, there remains the Norman font. *Kelly's Directory* records: *Partly rebuilt in 1800; N. isle added in 1841; re-roofed in 1904 - at a cost of £300. It now has space for 150 sittings - none rented* [common in other parishes].

Just as seats in Parliament could be bought and sold, so too could livings for curates and vicars. The gift of a 'living' was generally held by an influential landowner not necessarily in the parish. This was sometimes from neighbouring 'lords' holding land in Keinton, but latterly, a sequence of major landowners from within the village. The list of rectors begins:

1317 Robert de Wolmington
1348 Canon Roger died of the Black Death
1348- 1413 John Garland

During the C15th several rectors made *exchanges*
1418 *William Haache* exchanged with
William Talbot Mulcheldever,Winchester;
1419 *William Talbot* exchanged with
Richard Hawyn Farndych, Lincoln;
1443 *John Kyngeston* exchanged with
William Kenwolmerssh, Esthenrath, Salisbury

Close contacts and kindnesses existed between rectors *viz*
1497 *William Adice*, rector of Charlton Mackrell 'did *Will* one beast to each of his fellow rectors at Kygeston, Charlton Adam, Kynton and Butteleigh'. [Somerset Wills Vol 16]

From **Catholic** to **Church of England…C16th Reformation**
We know from details of other villages in the south-west just how these changes impacted on village rituals and community life. The committees which cared for specific images, or which organised fund-raising 'Church Ales' festivities were closed - obliterated as 'abominations'… Administration was centralised in 'reformers' hands. Prayer Books came and went, vestments and images were hidden / brought out as royal policies changed.

Norman font, nave and C13th Chancel with single lancet window

The very turbulent Tudor times didn't see frequent hirings or firings in Keinton: the rector managed to keep his head down and the proceedings un-noted. The tradition continued of calling for *National Fast Days* in times of difficulty: e.g. revolt in American colonies, famines at home…

In 1671, the 'living' was purchased for £100, by *Elizabeth Tassell* of E Chinnock for her son Samuel, and grand-daughter's husband *Joseph Dauncey, (from Longbridge-Deverill Wilts)* a long-serving vicar from 1686-1729. The family bought substantial Keinton lands, moved to Barton and subsequently settled and married into the local Grant family. Land was leased annually to tenants and corn rents due.

The Trade Directory of 1841 indicated that the living had annual rent-value of £151, and was endowed with £200 from private benefaction and £200 from royal bounty.
By 1861, rent-value was reduced to £112, and 78 acres of glebe land was gifted by trustees of (current) *Rev Henry George Livius*. The gross income was £215 p a. Much of the glebe land was also leased and tithes collected – on Mar 25th, Lady Day. These monies added to the rectors' income and perhaps lessoned the burden on the parish of having to raise all the vicar's annual salary.
Rev DW Morrice vicar of Longbridge Deverell (Wilts) was given as *Lord of the Manor* while Francis Henry Dickinson esq (from Kingweston) was *Justice of the Peace,* while we find in 1892, Mrs Esther Parfitt became *Patron*, (later Capt WA Whitehead, and then Mrs Joy Burden nee Dickinson).

In 1931 the living had a net income of £288 including 78 acres of glebeland with a rectory (since sold and replaced with a smaller house in1960s). Tithes were still collected till 1960s.

The Roll of Rectors on the nave wall shows several vicars of over 10 years service:

1500-1547 Nicholas Busshe
1577-1618 John Eleston
1686-1729 Joseph Dauncey
1851-1873 Henry Livius }
1873-1878 William Livius }

The effort to improve the standard of parish priests are evident in the qualifications of later Keinton rectors:

1880- 1892 Amos Pitcher (also student of Bonn Universioty)
1892 - 1941 Arthur F Whitehead (B.A. Durham)

Young parishoners recall: *Some of us boys rubbed flat random words in his Braille Bible, so he was forced to mumble over the words he couldn't 'read' during the service…He never reprimanded us ..*

Trevor Cook remembers: *Rev Whitehead was blind and always accompanied by his dog Wallace, to whom there is a memorial drinking place at the roadside at the top of Common Lane, in front of the old rectory grounds. He was much loved and respected, but some Sunday school attendees played tricks… [see above]*

Sunday School was a very important part of the children's lives in the C19th. Most attended – although 'incentives' were known to be used in some villages e.g. ½d for the first to arrive and 2d-cakes for those who stayed! The Church played an important social role as well as spiritual. All social village activities were organised through the religious institutions. The Weslyans opened a school in 1830s with 72 members, while the Anglican one attracted 35.

The Church impacted on all key life cycle events and charges were imposed at each. **In 1811** charges were as follows:

7s 6d for Banns of Marriage to be read
5s for a marriage certificate
6d for a churching after giving birth
1 guinea for each burial, tombstone or vault

These charges could result in people not getting formally married - none could avoid burial.

The photo (above left) shows the old rectory which had a pond on which visitors skated in winter (it rarely freezes now) – since sold privately. And (above right) a photo showing the new, more modern and practical rectory.

Each rector can revitalise the role of the Church with new projects and renew old links with the past as well. The custom of *Beating the Bounds* at Rogation tide (choir boys were 'beaten' at each corner post of the parish to remind them of the boundaries and emphasis their identity and importance of belonging!) briefly became the *Wheathill Wanderings* (Wheathill being the name of the benefice including Barton, Lydford and Kingweston, with whom Keinton has been linked for so many centuries and which the walk included).

Liturgical forms are constantly on the move, renewed efforts to include a younger wing into the ministry and also closer links with the Methodists are developing.
As with the village so, too, the churches change and adapt.

Methodist Chapel: Non-conformist churches were particular active in industrial areas. The 'founder' *John Wesley* himself (1703-91) was very active in nearby Radstock mining areas. He also is said to have preached at *Christian Cross*, Butleigh (the junction of Keinton-Somerton and Street-Charlton roads) on 3 preaching tours between Radstock and the neighbouring Charltons. *How many Kentonians walked over to join in?*

1840s: Poor harvests and the agricultural crises resulted in considerable migration between villages, and town/village in search of work. This helped to erode social networks and controls, and, together with increasing alcohol abuse, led to renewed efforts by churches to re-establish their influence.

It was said that *Oliver Chalker,* while walking to Babcary Chapel (built in 1811) for the Sunday service, received inspiration to build one in Keinton. So, local residents combined to form a Trust. Land was bought from John Harris for £19 0s 0d and, in 1843, building began on the Queens Street site. Many workers volunteered their efforts and after immense trials, the Weslyan Chapel was registered for worship on May 12th 1844.

The first 'Class Book' is dated 1840, with *George Bailey, Blacksmith*, as Class Leader.
Other key families included *Brooks, Chalker, Culling, Dark, Harris, Matcham, Oborne*, *Ridewood, Seymour*.
Early ministers were:

1861 William Saunders (Wesleyan)
1862-64 Nathaniel Alston
1865-67 Robert Rundle
1868-70 Thomas Thompson

Many members were outstanding preachers: *Thomas Chalker* (who once started evening service at 6pm, finishing at 9 pm!), *John and Tom Chalker* (who became President of the South African Conference), *George Bailey* + *John Brooks* often walked to Street to preach before Keinton Chapel existed.

The Sunday School was held in the croft beneath the Chapel: *Misses Austin, Haker*, *Masters, Dark and Grant* took great interest in training the children. A Christmas-tide Treat and Summer Treat were very popular.

The Chapel had *200 sittings*, and was then re-seated in 1888 and the box-pews removed.

Methodist Chapel interior,

… after refurbishment.

As residents of the Parish, members of any faith or none have the right to be buried in the parish churchyard of the CoE St Mary's (Methodists were mostly buried on the north side, where *Oliver Chalker's* grave can be found).

The churchyard and parish records sometimes tell of disasters which befell the village, like the many deaths recorded over the winter of 1855/6 from typhus and other recurrent epidemics of diseases which can all, now, be controlled.

United Weslyan Chapel was built in 1881 also with 200 sittings, known as **The Bible Christian Chapel**

(*distant Rt in photo, with gable end facing the road)*

Also,
the **Methodist Temperance Hall** opposite was added.
Both were sold off in 1960s, and converted to private homes.

Used for surgery, concerts and all sorts …

Inscription found on a slab in the Yew tree in Keinton Churchyard

Written by Hugh Chalker, 1984

Here stands a tree long past its prime, yet still
Most wonderfully hale and vigorous
Centuries are trifles wherewith to tell
The glorious story of it's lengthy days.

As well attempt a coliseum huge
With golden sands from off a sea-swept shore
As herald it's triumphant battle with
The ephemeral thing we misname Time.

It mocks at time and all the puny race
Of men long since passed in generations
To the land beyond this vale of sorrow.

While its umbrageous branches, vernal yet
And glowing with the strength and sap of life,
Seem to defy the raging tempest and
The thing called Death to work its worst abuses;

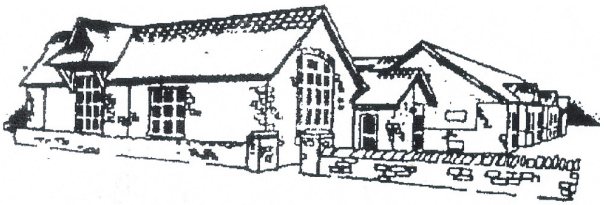
As phoenix-like, from glowing ashes rise,
Its wonted fire as ever on it lives
Coequal with – and of –eternity.

Exterior of *St Mary Magdalene Church*, Keinton p126

S for School, the happiest days…

In 1818 a day school for 30 pupils, taught by a 'poor man', was supported by the Rector (possibly *in* the Rectory?) A school master was in the village in 1841. A *National School* existed in 1846 for 46 pupils with *Miss Harriet Brown* '61 and *Miss Lucy Matcham* in '66, still 'supported by the Rector' (possibly held in the Master's house?).

By 1878 numbers had risen to100 (av 85), when it became a *Board School* – with 5 managers and *F Pitman* as Secretary. This school was housed in the **Church Rooms**, Chistle Road. Under the new Board structure in 1883 George Brooks was appointed as *Attendance Officer* (attendance improved!). These rooms were still used as extra space after a new block was built **in 1902** for 120 pupils (av 97) and 4 teachers in 2 rooms. The school was extended in the '30s. Finally, in 1995 the original Church Rooms were sold for housing development.



C19th census often shows sibling 'scholars' as young as 3 years - to help busy/working mothers. This continued into C20th .

Megan Cabble recalls*: I started at 3½ years old, when my baby brother arrived. It was common at the time. We used slates and pencils, and always started the day with a hymn and prayer*
Kath Cross tells: *My elder brother started at 3 years old too. Keinton school had about 70 pupils at this time ('30s).*

The early curriculum was 'basic', even in the C20th:

Jessie Squires remembers: *We did arithmetic, grammar, sewing and knitting. I often used to take ½ a day off to help with the washing. There was a lot of work for the family.*

Between the wars Keinton became a 'model' school – especially under Headmaster *Mr Newstead* - and achieved high standards. The school produced a remarkable number of pupils who became teachers themselves.
But not all pupils were good all of the time! Canings were a part of school life…

The girls were tender-hearted… *Megan Cabble remembers hiding behind her desk "I couldn't bear to watch when the boys were caned."*

…and competent - *Kath Cross recalls being very annoyed when the Singer machine broke down and her offer to help was rejected by the teacher – she was 'only' a girl – so an engineer was called out. Her father was quite angry with the Head, as Kath was good with Singers…*

Mike Ridewood recalls: *We learned to write our alphabet Aa Bb Cc Dd and had to chant our tables together. We learned important history dates like 1066, the Battle of Hastings and all about the Empire Heroes and where to find their adventures on the map of the world.*

Mary Matthews remembers: *We all went into the school playground to salute the flag on Empire Day and sing patriotic songs.*

The Census shows several teachers and school officials in the village:

1839 School Inspectors ! 1841 John Brown (61)
1861 Ms Harriet Brown
1871 Ms Masie Simm Nat Cert Tacher, Guernsey: :
Mary Maidment Butleigh , Thuza Matcham Teacher-pupil
1872 Mrs Alicia Teague National School Mistress
1875 Miss Easton

1878 National School
1883 new Board formed
Schooling became free for all and had a new management scheme
Hon. clerk: Mrs Caffrey '89 Mr F Pitman:
Officer for attendance : '89 Mr G Brookes
no. of pupils 95, av. attendance improved to 90!
1902 Geaorge Master, clerk

Head teachers:
1881 Joseph Baker 34 and wife, Katie from London
Sarah Scrivener (border), Minnie Chalker 20 Keinton
Marion Durbin 20 Yeovil
1889 Charles and William Hunt and Mrs Hunt
1891 son James Hunt 38, and wife, Emily 36
Mable Chalker 19 Keinton, Bessie Brooks 17 Keinton

Hunts remain till 1910.

In the interwar period the main school block was divided into three classrooms, by glass folding doors, to form separate spaces for infants, middle and senior years. The room could become one large space for special events, but classes had to be quiet to avoid disturbing each other.

In the post war period, pupil numbers grew and classes were held in different buildings throughout the village.
The deconsecrated **Bible Christian Chapel** housed the Infants, middle years were in the **School block** in Chistles Rd and some senior classes were held in the **Parish Rooms – e.g. cookery**. They all met up for school lunch in the main block where hot diners were brought in and served to all who didn't choose to go home. A few children were driven daily by 'school car' from Kingweston.

John Sutton remembers: *It was hard to settle as in Infant. At that time the mains were being put in along Castle Street. The pavements were made of shields which were lifted and leaned against garden walls. I hid behind them. My friend Richard Cook was sent to fetch me, but Miss Canon was understanding - I was never punished for it. I also recall reading aloud to Miss Salter: if you made 2 errors you got a slap on the back of the legs. You learned quickly!*

What was school like at this time?

It was still quite formal – everyone sat in rows, children chanted their tables, both boys and girls knitted squares and learned to do cross stitch, they all learned country dancing and joined in the regular school plays and concerts!

C20th teachers include:

Head: *Mr Newstead* ***1911***
Miss Edwards,U, Mid.'18-27
Miss Pearce, Inf *1914-16*
Miss Ridewood, Inf *'16-19*
Pupil T: *Olive, Cyril Squire*,
Later, Pupil T *Miss Day,*Inf '19
with Pupil T *Annie Corp Miss Hilda Beard*,U.'27-32

Head: *Mr Young* ***1934***
Miss Rabbage,U, '33-36
Mrs Young, C Mid '35-
during the war, *Miss Hector*
later *Miss Salter*,

Head: *Miss Squires* ***1940***
Mr Brooks Mid, -55
Miss Polly Squires.
Miss Cannon, infants 32-57

Head: Miss Mills ***1960***
Miss Bennet/Pitman
Later *Miss Stevens*
Miss Outram Inf
Christine Donkersly

Recent Heads:
1973-80s *Roger Amis*
80-90s *Alan Caruthers*
2000s *Mrs Ceri Austin*

Some are born to teach others have teaching thrust upon them.

John Sutton recalls*: Mr Percy Brooks was mercilessly ragged at school. Wingless flies were put on his desk to frighten him, book cupboards stacked so when opened they all fell out… Even his garden wasn't safe. The boys often climbed over to pull up a couple of his bamboos to use as fishing rods. Maybe poor Mr Brooks didn't dare complain. He was however a good and kindly tutor and, privately, helped many individual pupils with their Maths problems*

Miss Pitman's Class, 1970s

Bell, Bible and Cane

Happy school moments are also remembered .This included plenty of practical activities. It wasn't all writing and reciting!

Jean Maynard vividly recalls: *We had nature walks to collect leaves and flowers … the enthusiasm Miss Salter brought to this! As a teacher she was strict, but if you were hurt she was there; if naughty, she was there too!*
My younger brother had the **ita** *method of reading, but it didn't work well and the school soon stopped the idea.*

All Kentonians seem to remember school days as happy ones. It seems to have inspired some to become teachers themselves.

Joyce Pitman, nee *Bennet* began as a pupil in Keinton before the war. She remembers doing jigsaw puzzles and learning to read in *Miss Salter's* class, before moving up to *Miss Rabbage* and *Miss Squire*, the Head. Not many village children were able to take advantage of further schooling. But the lucky ones who could found that the imaginative and hands-on approach to science continued at nearby **Sunnyhill School for Girls in Bruton,** secondary level.

Joyce Pitman recalls: *During the war I moved on to* ***Sunnyhill School for Girls****, as a weekly border. I can well remember studying silkworms, watching them grow on a diet of lettuce – mulberries being difficult to find ! – and finally unravelling the silk cocoons.*
Also, immediately after the war, older pupils were taken on exchange visits to a school in Germany. It was all part of the move for reconciliation I expect.

After qualifying as a teacher in Wimbledon, she returned to Keinton, helped in the Youth Club and school – temporary became permanent - and finally retired in 1991. Her pupils say:

Richard Cook in '50s: *Miss Bennett helped in Youth club performances. When I was about 10 we were practicing for the Little Drummer Boy. I was longing to play the drum part but was passed over for my cousin. What did I do wrong?! Another time, when rehearsing 'There's a hole in my bucket' the stage collapsed!*
Later, she coached me for my first stage Kiss – with Jean Barrett! It was always fun at the Club!!

Alan Barker in the '60s: *We were going to have a new teacher – we couldn't believe our eyes. Miss Bennett was much younger – like our Mum. She joined in our games and took us for nature walks to the orchard and pond.*

In 2008 Miss Chris Calcutt recalls wonderful performances of *Pepys, Joseph, Star Turn,* and residential visits to Norfolk, Ironbridge, St Ives, Dartmoor.
In the classroom, 'jam-sandwich fractions', writing poetry, practical science were always popular… and her memory of how children grew in confidence and ability - both individually and in teams – made for happy recollections.
She also remembers stifling 'temporary' mobile classrooms and the winter floods, before the new buildings in '90s !

The story of the Church Rooms is an interesting one, slightly lost in the mists of time. Records show that a Trust was set up in 1843, during the incumbency of the *Rector Henry Livius*, between several senior Church dignitaries to provide facilities for the promotion of Christian education. These rooms served the school as well as providing a place for several other village organisations to meet.

The cookery facilities in the Church Rooms were also used by girls from several other schools such as Lovington, Lydford and Bruton – all linked by rail…

Mary Matthews remembers the cookery lessons well. *These were held in the adjacent Church Rooms while the boys did Gardening. The ever-hungry boys always asked us to smuggle something out for them. We tried lots of tricks. Water had to be fetched in a tub on wheels from the Carter's at Manor Farm. Every time we went out to fetch some new water we passed a bit of what we had just made to the lads. They loved it!*

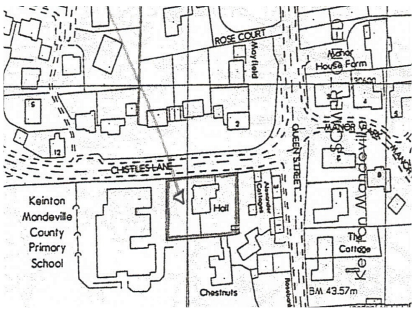
Over time it was used as…..
School Room: Cookery lessons for the girls.
Night School: in particular, cookery and dairying classes, also confirmation classes
Library: boxes of books were changed once a month by the county Library services and were available for loan to readers
Surgery: daily morning surgeries were held here in the 80s and 90s, staffed from Castle Cary. Many doctors are remembered including Dr Pascell?? Dr Jennie, Dr Jay and Dr Roylance These doctors also served the school needs as well.
Village meeting place: Mothers' Union meetings, beetle drives, jumble sales...

During the ’80s the expanding school numbers led to severe pressure on the school premises. Clearly, it was time for some *new building*. Keinton was fourth on the County buildings review list when, suddenly, it slipped to seventh place.
The Parish Council Chairmen, *Mr. Balance*, backed by the current serving *Cllr John Allen*, wrote a sharp reminder of Keinton’s urgent need and the priority position was reinstated.
At last, in 1994 additional classrooms were begun and the school enlarged for the expanding numbers of pupils.

Soon afterwards, amidst renewed pressures on the old Social Club Hut, together with need for new housing developments it became desirable to consider the *sale of the Church Rooms*.
But, when the time came for the sale, no ownership could be established and no deeds could be found, although the central registry still had documents relating to an original Trust.
Current ownership was unclear – the Church, the local Council, or ….?

So, a Trust had to be re-created to negotiate the sale and administer the funds thus raised. It was named after the *Rev Henry Livius* who held the Living from 1851-1873.
Three Trustees were created, always including the current rector.

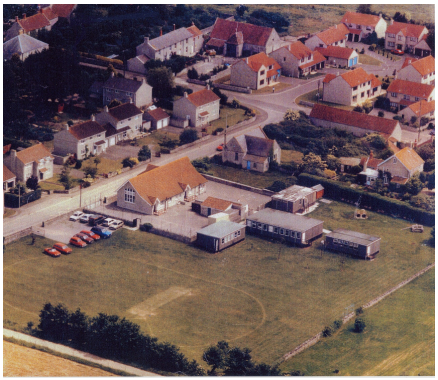
Map showing location of the Church Rooms



After the sale, the *Henry Livius Trust* spent some money was on new kitchen and toilet facilities at St Mary's Church (which replaced – and improved - those lost at the Church Rooms); on books for religious education in the school; some money towards the cost of children from KM school to go to Zambia on a local mission project. These links are being re-forged and two schools, from such very different cultures, continue to learn from each other.

A large sum went towards the building of a new Village Hall, in return for which the Church was allocated a specific number of hours when they could freely use the Hall for associated activities.

Left: aerial view of the Church Rooms and School buildings in the early 1980s. The field in front was used by the school for sports.



Right: aerial view from the rear of the Church Rooms and School buildings in the early 1990s.

Welfare: medical matters.

***Mentioned by* Oliver Chalker**

1843 of Dr West, and W Tucker, surgeon - from beyond Keinton??

1851 ***Eliza Brooks*** *nurse, from Wilts, who trained*
1861 Anne Hutchinson 63 Mary Cabble + Eliza Hunt (mother-in-law)

1871 Frank Scott, vet, *incomer from Lottisham*

1881 Elizabeth Hunt 63, with Harriet Monk 29 incomer from Devon, nurses
1891 Elizabeth Bailey 58 with Rose 14, nurses

1906 Dr Fred. J Brennard **at** *Sunnyside, Castle St*
'30s-40s Dr. Kendal also *Sunnyside, Castle Street*
with Surgery in wooden building behind the house

'50s-60s Dr. Connelly Beech House, High St. (now a nursing home) **Surgery -**Temperance Hall
'60s-70s Dr. Bernan, who lived opposite George Close

*post '70s Dr Jasmaria plus Dr Roylance from Castle Cary***,** in the *Church Rooms*, but after its demolition in *Beech House* until the current *Village Hall* was completed in1998.

This practice still sends a doctor for daily consultations for anyone who comes – without needing to make an appointment. A marvellous service for the village.

Interestingly, there seems to have been a *vet* in the village before a nurse or doctor – testament to the efficacy of home-cures, suspicion/expense of 'white coats' or just short supply? Nurses seemed to work in pairs, an older experienced woman with a younger trainee. A doctor only arrived in the C20th.

A Somerset doctor *John Westover*, 1643-1706 in *Wedmore*, noted that the commonest *complaynt* was the '*itch*' (scabies) or the '*ague*' (malarial fevers in the levels). Popular remedies were quasi religious/astrological. Causes were often Divine. In the late C18th *Parson Woodforde of Ansford* notes that inoculation against *small-pox* was becoming common and he inoculated both his servants as well. Rhubarb and ginger were taken for gastric problems; other treatments included wiping a gold ring across a stye; bark infused in spirits with citric peel against fevers; gentian root, pine and germander leaves for rheumatism; and Kentonians were recommended a rinse of cold tea to soothe eyes, rubbing bread on warts, and cider vinegar to prevent rheumatism - some still helpful..

Medical services, as with *education* and *policing*, seemed to develop after the re-organisation of local government due to Acts of 1880s when new responsibilities were added and a greater attempt at professionalism emerged. It also followed severe outbreaks of *cholera* in the bigger cities where terrible overcrowding led to appalling conditions (*typhus* hit Keinton, 1855/6). Suddenly water, sewage, health were national issues.

From the late'30s Dr Kendal was the resident doctor. His wife, being Irish, enjoyed a flutter. She owned horses, cared for and raced by *Charlie Cross.*
Dr Kendal assisted at *Mick Ridewood's* birth, for the princely sum of £5 – over a week's wage. Four years later he was needed again by the Ridewoods.
Many diseases have only fairly recently been controlled**.**

Mick Ridewood remembers*: Father told me to go to bed one night when suddenly I couldn't feel my legs. It was an outbreak of* ***polio****. I was lucky, but another child ended up with an 'iron leg', while a third child's leg became withered.*
TB *was still a problem, as my wife Grace found as a young woman. Treatment was fresh air, so she stayed three years at Taunton sanatorium. Again, she was one of the lucky ones.*

John Sutton recalls*: Before the National Heath Service treatments were expensive so people came to Granny Hyde whose remedies were highly respected.*

In the '30s, *District Nurse Rodmen*, in W Lydford, would cycle over when needed, particularly for a difficult child birth – as for Kath (nee Wilcox) Cross' arrival into the world. Otherwise, an 'experienced' woman from the village would be 'engaged' to attend. There was also a nearby *Cottage Hospital* in Butleigh for births and for 'minor cases'. This closed in '60s….

Kath Cross recalls*: All my children were born in Butleigh Hospital. The first child, Faith, was born during WW2, and came 'with complications', so we had to call for Dr Kendal. It cost £70 in doctor's fees + 6gns a week, for 2 week's lying-in; weekly fees were later paid by the Army as husband Charlie was a regular soldier at the time). Post-war births were all on the NHS! Village doctor's made up their own basic medicines, others from a pharmacy in Somerton/Cary.*
(At Kath's own birth her Father had had to ride to Lydford to fetch District Nurse Rodman to attend – the alternative was to 'engage' a neighbour from the village to attend).

During the war, larger homeowners were required to take evacuees. ***Nits*** were discovered in the school (it was assumed to have been brought in by the evacuees). They were quickly treated and no further outbreaks recorded.
Vaccinations were also given in schools by nurses – not always with good results.

Unfortunately for Mick Ridewood, a needle broke in his arm and infected the bone, requiring a bone graft at St Michael's Hospital, Bristol which, before the NHS was invented, cost the family £300 – the price of a good house at that time…

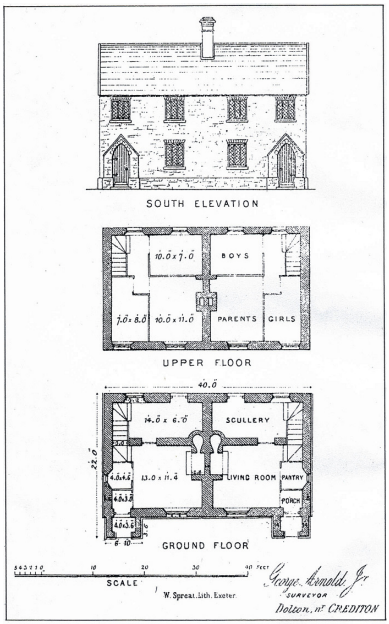
Meanwhile, home-made remedies were used: a hot poultice of goose grease on brown paper on the chest to ease coughs, rosehip/ blackcurrent syrup against colds. In WW2 the US convoys zig-zagged across the Atlantic to bring essential supplies while war rations permitted orange juice and codliver oil to improve health for children and pregnant mothers, but many children never saw a banana or orange for years. One bonus came as, with few sweets, teeth were in better condition!

Megan Cabble recalls: *Many remedies were home made. Rosehip and berry syrups to prevent colds but if you got one, then goose-grease and brown paper made a hot poultice for chests! It cost 2/6 for a visit to the doctor + medicine, at a time when £3 was a week's wage.*

In '50s two *District Nurses* lived in a cottage on the corner of Church Lane, mostly attending to pre-and post-natal care and also the elderly and housebound.

Since the late '70s, a Castle Cary practise has surgeries in the village - at first in the Two Nursing Homes now exist within the village, so residents are catered for, from cradle to grave…

Housing was a recurrent issue in the fight to improve health.



These labourers cottages (18x20'or 6x7m) were designed for the *West of England Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture, 1854*. Yet this was an improvement, tho' there was still no bathroom or toilet included.
The cottages in *Row Lane* were the only ones in Keinton found to be of less than an adequate standard.

Megan Cabble remembers visiting a Row Lane cottage in '50s: *It was a 2-up-2-down type - one bedroom for father and the boys, the other for mother and the girls. It was very cramped for a long family. [In the '30s - 2/6 a week rent.]*

Similar properties often added a kitchen-scullery with sloping roof at the back to make a 'two and a half' storey, with storage above. Some examples of these can be seen in High Street.

In C21st, 3-bed and en suite would be considered 'standard' but with sustainability, affordability and energy efficiency becoming more critical than size, other criteria are becoming dominant.

W: Women Workers in domestic service and, as housewives

Domestic servants showed up on the census from the mid – C19th, wherever prosperity had increased sufficiently to be able to afford them in the village. It is not clear how many workers lived-in or lived at home, as addresses are not always recorded. But it seems that girls who left school at 13 and went into service were sometimes considered the lucky ones.

Mike Ridewood remembers his mother reporting: *Some families were horrible and some very kind. It was quite a shock to leave the village and go to London to work at such a young age. Girls must have felt homesick.* Grace Ridewood recalls *her mother started work as a milker when she was thirteen. It was hard work, but she worked from home so it was familiar.*

Brenda King (nee Squire) was another young Keinton woman who went into service, at one time in Bristol. But it led to good fortune as she met her husband while out walking on the Downs on her day off! Subsequently, after marriage and two children, her resourcefulness and her domestic skills enabled her to find part-time work at Lydford Hotel, Millfield Annexe in Barton and later, Combe Hill House.

But what was it like to be working in the home? No mod-cons! What was it like to clean, wash, cook and look after a home in with no hot + cold running water or indoor toilets? Few houses in Keinton had fridges or washing-machines till the late 1960s. It was hard work. Everyone in the family had to help out.

Children often had to do jobs like collect acorns for the pigs and feed the chickens and ducks each day. Mary Matthews had to make sandwiches for her brother' lunches every morning. On Saturdays she helped wash the flag stones in the kitchen and to clean the steel knives (before stainless steel ones). To wash up, there was a bowl of hot water on the kitchen table and the clean items were placed on the nearby tray ready to be wiped and dried.
The boys had to fetch water from the well or pump, also to collect firewood, dig the garden and work on the allotment

Children's Amusements: With no TV, usual activities out of school time included walking around the lanes and paths, often playing bat and ball, cricket, or chase games in the road… or, when cars became more numerous, on the verge!
Where several branches of the same family used similar names it was common for friendly nicknames to be invented for each other within the village (and not so friendly names for other villages).

Children's chores included feeding the chickens

Census returns show several servants and other domestic workers. Sometimes a wife is listed 'family laundress, a sister as 'housekeeper' to an unmarried brother, or niece as 'servant'. Amelia Chalker, 1871, is listed as '*slave to the rest of the family*'… hopefully, a joke!

Other servants (often *aged 13/14*) are attached to pubs, businesses or others (e.g. doctor, rector or larger households). Whether they were always paid, or given board in lieu as 'charity' is impossible to tell. Their numbers increased and the roles become more specialised. Many came from outside the village..looking for work?

1841 13 female servants (10 male)

1851 8 female servants. (2 male) 4 housekeepers, 3 laundreess

1861 6 servants (2 male)
4 laundress, 3 housemaids, 4 house servants

1871 1 cook,, 5 servants, 1 housemaid, 4 laundress

1881 8 servants (1 male) 3 charwomen, 4 laundress

1891 9 servants, (1 male), 4 laundress, 4 charwomen

Keinton gradually came to look more like it does today - some roads had **tarmac** surface in the mid-20s, though it was still only stone-paved down Combe Hill Road.

E**lectricity** reached some houses in the '30s – at first families were given three lights and one free power-point per household. But even after the war you still had to use a candle to find your way to the *outside toilet* down the garden and, on a windy night, it always blew out!

Jobs were hard to come by and *March Hirings* – just like in the *Hardy* novels - still existed, into the early C20th, where a labourer could hope to be taken on for 'unskilled' work, at £1 12s a week.

Money was always tight so there were some imaginative ways of meeting family needs! *Poaching* was 'fair game'. Ever tried to soak raisons in a drop of brandy, tie it on a hook, tempt the peasants then wind in the gullible ones?! During harvest, *rabbitting* was a recognised sport. These could be caught and sent up to the London markets on the train: snared ones fetched 1/6d, but if shot only10d. *(sources cannot be revealed!)*

In general, diet was very plain, monotonous and dull by modern standards. Hence traditional rhymes such as

Pease pudding cold,
Pease pudding hot,
Pease pudding in the pot
Nine days old.

Jessie Squires recalls: *Potatoes were baked in the ash under the fire, and Spotted Dick boiled in a pan above…treacle pudding was a rare treat and much enjoyed. A pastry or junket was a real celebration. For lunch, the men took a bottle of cold tea with their chunks of bread – perhaps with a scraping of dripping to add some flavour.*

Business was still a very personal affair and with everyone knowing everyone else, trust and individual service was high. Shopkeepers were obliging and would 'put items aside' for a customer while they paid off the price week by week – whether it was some new shoes from *Ida Brown*, an item from *Mrs Moss* at the corner Drapers, or the dream-bike from *Cyril Ridewood*…

Communication and transport. With obliging shopkeepers who would make individual orders on request for almost any domestic goods, the reliable Ridewood cart and horse, together with the railway halt (at W.Lydford), Kentonians were usually well-served and didn't have to travel far to meet their general individual needs.
Later, a once-a-week bus service to Yeovil, on Saturdays, expanded opportunities. This only started after 2000!

Food bills could be reduced by swapping home-grown items with neighbours. Cut-price 'cuts' could be bought at the Butchers on a Saturday evening, as there were no fridges to store the remaining meat over the weekend.

Children could sometimes earn some extra pennies – 6d per pound - by picking and selling blackberries to specific households who used them to dye cloth – mostly still coloured by vegetable dyes into the late '50s. A week's *Blackberry Holiday* was given at the end of September for pupils. Trevor Cook earned a record-breaking 2/6d, which he then lost!!

Role of the Mother's Union, founded in 1876.
Although times were hard, this organization has always had an international perspective. It encouraged members to consider the lives of women 'in the colonies' and, now, in all parts of the world. Many of its activities related to fund-raising for these projects, but there were also social outings and gatherings to enjoy as well such as Charabanc trips, in 1930s, or even in an open-sided lorry which sometimes broke down – it was always an adventure and talked about for a long time.
Womens' Institute was more local in its objective: at first to get women together to share common experiences and develop homemaking skills. It is often falsely mocked for its 'jam and Jerusalem' image but it retains an active role in village life.
Both these organisations continue to thrive in the village.

So, without mod-cons, how did women, in mid C20th do the usual chores of laundry, cleaning, storing and cooking food?

Water: Most houses had either a *well* in the garden, often shared, or a *pump* in the yard. The pump either gave water into a bucket, or pumped into a loft tank from which an inside tap would release it – until the tank needed a refill…
'Bath' water still had to be heated in pans for a tub in front of the fire…often a Saturday night ritual for all the family.

Cleaning: Sweeping and mopping floors were a daily necessity to keep the winter mud and summer dust at bay. Other home conveniences, as at Manor farm, included a Keinton shield with a hole in the centre, through which the women would put their mops to twist and pull them to squeeze the water out!

Laundry: Wash day had for centuries been a major event – during which most men kept well away! Instead of a fire under the old copper, by the mid '50s laundry could be done in a *galvanised caldron (about a metre high and 40cm wide),* filled with water *plugged in* and heated to wash soiled 'whites', while the rest of the wash was usually *cold-soaked* in buckets with handfuls of *washing soda* to get rid of the lighter dirt.

Sketch of traditional wash day, early-C20th

During a very dry summer the Parish even paid to have the *Row Lane* wells deepened. At least this helped to save a long trek to get water from Charlton Road springs.

Laundry day was tough. All bedlinen and underwear was white cotton, so it could be boiled in the *copper* over the washhouse fire – the same boiler was used for boiling puddings!
A bag of *Reckett's blue* was added to whiten the wash.
Colours were cold soaked, rubbed on a *ribbed wash board*, then put through the *hand-turned mangle*. (The same wash board was used by '50s skiffle groups, rubbed with a thimble for rhythm!)

The late '60s saw the first *twin tub washing machines* with hand-turned mangle attachments, which was a huge advance, and such an excitement that it even featured in a children's dressing-up competition !! - along with *Bill and Ben* the flower-pot men, the proverbial fairy and *Robin Hood*.

(dressing up competition, mid-60s)

Photo includes: Colin Pearce, C Beal, P Beal and Lorraine Beal

Food: Storing food to keep it fresh was a key task. Butter was often kept in same crevices on the *inside of a well* where the thick walls kept it cooler, or, in an *earthenware crock* standing in a saucer of water. Surplus fruit could be bottled and also and jammed; meat was often smoked. Now, storage is often in large chest freezers.

Well 'store', in a garden in Queen Street.

Roy Cabble recalls: *Meat was kept in a wooden 'safe' box with a metal mesh 'door' and then hung on a north facing wall, outside.*
To preserve the family pig, after slaughtering, salt was rubbed into a 'side', left on the 'salter'(slightly hollowed stone/marble slab) for rubbing the other side next day, then stored in a walk-in larder (tile/stone shelves to keep items cool, and usually situated on the north side of the house).

Some kitchens, in the '60s began to swap the old coal range for a new *oilstove* placed in the same fireplace. Several of these old fireplaces have, more recently, been painstakingly restored and *solid-fuel ranges* reintroduced.

Probably a majority of homes now also have a modern micro-wave on the working surfaces, but maybe also a fireplace or barbeque outside!

And, finally,

In praise of Keinton women –
or of one who particularly caught the eye of a young gallant…

The Maid of Keinton

I hear that maiden still
Of Keinton Mandeville
Singing in flights that played
As wind-wafts through us all.
Till they made our mood a thrall
To their aery rise and fall
"Should he upbraid."

Rose-necked, in sky-grey gown,
From the stage in Stower town
Did she sing and, singing, smile as
She blent that dexterous voice,
With the ditty of her choice
And banished our annoys
There awhile.

One with such song had power
To wing the heaviest hour
Of him who housed with her
Who did I never knew
When her spoused estate on drew
And her warbling flung its woo
In his ear.

Ah, she's a beldame now,
Time-trenched on cheek and brow
Whom I once heard as a maid
From Keinton Mandeville
Of matchless scope and skill
Sing with smile and trill
"Should he upbraid"

Flora (Thomas Hardy's wife) wrote to Mr and Mrs H. Chalker, in reply to an enquiry in 1926, as follows:

Dear Madam,

The Maid of Mandeville occurs under that title in Mr Hardy's volume called 'Collected Poems' published by Macmillan, latest edition, 1923. Also in an earlier volume called 'Late Lyrics'.

The song was sung by Miss March at Sturminster Newton, in 1878.

Yours very truly,

Flora Hardy

My husband's secretary is away il. F.H.

There is no reference to this song at the national folk collection in the *Vaughan Williams Museum Library*, Cecil House, London, nor in the 'Hardy Collection' held in the *Dorset County Museum,* nor at *Folk South West*, Montacute...

So, we have a unique reference to this important tribute to the allures of a Keinton Maid!

Any one like to set a tune to it?

<u>Beyond the Village</u>: Social Conditions in Somerset:
The comings and goings in village population.

Keinton records don't go back far enough to provide much information of the medieval period, due to the loss of records in the C18th Vicarage fire. Nevertheless, there are some mysterious bumps in the fields around the Church which might indicate earlier dwellings which were abandoned due to events like the Black Death 1348. However, the less-romantically disposed could attribute these to field use as land-fill for Street manufacturers like Clarks in C20th !

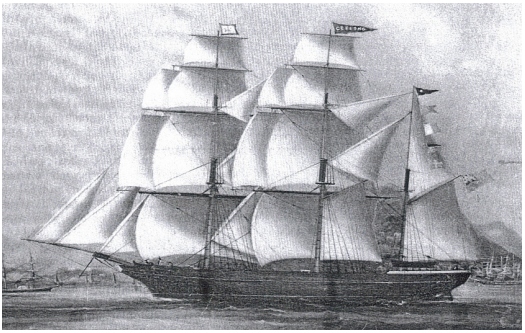
Certainly, the village seems to have migrated towards the cross roads around the time of its increasing use as a coaching road. Businesses followed customers.

Mid- and Late C19th

The census of 1851 reported that the peasants of Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire were among the worst paid and worst housed in the country.
Farm labourers received 7s- a week [25p] plus the usual allocation of 4 pints of cider
Stone cutters received 10s- a week [40p] (no mention of cider)
But *Quarry labourers* only received 6s or 7s a week.

Farm labourers' wages were low following successive poor harvests in 1840s which partly led the Anti-Corn Law League's eventual success in repealing laws which had restricted corn imports to protect local farmers but which kept prices high which hurt the labourers. Wages changed very little during the next 30 years when another agricultural depression struck partly due to huge mechanised production on the American prairie and imports of its beef and of corn into England.
Both these periods led to *increased emigration* to Australia, S. Africa, Canada, and also America.

Opting for emigration to the colonies was chosen by several members of Keinton families. The journey was long and arduous and not all made it, and of those who did arrive the chances of a better life were by no means guaranteed.


The *Geelong*

The *Geelong, Nestor* and others, list passengers from Keinton and other Somerset villages on journeys to Australia, South Africa and America. e.g. (extract from *Somerset Years)*

> *Julia Gaylor* (30, reads) wife of *Frederick* (35, labourer) son of *John and Lucy Pitts* of Keinton Mandeville sail from Plymouth, May 21, arriving at Portland, Victoria, SA. Sept 16 1854.
> Also, *Eliza* (10, literate) and *William* (7 lit.), *Lousia* (4).

Many signed contracts for 6 months, at £60 with rations…

What happened next ??

Migration: Census records throughout the C19th show considerable changes. The shift in occupation was not always a shift of people. Many within the village just switched from agriculture to quarrying.
The quarrying boom gathered during the second half of the C19th, coinciding with periods of poor harvests and cheap imports from the American Prairies.

Emigration: Some went to try their luck in the gold rush in Australia and South Africa, others to America.

Immigration: There is a noticeable trend towards more skilled people arriving and development of services and professions, while leaving quarrying and farming to indigenous families.

During the *latter* decades of the C20th, when agriculture was being hit by new food imports from America - made possible by the faster steam ships and even with refridgerated holds - many workers sought better security in industries like the quarries, which increased the likelihood of migration into the village in the '80s and '90s…

Numbers born in …			
	Keinton,	*in Somerset,*	*beyond*:
'41			35
'51	341	110	42
'61	314	296	34
'71	293	199	37
'81	318	174	44
'91	308	161	49

Immigration has continued with the growth of 'urban overspill' and 'commuter villages' in the 1980s and 90s, so that Keinton now has a population of 1000+… its highest ever!