

**THE BUXTONS OF EASNEYE:  
AN EVANGELICAL VICTORIAN FAMILY  
AND THEIR SUCCESSORS**

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## PREFACE

I first came to Easneye in 1964, when I had been appointed as the Resident Tutor at All Nations Missionary College, which had just moved there from Taplow, near Maidenhead, Berkshire. I lived with my family in North Lodge, one of the cottages on the Easneye estate, for the next four years, but my connection with All Nations and Easneye has continued up to the present. I worked for thirty-four years full-time and for another seven years part-time, and now my son, who was only eighteen months old back in 1964, is a member of the All Nations faculty. I feel, therefore, that my long connection with the place gives me the interest and ability to look into and record something of the past history of Easneye and its inhabitants.

Mr David Morris, the Principal of All Nations when it was at Taplow as well as for several years after the move to Easneye, and whose vision and hard work were vital in making the college what it is today, used to give a very informative and entertaining history of the site, the building, the Buxton family and the college (never dull but sometimes bordering on the over-imaginative!) When he retired, the Rev. Bob Hunt, who had been a student at Taplow and for the last thirty years or so has been on the staff, took over the “Story of Easneye” and entertained and informed successive generations of students (and staff!) with his lively presentations. Last year (2006) he retired and it now falls to my son Paul to continue the task. It was partly to help him that I set about researching the history of that part of the wider Buxton family which lived here, but the work has taken on a life of its own and I have now tried to gather all the information I can from whatever source, including censuses and other online resources, to tell the story as it was. I have also produced a Powerpoint presentation.

## CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

Thomas Fowell Buxton (1821-1908), the first owner of Easneye Mansion in Hertfordshire, and who lived there for forty years, was one of eleven children born to Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786-1845) “the Liberator”<sup>1</sup> and his wife Hannah (née Gurney, 1783-1872).<sup>2</sup> His father was a brewery owner, a Member of Parliament, a social reformer, a mission advocate and an anti-slavery campaigner. His mother was the sister of Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845), the prison reformer, and of Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847), an evangelical Quaker preacher who had great influence on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond.

His older brother Edward North Buxton (1812-1858), who succeeded to the title of baronet on the death of his father, together with Thomas Fowell himself, and his younger brother Charles Buxton MP (1822-1871), were Evangelicals who were active in all kinds of religious, philanthropic and social activities.<sup>3</sup> His sons John Henry Buxton (1849-1934) and Alfred Fowell Buxton (1854-1952) followed the family tradition of business activity in either brewing or banking, combined with extensive Christian activity in a wide variety of fields, as did other members of the family, including his son-in-law Robert Barclay (1844-1921) of nearby High Leigh, Hoddesdon, who married Thomas Fowell’s daughter Elizabeth Ellen (1848-1919). His youngest son Barclay Fowell Buxton (1860-1946) was a pioneer missionary in Japan, and three of his sons followed in his steps: Murray Fowell Buxton (1899-1940), who also worked as a missionary in Japan; Alfred Barclay Buxton (1891-1940) who served in Africa with C T Studd, and [Barclay] Godfrey Buxton (1895-1986) who was too badly injured in World War 1 to go as a missionary, so instead headed up a missionary training colony which prepared more than 300 men to go overseas as missionaries.

Two of Thomas Fowell Buxton’s grandsons, Claude Pelly (1883-?) and Dick Pelly (1886-1976) the sons of another daughter, Margaret Jane (1859-1903) who was married to the Rev R Arnold Pelly (1856-1949), served as missionaries in India. A number of other descendants

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<sup>1</sup> There is a good modern account of his work and that of the “Clapham Sect” in Oliver Barclay, *Thomas Fowell Buxton and the Liberation of Slaves* William Sessions Ltd, 2001. (Oliver Barclay is a great-great-grandson of Sir TFB.) There are also a number of useful articles, e.g.; A Walls, “Thomas Fowell Buxton” in *Mission Legacies* ed G H Anderson, 1994:11-18 [available on-line at [http://www.dacb.org/stories/non%20africans/legacy\\_buxton.html](http://www.dacb.org/stories/non%20africans/legacy_buxton.html)]; M M Hennell in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860* ed G M Lewis, Blackwell Reference 1995; i:179-180; D M Lewis in *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* ed T Larsen, IVP, 2003:107-109.

<sup>2</sup> Only five of the eleven children survived into adulthood, Priscilla, Edward North, Richenda, Thomas Fowell (given the same name as the oldest son who had died the previous year) and Charles. Susannah Maria (b.1811) died in 1811 aged seven months. Four died of whooping cough and measles within a five week period in 1820, Thomas Fowell (b. 1810) aged ten, Rachel Gurney (b. 1816) aged four, Louisa (b. 1817) aged three and Hannah (b. 1819) aged one. John Henry (b.1813) died in 1830 aged sixteen, probably of tuberculosis.

<sup>3</sup> David Bebbington’s summary of “Evangelical Characteristics” is widely accepted as normative. He includes “conversionism”, the emphasis on the need for personal conversion, “crucicentrism”, the centrality of the Cross of Jesus Christ for human reconciliation with God, “Biblicism”, the stress on the Bible as the revelation of God’s will for mankind, and “activism” the need to be active in evangelism and in social action (*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* London 1989:1-19.)

were either missionaries, e.g. Kenneth Buxton (1909-2001) in Burundi, his eldest sister Hannah as a nurse in Ceylon, and his other sister Ruth Lydia Buxton (1906-c2000) also as a nurse, with C.M.S. in Kenya, or evangelical ministers in Britain. e.g. Leonard Buxton (1873-1946), Kenneth's father; Arthur Buxton, Leonard's brother; and Edmund Digby Buxton, Leonard's son. Leonard's wife Kathleen "Kitty" (nee Wingfield Digby) had been a missionary in N. India with the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society before their marriage. Kenneth later worked for twenty years as the medical superintendent of the Mildmay Mission Hospital, and many other Buxtons, Gurneys and Barclays have been active as Christians in their professions.

Thomas Fowell<sup>4</sup> was born on August 29, 1821 at Cromer Hall, in Norfolk, where his parents had moved from Hampstead shortly after the death of four of their children in 1820.<sup>5</sup> He grew up in Norfolk (the family moved to nearby Northrepps Hall in 1828) and in 1840 followed his older brother Edward by going up to Trinity College, Cambridge, from where he graduated with a BA in 1844, eventually receiving an MA. He was married on February 5, 1845 to one of his cousins, Rachel Jane Gurney (1823-1905), the daughter of Samuel Gurney (1786-1856) of West Ham, another of Hannah's brothers, known as "the Bankers' Banker," who was Treasurer of the British and Foreign Bible Society from 1843 until his death. Edward had already married one of Samuel's daughters, Catherine Anne Gurney (1813-1911) in 1836.<sup>6</sup> Their father, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, died two weeks after Thomas's marriage,<sup>7</sup> and Edward inherited his father's baronetcy. Within a couple of years he moved out of Leytonstone House in the village of Leytonstone, Essex, to No 10, Upper Grosvenor Street, London, and in 1847 became Whig MP for South Essex.

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<sup>4</sup> He was given the same name as his brother who had died the previous year in Hampstead.

<sup>5</sup> They had lived for seven years in the Director's House attached to the brewery in Brick Lane, Spitalfields (in September 2007 an English Heritage Blue Plaque commemorating him and his work in the campaign against slavery was placed on the wall of the house), but in 1815 they moved to Byron Cottage, North End, Hampstead. A close friend, Samuel Hoare, a banker who was married to Louisa, Hannah's sister, lived nearby in Hampstead. However, in 1820, the Buxtons moved out of London to Norfolk, firstly to Cromer Hall, then in 1828 to Northrepps Hall nearby. About this time, Buxton and Hoare began to involve themselves in the work of prison reform undertaken by their sister-in-law Elizabeth Fry.

<sup>6</sup> Their sister Priscilla (1808-1852) married Andrew Johnston in 1834, and their youngest brother Charles (1823-1871) married Emily Mary Holland in 1850. Richenda (1820-1858) married Philip Hamond and had a son, Charles. She died three days after her brother Sir Edward North Buxton. Priscilla and her husband gave invaluable support to Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton in his fight against slavery. She was the nineteenth century equivalent of secretary and political research assistant, compiling and collating the facts and figures which he used in his public speeches and writing. See Clare Midgely art 'Buxton , Priscilla (1808–1852)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/55183>]

<sup>7</sup> Thomas and Rachel had to return early from their honeymoon in Devon to be at the bedside of his father in his last illness.

## CHAPTER II : SPITALFIELDS AND LEYTONSTONE

For the first two years of their marriage, Thomas and his wife lived, as his father had done, in the Director's House at 91 Brick Lane, Spitalfields, attached to the Truman, Hanbury and Buxton Black Eagle Brewery, where their first child, a daughter Rachel Louisa, was born in 1846. He was increasingly involved in the running of the brewery during this time, and continued his involvement for the remainder of his working life<sup>1</sup>, even when he moved away from Spitalfields.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Back Eagle Brewery in Brick Lane, Spitalfields was the largest in Europe and covered an area of six acres. Founded in 1669 it passed into the hands of the Truman family in 1694. In 1780 the Hanbury family became involved, particularly two brothers, Sampson and Osgood Hanbury. Their sister Anna married Thomas Fowell Buxton of Earls Colne, Essex and in 1808 their son Thomas Fowell Buxton (later Sir) joined his uncles' firm. He was soon made a partner and given almost sole responsibility in reorganising and running the business, which he did with great energy and ability. "Among other measures of reform, he resolved to remedy the state of gross ignorance which prevailed among the workmen. He dealt with this in a summary method, by calling the men together and threatening to discharge at the end of six weeks everyone who could not read and write. He gave them a schoolmaster and other means of instruction and fixed a day for examination, when he was gratified to find that he had not to send away a single man. He was also very careful to prevent the servants of the firm from working on Sunday." Industries: Brewing', *A History of the County of Middlesex*: Volume 2:(1911), pp. 168-78.

With his two brothers' involvement in political and other aspects of public life, it fell to Thomas Fowell Buxton to handle most of the running of the business. The fame of the firm was widespread. In Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1850) Mrs Micawber says: "I have long felt the brewing business to be particularly adapted to Mr Micawber. Look at Barclay and Perkins! Look at Truman, Hanbury, and Buxton! It is on that extensive footing that Mr Micawber, I know from my own knowledge of him, is calculated to shine; and the profits, I am told, are e-NOR—mous!"

<sup>2</sup> Many Christians today are troubled by the thought of their nineteenth century forebears being involved in the business of brewing. At the time, however, beer was seen as a good, nourishing and healthy alternative to the cheap gin which caused so much drunkenness and resulting social problems (gin drinking was the equivalent of today's binge drinking.) Hogarth's famous engraving of "Gin Lane" advertising "Drunk for a penny, dead drunk for two pence, clean straw for nothing" had as its companion piece "Beer Street" encouraging the use of this beverage, for, as Hogarth said, it is an "invigorating liquor" and on this street "all is joyous and thriving. Industry and jollity go hand in hand."

However there were a growing number of dissenting voices; some Quakers, including Joseph John Gurney, Sir Thomas's brother-in-law, believed that water was sufficient to drink (although water was not always safe), and William Booth and the Salvation Army set their faces against all alcohol use. Surprisingly, Charles Buxton, Sir Thomas' son, who was a partner in the brewery, wrote an article attacking the sale and use of strong drink! Possibly he had in mind the "gin palaces" but he did also mention beer houses. Perhaps he was happy for beer to be consumed at home as an accompaniment to food, rather than in beer houses. In his own words: "It would not be too much to say that if all drinking of fermented liquors could be done away, crime of every kind would fall to a fourth of its present amount, and the whole tone of moral feeling in the lower order might be indefinitely raised. Not only does this vice produce all kinds of wanton mischief, but it has also a negative effect of great importance. It is the mightiest of all the forces that clog the progress of good. \* \* \* The struggle of the school, the library and the church, all united against the beer-shop and the gin-palace, is but one development of the war between Heaven and hell. It is, in short, intoxication that fills our jails; it is intoxication that fills our lunatic asylums; it is intoxication that fills our work-houses with poor. Were it not for this one cause, pauperism would be nearly extinguished in England" (*How to Stop Drunkenness* 1855).

In 1893 John Henry Buxton spoke at a rally in London opposing a rather Draconian bill which the

When his brother moved to London in 1847, Thomas, with his wife and child, moved into Leytonstone House, where they lived for the next eighteen years and where the remainder of their children were born (They had a total of fourteen, but twins who were born in 1847 or 1848 died in infancy, and Leonard, born in 1857 died of scarlet fever in 1861.) At that time Leytonstone was described as “one of the prettiest villages imaginable. The main road from Stratford was simply a country road with a double row of trees and bounded by hedges and ditches nearly throughout its whole length. Here and there were a few small houses, cottages and old inns. The village itself contained many fine old houses standing in extensive grounds.” Leytonstone House itself was a large Georgian house built around 1740, which was later classified as a Grade II Listed building. The traffic that passed along the Leytonstone Road caused the hamlet to grow quite considerably, and twenty years later the sprawl of London began to threaten the rural calm, but for the next twenty years they enjoyed life there.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas did not have the public presence of either of his two brothers, Edward<sup>4</sup> or Charles<sup>5</sup>, both of whom were Members of Parliament; his gifts lay in organisation, which he exercised both at the brewery and as Chairman of the London Hospital from 1856 till 1866 (His association with the hospital dated back to 1845 when he married and moved to Spitalfields.) The London Hospital or “the Great General Hospital for East London” according to an inscription on its frontage, was not endowed like Bart's, Guy's, and St. Thomas's, but almost entirely dependent for its maintenance upon voluntary contributions. It was originally founded, in 1740, as an Infirmary in Goodman's Fields, E., and twelve years later moved to the present buildings in Whitechapel Road. It started on a modest scale with four hundred and forty beds, and its patients were, and continued to be, the poor workers, such as coal-heavers, watermen,

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Liberal Government was introducing to give local authorities power over all licensed premises which would severely restrict the access of working people to alcohol, but left the rich who had their clubs free to drink their wines and spirits to excess! The bill never made it to the statute book and a similar bill in 1908 was also defeated. In 2006, nearly a century later, the government is still trying to get it right!

<sup>3</sup> The *Post Office Directory* for 1855 which describes it as “a hamlet of Leyton, with many fine suburban villas, running parallel to Leyton” gives the population in 1851 as 1538. The *Post Office Directory* for 1874 gives the population in 1861 as 2396 and for 1871 as 4914. The earlier one mentions that the *Royal Mail* coach to London passes through Woodford; the later one that Leytonstone has its own station on the Great Eastern Railway.

<sup>4</sup> He served as a Whig MP for South Essex (1847-1852) and East Norfolk from 1857 till his death a year later. He was especially active in various organisations, including the African Civilisation Society, the London City Mission, the Ragged School Union, the Church Missionary Society and the Lord's Day Observance Society. He was also treasurer of the London Hospital. He spent much of the 1850s in Italy trying to reconcile Waldensian and other Protestant missionaries, who were competing unhealthily in the areas of evangelism (see J B Cutmore in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* ed. D M Lewis, Blackwells, 1995 I :179).

<sup>5</sup> Information on Charles' Christian activity is harder to come by than Edward's. The article in the Oxford DNB focusses mainly on his political and other public activities. See G. B. Smith, 'Buxton, Charles (1822–1871)', rev. H. C. G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4244>]

costermongers, and labourers generally.<sup>6</sup> By 1850, nearly a million and a half patients had been treated. In 1840, Elizabeth Fry's Nursing Sisters began to nurse in the Hospital (interesting in the light of the family relationship!), training under the Matron, Jane Nelson, and by 1873 the Hospital had opened its own School of Nursing, based along lines pioneered by Florence Nightingale. The school of nursing expanded under Miss Eva Luckes, the Matron from 1880 to her death in 1919)<sup>7</sup> to become the largest nurses' training school in Britain. Edith Cavell, the English nurse executed by the Germans on October 12, 1915, for helping British soldiers marooned behind German lines in Belgium escape, trained under Eva Luckes. Thomas John Barnardo, became a medical student here in 1866 and after qualifying set up the first of his Dr Barnardo's homes in Stepney Causeway. By 1876, when Queen Victoria opened a new wing, 30,000 patients a year were being treated and there was an average of six hundred and fifty patients in the hospital. In 1886 Joseph Merrick, the so-called 'Elephant Man', was admitted to the hospital. He remained there until he died, in his hospital room, in 1890. Thomas Fowell Buxton continued as chairman for ten years and as treasurer for a further ten, and his son John Henry later became chairman and then treasurer of the hospital. There were two wards endowed by Thomas Fowell, a "Buxton Ward" for children, and a "Rachel Ward" named after his wife, for those with various infectious diseases,. Thomas and Rachel made an annual practice of inviting all the nursing staff from the hospital for a day out at Leytonstone House (over two weekends, so that the hospital could continue to function.)

Thomas Fowell was also involved in many Christian projects, in particular supporting the work of the Abbey Street Sunday Schools in Bethnal Green, where over seven hundred children from very poor backgrounds were taught every week. It became known throughout Britain and across the Atlantic for its "excellent discipline and superior methods of teaching."<sup>8</sup> Thomas's brothers, Edward North and Charles gave their public support, but again, Thomas was more personally involved, chairing meetings, presiding at Sunday School anniversaries and helping to sort out the problems and crises which inevitably arose over such things as staffing, leadership and organisation of such a large and successful charitable undertaking. It was through his firm, "who [are] numbered among its most munificent supporters" that the Sunday School was held in a newly built British and Foreign Building Society school which was "truly palatial" in comparison with the premises previously occupied. He also helped on the financial side. One entry reads: "The year's contributions amounted to £30 5s 6d., the names of T. F. Buxton, Esq. and Messrs Truman, Hanbury, and Co., as usual, being at the head of the list for liberal sums." In 1872, after the death of Charles Buxton in the previous year, "his place [as President] has kindly been filled by John Henry Buxton, Esq., thus continuing to the institution the benefit of an influential name - a name which is ineffaceably impressed not only upon this, but on many a kindred institution."

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<sup>6</sup> A small volume printed in 1809 has as its title, *General State of the London-Hospital for the Reception and Relief of Sick and Wounded Seamen, Manufacturers and Labouring Poor, also Women and Children...*, which gives a good idea of those for whom it was intended,

<sup>7</sup> She stayed with John Henry Buxton and his wife at Hunsdonbury a number of times.

<sup>8</sup> The details and citations are from *The History of Fifty Years' Work of the Abbey Street Sunday Schools, Bethnal Green* by G Morgan (J S Forsaith, 1890), which are scanned and available on [http://www.ferdinando.org.uk/abbey\\_street\\_sunday\\_school.htm](http://www.ferdinando.org.uk/abbey_street_sunday_school.htm)

In 1847 after the repeal of the Corn Laws and when the Irish Potato Famine was affecting the whole population, Thomas Fowell proposed in a letter to the *Morning Chronicle* the substitution of brown bread and brown flour for white bread and white flour, claiming that it was far more nutritious and also prevented a third of the wheat “going to the hogs” instead of feeding a starving population. A man ahead of his time!

Family life at Leytonstone was pleasant, although with its inevitable ups and downs, judged by the journal kept by [Elizabeth] Ellen, who was born on January 17, 1848 in nearby West Ham, probably at her grandparents’ home.<sup>9</sup> There were bereavements, including three of the fourteen children, sadly not unusual at the time, especially in a large family. Following the birth of Louisa in 1846, twins had been born but they died in infancy. Six boys and another three girls were born, the last in 1864 when Rachel was forty-one. When Leonard contracted scarlet fever at the age of three, three of the children, including Barclay, who was only six months old, were sent away to stay with relatives<sup>10</sup>.

Ellen’s journal includes the following picture of a typical day in 1862 when she was fourteen:

“Early in the morning at six o'clock I generally wake up, so then I light a candle and sit and work or read till half past six; then I get up and when I am dressed I work again till half past seven; then we go down to Papa and Mama and do anything we like till eight o'clock. At eight Miss Smith [the governess] comes down, and she goes in to 'Early Breakfast' with Johnney, Arty, Geoffrey, Alfred and I. At half past eight we have prayers, and we always have a hymn for which Johnney, Lisa and I take in turns to play the music. After Reading the boys and Papa play Battledoor and Shuttlecock; and at a little before nine o'clock Mama, Papa and Lisa go in to Late Breakfast - and Johnney goes off with a hoop to his school - and Arty, Geof, Alfred and I generally go out in the garden or stay in and do anything we like. At ten we all come in to lessons, and they end at a quarter to one, then we all have luncheon together at one, and then go out in the garden or do anything we like. At four we come in again to afternoon lessons, and when they end at half past five we then all go down and have Schoolroom tea, except Lisa who has a music lesson so she waits and has dinner with Mama and Papa. After tea we all go up and dress, then the boys and I share the two pianos till seven o'clock, so we get all our practise done then. At seven Miss Smith reads us Macaulay's history till half past seven, then Mama, Papa and Lisa come out of dinner, and Alfred, Geof and Arty go to bed, Johnney, Lisa and I go to bed about half past eight, so we read and work with Papa and Mama till then.”

Their routine on a Sunday included Bible reading and hymns at home, church at eleven, luncheon at one and then the children were set texts to copy out. There was a further visit to

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<sup>9</sup> Selections from her journal have been published as *Ellen Buxton's Journal 1860-1864* arranged by Ellen R C Creighton [her grand-daughter], Geoffrey Bles 1967.

<sup>10</sup> The children who survived into adult life were Rachel Louisa born in 1846, Elizabeth Ellen born in 1848, John Henry born in 1849, Fowell Arthur born in 1850, Geoffrey Fowell born in 1852, Alfred Fowell born in 1854, Catherine Emily born in 1856, Margaret Jane born in 1859, Barclay Fowell born in 1860, Effie Priscilla born in 1861 and Ethel Mary (Mary Ethel in the Registry of Births) born in 1864.

church at three before visiting relatives or a walk in the nearby forest before tea.

Summer holidays were spent on one of the Gurney family estates near Cromer in Norfolk. At some point Thomas bought Upton House, Cromer, where they spent their holidays separate from, but still close to, other members of the family.<sup>11</sup> The journey was easily made in a day with their own carriages taking the family and servants to Stratford Station where everyone, plus horses and carriage, were transported by train to Norwich. The family had a saloon carriage with easy chairs, a table and even a small nursery area. The last part of the journey was made partly in their own transport but carriages were also sent out by their relatives for servants etc. While on holiday they played more, had long walks and carriage rides, picnics, walks along the beach and often met up with their numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

In 1850, when there were only four children, Thomas and Rachel went on a trip to Austria and Switzerland, leaving the children in the care of relatives. Perhaps this was compensation for the interrupted honeymoon back in 1845! A sketch book from the holiday survives in the Buxton archive at Easneye.

According to the 1851 Census, there were twelve servants, including a butler, two footmen and a groom. There were also two gardeners. In the 1861 Census there were a total of ten, a governess, a cook, a butler, a footman, a groom, a nursery maid, a kitchen maid and three housemaids. Ellen in her journal mentions in passing a coachman, a governess, two nursemaids, two maids and a gardener.

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<sup>11</sup> The following is part of the entry on the Norfolk Museum website:

“Upton House:

At this point - Flint House - Church Street ends, and Upton House is the first house in Norwich Road, as it was called after Turnpike Road. However as this house has some points of interest I am including it, as the remainder of Norwich Road is comparatively new, having been erected around the end of the 19th century.

“Originally, the first Upton House was a large, oblong building, bordering right on the road, with the front door opening directly on to it. This belonged to Mr Thomas Fowell Buxton of Ware, in Hertfordshire. Mr T.F. Buxton was a younger son of the original Sir Thomas Buxton, of Northrepps Hall, and this was purchased as his summer residence. His brother [Edward North Buxton], the eldest son of Sir T.F. Buxton, had already purchased Colne House some years before, for the same purpose, to have a summer residence, near his parents at Northrepps Hall, but where it was impossible to stay, due to the large number of children in the family. Thus at one time there was two Fowell Buxton's in Cromer, one at Upton House and his nephew at Colne Cottage & Colne House. Cromer and the surrounding area was full of their relatives and friends. For many years it was a joke amongst the residents that the first sign of habitation in Cromer on entering down the hill was Mr Fowell Buxton's toilet which had been added to the house on the first floor and was supported by two pillars all of which being on the south side of the house was very noticeable. In 1883 he had the old Upton House pulled down and the present house built, standing further back from the road.

“After his death, the house reverted to his son, John Henry Buxton, then the grandson, the Rev. Arthur Buxton. He later turned the house into a Private Hotel, and lived mainly in London, coming to Cromer only on special occasions. After his death, the private Hotel was run by Mr and Mrs Watson for a while, and then it was sold in 1963 to be a home for old people.”

### CHAPTER III: THE MOVE TO EASNEYE

In 1856 the railway came to Leytonstone. The Eastern Counties Railway company (later the Great Eastern) ran nine steam trains per day to London. This made it easier for Thomas to get up to town, but perhaps it also heralded the end of a pleasant country existence as house building accompanied or followed the railway. By 1866 Thomas and Rachel made the decision to move from the outskirts of London to rural Hertfordshire.<sup>1</sup> He bought 3000 acres of land bordering the eastern edge east of the town of Ware and extending to the village of Stanstead Abbots, with its southern boundary the River Lea and its approximate northern boundary the road from Ware to Wareside,<sup>2</sup> and commissioned the Quaker architect Alfred Waterhouse to design a mansion for him and his family on Easneye Hill.<sup>3</sup> It turned him from brewery director to landowner and, in a short time, to local magistrate as well. Leytonstone House and its nine acre site was sold for £9500 to the Bethnal Green Poor Law Guardians, and it was opened on August 18th 1868 as "Bethnal Green School for the Juvenile Poor", providing semi-detached "cottage homes", rather than the barrack-style architecture of orphanages. Around 400 children were accommodated; of those admitted, some were orphaned, some deserted by their parents, others where the parents were ill or in prison and so unable to care for them.<sup>4</sup> It seems likely

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<sup>1</sup> They already knew something of the area. They were related to the Hanbury family of Poles Hall, near Ware, and Thomas went to Mrs Hanbury's funeral there in October 1863.

<sup>2</sup> Details of the various properties, farms, maltings and other pieces of land, including eight small islands in the River Lea (!) are found in the title deeds located in the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies at County Hall, Hertford. According to the summary attached to the documents they include "estates centred on the parishes of Ware and Stanstead Abbots, but overlapping into the neighbouring parishes of Great Amwell and Thundridge. The chief properties in Ware were the manor and estate of Mardocks, with Moules Farm, Widbury Hill and Grumballs Farms, Noah's Ark Farm, Newhouse and Hales on the Hills Farms. In the 18th century they were largely in the hands of the Plumer and Hutchinson families, from whence they passed in the 19th century to the Ward, Proctor, Chuck and Wilkinson families: in the 1860's they were purchased by T F Buxton. The Stanstead Abbots' properties consisted mainly in maltings, cottages and small parcels of land, which were purchased in the 18th and 19th centuries by the Hankin family and sold to H C Wilkinson." The *Kelly's Directory* for 1890 *in loc.* describes him as lord of the manor of Stanstead Abbots and a major landowner in Stanstead Abbots, Ware and Wareside

<sup>3</sup> "Easneye" is possibly Anglo-Saxon for "Island of the rivers", the Lea and the Ash flowing along two sides of the estate. The area bears evidence of very early habitation. There is a tumulus or burial mound in the woods and two flint arrow heads dated around 2000 B.C. were discovered nearby. Archeological soundings on the tumulus discovered that over 500 bodies were buried there; the Buxtons deliberately planted trees on the mound to prevent further excavations and so leave the bodies undisturbed. On the estate there is the site of a Danish fort overlooking the River Lea, and Alfred, king of Wessex, defeated the Danes at the Battle of Widbury Hill nearby in AD 895. He is reputed to have dammed the river between Hertford and Ware, causing the Danish longboats to sink into the mud and forcing the Danes to carry their boats overland to the sea. The River Lea marked the boundary between Wessex to the west and Danelaw to the east.

<sup>4</sup> Various new buildings were added to it at the cost of £45,000. In 1930 the schools ownership changed to the London County Council, who closed it six years later, and reopened it as a hospital for people with mental problems. It eventually closed in 1994, since when the site has been developed as a Tesco superstore, although the original house, which is a Grade II Listed building, still stands and is used as offices by a firm of chartered accountants. A plaque mentions its original use as a home of the Buxtons. Information from Tracy Smith, *Life and Times at Leytonstone House*,

that Thomas, who was involved with the care of children in Bethnal Green through the Abbey Street Sunday Schools (see above), alerted the Poor Law Guardians to the availability of the property and accepted a price which was extremely low (£9500 is the equivalent of £520,000 at today's prices). Having sold Leytonstone House, and while waiting for Easneye Mansion to be built, they moved in May 1866 to Ham House in West Ham, where Rachel's parents Samuel Gurney and his wife had lived and where she had been born.

Alfred Waterhouse (1830-1905) had begun his architectural practice in Manchester and moved to London in 1865. He is particularly associated with the Victorian Gothic Revival although he also used the Renaissance style and was able to adapt and innovate in his work. He had already designed a number of domestic buildings but in 1859 won an open competition for the Manchester Assize Courts. In the 1860s he designed the new Cambridge Union Society building, new buildings at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge and Balliol College, Oxford and Manchester Town Hall. His most famous work was the Natural History Museum in Kensington which was built in the 1870s.<sup>5</sup> The house he designed for Thomas Fowell Buxton<sup>6</sup> was Gothic in style using red brick and terracotta. Various plans dated 1867 and 1868 are in the Buxton archive.<sup>7</sup> The lodges and cottages he planned for the workers on the estate were modelled on traditional Hertfordshire lines and provided comfortable accommodation at a time when rural workers' cottages were usually small and cramped.<sup>8</sup>

The family moved into their new home in the Spring of 1869, a year after Ellen, their second

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Waltham Forest Mencap, 2005. There is an interesting article with photographs and 1881 census details on [www.workhouses.org](http://www.workhouses.org)

<sup>5</sup> See Colin Cunningham & Prudence Waterhouse, *Alfred Waterhouse 1830-1905: Biography of a Practice*, Oxford University Press, 1992. There are a number of webpages giving details of his work e.g. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred\\_Waterhouse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Waterhouse). It was his design of the Victoria University building in Manchester in red brick which gave the name "red brick universities" to six civic universities founded in the Victorian period which achieved university status before World War II.

<sup>6</sup> The Cunningham & Waterhouse volume (see previous note) has a number of technical architectural points on the design (pp 97 etc.; the chapter is headed "Residences for the Rising Gentry"). They say: "By all accounts the client for Easneye, Thomas Fowell Buxton, had definite ideas" which Waterhouse incorporated into his final design. They describe the house as: "Large mansion, stables and lodge of patterned brick and terracotta with stepped gables and tile roof" (p 230). The cost is quoted as £32,800 which is the equivalent of £1,840,000 today. He did not need to take out a mortgage (!) but paid outright.

<sup>7</sup> Various interesting motifs are present in details of the main house. In the windows of the main hall, there is a series of views representing the day from dawn to dusk. Over the fireplace in the hall is the hart or deer, carrying a medallion around its neck with a negro slaveboy, representing Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton's work in abolishing slavery. In some of the windows a beer barrel appears as a motif. There is an interesting feature in the grounds, not designed by Waterhouse but with the same "brewery" theme; a small lake in the River Ash is in the shape of a "B" for Buxton, with beer barrels containing plants at various points in the water.

<sup>8</sup> The plans that survive are only those for the mansion and two of the lodges, so possibly the local designer copied Waterhouse's plan in the other buildings (including North Lodge.)

daughter, had married Robert Barclay, a banker.<sup>9</sup> In May of that year they held a brief dedication service for their new home. Lady Hannah Buxton, the widow of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, was among those present and she prayed for her son, Thomas, and the members of the family as they took up residence in their new home. There is a list of the headings she used for her prayer in the Buxton archive. The service took place on May 14, 1869. A week before, she had written to John Henry Buxton, Thomas's oldest son, who was a student at Cambridge at the time. He had gone up to Trinity College, following the example of his father and his two uncles, in the autumn of 1867, so he was finishing his second year of study. Her letter, a copy of which still hangs in the entrance hall of Easneye, deserves to be reproduced in full:

*May 8 1869*

*Dearest John Henry,*

*I opened my testament on a text with your initials written at the side, and this induced me to tell you myself how much I have desired a simple dedication service on the entrance into the new abode.*

*I feel this is a residence given by God, and I would trace His hand in the important transaction in your lives. This may be a residence of the Buxtons for how long, or how short a time also; but we look on to generations yet to come, and you may suppose what are my desires and hopes concerning it.*

*That it may ever be inhabited by faithful servants of God in and through Christ Jesus, and that it may ever be a habitation of God in the hearts of the inhabitants by the Holy Spirit, and Christ be honoured, confessed and served, and this place be a fountain of blessing in the church and to the world.*

*Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.*

*Your most affectionate Grandmother*

*Hannah Buxton.*

In the light of subsequent events, continuing down to the present time, her prayer has certainly been wonderfully answered, as we shall see. We may wonder why she chose to write to her grandson, rather than her son Thomas, who was the owner of the house. She says in her letter that it was his initials that she saw as she opened her New Testament, which may have been her main reason. He was the oldest son who would inherit the house on his father's death (which did not take place for another thirty-nine years); he may also have been her favourite grandson. Whatever her reason, he certainly followed his grandmother and his parents in their evangelical faith, and so played his part in the fulfilment of her prayer.

The house was much larger than their previous home in Leytonstone, and the number of servants was greater. They comprised a butler (usually a married man, who lived with his family in one of the cottages on the estate), two footmen, a house porter, two lady's maids, three housemaids, a cook, a housekeeper, a nurse, a laundress, three kitchen maids, a coachman, and two grooms. On the outside staff and living out there were a gardener, a gamekeeper, a dairy manager, a dairy maid, a shepherd, and several general and agricultural

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<sup>9</sup> They were married on February 12, 1868 and lived initially at Oak Hall, Wanstead, Essex, where their first two children were born, but in 1871 they moved to High Leigh, Hoddesdon, which his father Joseph Gurney Barclay bought for them, and lived there for the rest of their lives.

labourers.<sup>10</sup>

The censuses and the visitor's books (three of these survive in the archive) confirm the large number of visitors always present, with numerous comings and goings of relatives, friends and others. Lady Hannah, who was eighty-six years old when the dedication service was held in 1869 and which she attended, was back again at Easneye two years later. The 1871 Census was taken on the night of April 2 of that year, and she appears on the return for Easneye Park as an "Annuitant." Presumably she was only visiting, rather than living there; she normally lived in Norfolk, where the family visited her, and the following year she died there, on March 20, 1872 in Cromer, aged eighty-eight.

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<sup>10</sup> These lists appear, with one or two variations, in the Censuses for 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901. Thomas Fowell Buxton died in 1908.

#### CHAPTER IV: THE MINISTRY OF DOING GOOD

Thomas did not waste any time in getting involved in local benevolent activity. On February 17, 1869, even before the dedication service for Easneye, he was involved in the opening of an elementary school in Stanstead Abbots. The first entry in the school log book records for that date: "School opened by Mr Buxton and friends." The only education in the village before that date was provided by the Baesh Grammar School, founded in 1635. It still existed on an endowment of £20 per annum and was struggling to survive. It closed in 1879. Quite clearly there were plans to open a new elementary school before 1869, but possibly money was a problem. It seems that when Thomas Fowell Buxton bought the 3000 acres of land on which he proposed to build his new mansion, he was approached with a view to help with money for the project. He gave a plot of land, hired Alfred Waterhouse to design the building and also contributed substantial financial support towards the total cost of £1495; the building was opened a year before Forster's Education Act of 1870 which provided for compulsory, free elementary education.

He also gave substantial help in solving the problem of the location of the village parish church. The original parish church, dedicated to St James, was situated well away from the village on the hill by Stanstead Bury. It is possible that the original village had been built on the hill, which gave a commanding view of the countryside around, but the population had moved away down the hill towards the river as a result of the Black Death in the thirteenth century. Although Sir Edward Baesh had built a chapel onto the church in 1577, the church was inconveniently situated for the people of the village.

Thomas Fowell Buxton commissioned Zephaniah King of 3, Victoria Street, London to design a new church, which was built in Cappell Lane, much more convenient for the village - and for the Buxtons themselves!<sup>1</sup> King designed a very fine building in the perpendicular style; from the outside it might easily have been mistaken for a much older, medieval building. The inside, with its hammer-beam roof and other medieval details is finely designed, although its comparative newness is betrayed by the use of red brick rather than stone (Medieval builders may have used brick for the interior, but it would have been covered with plaster, not left exposed as here).<sup>2</sup> Thomas gave the land "on a slight eminence about eleven feet above the roadway...on the site of Mr Biggs' Old Barn" and paid the major part of the cost for its design and erection; it was consecrated on December 29, 1881, and officially replaced the church of St James as the parish church on May 7, 1882. The font was given by Mrs Robert Barclay (nee Elizabeth Ellen Buxton), the pulpit by John Henry Buxton and the lectern by Geoffrey Fowell Buxton. The dedication to St Andrew was doubly significant. Andrew, one of the original Twelve Apostles, had brought his brother Simon Peter to meet Jesus (John 1:40-42.), and the Feast of St Andrew (November 30) is used in the Anglican Church to focus on worldwide

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<sup>1</sup> There was some opposition in the village to the new church; there were those who resented the Buxtons coming in and changing things, suggesting that it was to suit their own convenience, rather than that of the villagers, that the new building was being erected.

<sup>2</sup> It is believed locally that Alfred Waterhouse was the architect for the church but this is not so. The book by Cunningham & Waterhouse (see above) which seeks to list every one of his commissions, including several churches, makes no mention of this one. The contemporary accounts make it clear that it was Zephaniah King who designed it; he also gave the communion table.

missionary work. Thomas Fowell Buxton hoped by building a parish church much nearer the village to encourage the inhabitants to attend church regularly, where, through the Evangelical vicars he and his fellow trustees<sup>3</sup> appointed, they would hear the Gospel and meet the Lord Jesus Christ. There was also the emphasis on mission to the world, to which the Buxtons of Easneye were committed.

Two years later, in 1883, Thomas Fowell Buxton paid for the building of the parish room in the village, which then housed the "British Workman" or village club which had been opened in 1876, and of which he was the President. A newspaper report of an exhibition which was held in 1878 to increase the funds of the club describes him as a person "who is ever ready to assist in the promotion of what will tend to the comfort and happiness of the people living near him." The club opened at 5.30 a.m. till 10.00 p.m. every weekday and supplied hot tea and coffee to its members, which in cold mornings before work was "an incalculable benefit". Membership cost 6d per month for which the refreshments were free, but the general public could also buy tea, coffee etc. The pieces for the exhibition were supplied by various local gentry of whom the Buxtons of Easneye and the Barclays of High Leigh were prominent.<sup>4</sup>

Although an Anglican, Thomas as an Evangelical was not narrowly denominational. The Countess of Huntingdon's Connection Chapel in Stanstead Abbots was only a stone's throw from St Andrew's, and might have been seen as competition to the parish church. However, when in 1901 the chapel needed to expand its premises, Thomas gave a parcel of land without charge for them to build the schoolroom and enlarge the vestry/classroom. Perhaps this may explain the presence in the Buxton archive at Easneye of an engraving of "Selina, Countess of Huntingdon at the age of 76, from a painting by Henry Moorland, 1774." It may have been presented to Thomas by the chapel authorities as an indication of their gratitude for his generosity.

Thomas did not neglect his local civic responsibilities. By the time of the 1871 Census, he is already described as "Magistrate, Landowner, Brewer, MA of Cambridge." We do not know how his activities as a magistrate were received, whether he was strict, lenient or scrupulously fair - local felons, poachers and petty thieves do not usually record their views for posterity!

The fact that he was a magistrate did not prevent his being the victim of crime! In 1877 a number of young swans on the River Lea between Stanstead Abbots and Ware, which were his property, were stolen. He offered a reward but it seems that they were not recovered. In 1888 there was a burglary at Easneye; thieves entered an upstairs window and stole an amount of

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<sup>3</sup> The Simeon Trust was involved as one of the trustees. Charles Simeon (1759-1836), one of the outstanding Evangelicals in the Anglican Church (who was also involved in the founding of the C.M.S. in 1799) had realized that, while there was no shortage of solid Evangelical priests, the patronage system of parish appointments not only made it difficult for Evangelicals to secure parish appointments, but meant that continuity was not guaranteed: a congregation with a good preacher that left would not necessarily receive a good replacement. To combat these problems Charles Simeon established a trust, later known as the Simeon Trust, to purchase the "livings" or "advowsons" (the right to appoint the priest-in-charge) of various parishes.

<sup>4</sup> In the list of donors and exhibits is mentioned, "Mr G F Buxton [Geoffrey who was soon to get married] sent a young bear shot by himself in Norway"!!

jewellery. Again a reward was offered but it seems that the items were not recovered. One wonders what would have happened if in either case the thieves had been caught and had appeared before Thomas as the magistrate!

In 1878 Thomas Fowell was appointed High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, an appointment held for a year which involved various administrative and ceremonial duties, one of which was to accompany Her Majesty's Judges at the Assizes held in Hertford. Thomas appointed his son, the Rev Fowell Arthur Buxton as his chaplain, and he preached the Assize sermon at the Lent and Summer Assizes. Arthur had graduated from Cambridge in 1873, had been ordained as deacon and then priest, and had his first curacy at St Nicholas, Nottingham. In 1878 he was a curate in Bengoe, Hertford. His Lent sermon was on Exodus 34:6-7 where God proclaims His Name to Moses. In God, mercy and justice are fully combined, and in the Cross of Jesus Christ they are fully reconciled. If we reject His mercy, we shall find His inexorable justice revealed against our sins. If we receive His mercy by faith, He will then begin the process of conforming us to His character, especially as seen in Christ. His sermon at the Summer Assizes was on Hosea 6:3, "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." We will know if we seek to know Christ, in Whom God is revealed - in His life, death and resurrection. "Redemption and sanctification are given by His blood." By His Word and Spirit we can know Him. We do not have record of how these sermons were received, but there is no doubt that the Buxtons were not afraid to nail their colours to the mast and be known as committed Christians.

Thomas Fowell was a trustee of the Ware Charities, together with Richard Benyon Croft of Fanhams Hall, Ware (now Fanhams Hall Hotel) and Edmund Smith Hanbury of Poles, Ware (now Hanbury Manor Golf and Country Club).<sup>5</sup> All three were involved in the brewing trade; Richard Croft was the son-in-law of Henry Page the maltster, and Edmund Hanbury, a second cousin of Thomas Fowell Buxton, was involved in Truman, Hanbury and Buxton. The Ware Charities, which still exist today, leased out various properties in Ware and the surrounding district, mainly public houses, to other brewers and landlords, the rents being used to fund schools in the town.

Thomas was involved in organising special evangelistic meetings in Stanstead Abbots from time to time. In December 1877 there was a week of special meetings under the auspices of the Evangelization Society<sup>6</sup> held in the School Room, where the speaker was Charles Smith, "a Working Man." Again in January 1880 "W. W. Martin of the Evangelization Society, Late a Working Man, and Others, will deliver Addresses in the School-room, Stanstead Abbots... Admission Free. Come Early." When the new church of St Andrews was opened in the village, a mission was held there in 1882 from February 18<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> His father Robert Hanbury had given the ground and paid for the cost of building Christ Church, New Road, Ware, in 1858. This was and is an Evangelical Anglican church.

<sup>6</sup> "TES was established in 1864, following the UK revival of 1859. It is one of the longest established evangelistic organisations in the UK. Amongst its founders were Lord Radstock and the renowned Scottish preacher, Brownlow North. TES had the personal support of D.L. Moody and both William Booth and Wilson Carlisle were associated with the work in its early days." (From their website.)

Thomas and his wife regularly supported missionary work, especially through the Church Missionary Society, of which his father had been treasurer for several years,<sup>7</sup> on the Committee of which he served as member and as Vice-President, and with which society his youngest son Barclay Fowell Buxton was later to serve in Japan.<sup>8</sup> They also supported the British and Foreign Bible Society, with which Sir Thomas had also been involved and of which his father-in-law, Samuel Gurney, had been treasurer. They gave lifelong support to the London City Mission<sup>9</sup> and the Church Pastoral Aid Society, and Thomas was president of the London Association for the Moravian Mission Society.

There is an interesting account of a mission in the Yukon in north-western Canada, the site of the Klondike Gold Rush to which they contributed:

Owing to the touching and stirring appeal of poor Sim [a young missionary who in 1885 had literally worked himself to death in preaching, baptising and caring for the sick among his flock], Mr. T. Fowell Buxton, of Easneye, Ware, gave the sum of £100 [c £6,600 today], and the Church Missionary Society sent out a young man, J. W. Ellington. He was stationed by the Bishop at the confluence of the Yukon and Forty Mile Rivers, after his ordination, already mentioned in this chapter; **and for some time the place was known as “Buxton,”** [emphasis added] but afterwards it took the name of Forty Mile, which had been familiar to the miners. (H.A. Cody, B.A. *An Apostle of the North: Memoirs of the Right Reverend William Carpenter Bompas, D.D.* Chapter 14, London: Seeley, 1908.)

Their involvement with the London City Mission was not limited to financial or prayer support. In July of 1882 Thomas and Rachel invited the 450 missionaries of the L.C.M. to spend their annual holiday (consisting of one day!) at Easneye. Apparently it was the sixth occasion on which they had done this. Thomas hired a special train to bring them all from Liverpool Street station which stopped at Watersplace, from where they walked up the hill to the mansion. They were given lunch in a large marquee and “scores of great joints of beef, lamb and veal disappeared before them. Two thousand bottles of gingerbeer had been provided, and by the end of the day the remainder would not have floated a toy boat” according to a newspaper report. They were encouraged to spend the day as they pleased; some played cricket or football, others went boating on the River Lea, others went fishing (and caught large amounts of roach

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<sup>7</sup> Sir Thomas had experienced his evangelical conversion through the preaching of the Rev Josiah Pratt (1768-1844), one of the founders of the CMS and its first secretary (Oliver Barclay, *op cit* pp 30-32)

<sup>8</sup> He wrote the preface to the published life of a German Pietist missionary who served with the C.M.S. in Sierra Leone and Nigeria: *Charles Andrew Gollmer : his life and missionary labours in West Africa / compiled from his journals and the Church Missionary Society's publications by his eldest son ; with a preface by T. Fowell Buxton.* Charles Henry Vidal, Gollmer, London 1889. “Mr T. Fowell Buxton of Easneye” is mentioned a number of times in Eugene Stock’s standard work on the history of the C.M.S. and referred to as “the society’s old friend and vice-president.”

<sup>9</sup> The Buxtons’ association with the L.C.M. began with Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton in 1835 and continued until the death of his grandson John Henry Buxton in the nineteen-thirties. In the *Daily News* of March 10, 1886, there is an account of the opening of a new L.C.M. mission hall, the Shaftesbury Memorial Mission Hall, in Bethnal Green by J.H. and Mrs Buxton, “who are so well-known in connection with all works of this character in the East-end.”

and dace), a few went swimming, several chose to walk in the woods or on the lawns or viewing the dairy farm; when it rained, many took advantage of tours of the house under the guidance of the Buxton daughters. After tea, Thomas Fowell and other speakers addressed them and encouraged them in the tremendous work they were doing, often under great pressures and against much opposition. As they left each one was given a copy of the life of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton who, in addition to all his other work, had been the first treasurer of the London City Mission when it began in 1835.

Thomas's son-in-law, Robert Barclay, used his home at High Leigh in a similar way. Later that month they received between three and four hundred foreign seamen from the ships docked in London for a day's outing in the country. Again, this was not the first time they had done this. The aim was to show Christian friendship to the various foreign seamen who visited London, at that time the greatest city and the busiest port in the world. The London City Missionaries had distributed invitations to all the foreign seamen and workers they met in London, and on the appointed day these invitations were accepted by the railway company at Liverpool Street as a free rail pass to Broxbourne station. There they were met by Robert Barclay and the whole crowd marched the couple of miles to High Leigh, where they were offered a choice of food suitable to their tastes (the Muslims who were invited came but as it was in the month of Ramadan, they were unable to partake). They were encouraged to enjoy the pleasant surroundings and peace of the countryside. Those present included "Nestorians, Mohammedans, Indians, Africans, all in the picturesqueness of native costume, by the side of whom French and Germans and Danes and Swedes looked very commonplace people indeed." An open-air meeting was held, chaired by Robert Barclay, where those who were inclined met local members of the Hoddesdon and Broxbourne Auxiliary of the L.C.M. and various of the missionaries spoke about their work. The visitors eventually returned to London "tired and happy" according to the local newspaper report.

The Buxtons set a high value on their children's education. They were taught at home by a governess until they were about ten or eleven; Louisa the oldest girl went to boarding school in Brighton; the boys went to various schools, John Henry to Repton School in Derbyshire, Fowell Arthur to Cheam and then Uppingham, Geoffrey similarly to Cheam and then Uppingham, Alfred to prep school at Rottingdean, near Brighton, and then on to Rugby, and Barclay to Harrow (where he received the coveted Neeld Medal for Mathematics in 1878.) In 1867 John Henry went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where his father and two uncles had been;<sup>10</sup> Fowell Arthur followed him in 1870, Geoffrey in 1871, Alfred in 1873 and finally Barclay in 1879.

A university education was not available for women at the time. In 1870 Emily Davies and Barbara Bodichon helped to set up Girton College, the first university college for women, but it was not recognised by the university authorities. In 1880 Newnham College was established at Cambridge University, but women at these colleges had to obtain permission to attend lectures and were not allowed to take degrees. However, it does not seem that women in the Gurney and Buxton families were put off by these disadvantages from making major contributions in

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<sup>10</sup> He was active in the Cambridge Prayer Union which was the forerunner of CICCUC, formed in 1877. He also represented Cambridge in tennis against Oxford.

various areas! This was certainly true of Lady Hannah's sisters, Elizabeth Fry (nee Gurney) the prison reformer, and Louisa Gurney Hoare, who was married to Samuel Hoare, but who was also wrote on the subject of education, both of children and their parents!<sup>11</sup> It was also true of Lady Hannah's daughter Priscilla, already mentioned above, and of the "Cottage Ladies", Sarah Maria Buxton, Sir Thomas' unmarried sister and Anna Gurney, one of Lady Hannah's cousins, who together with Priscilla and her husband Andrew Johnston acted as secretaries, researchers and encouragers to Sir Thomas in his anti-slavery work.<sup>12</sup> This is not to condone the exclusions but rather to show that talented and gifted people will overcome their disadvantages in one way or another.

Thomas Fowell's daughters were no shrinking violets, and made their mark in various ways. Elizabeth Ellen had married Robert Barclay before Thomas and his family moved to Easneye. As we shall see, Emily, Margaret Jane and Effie all eventually married, the latter two to Evangelical Anglican ministers. Apart from Emily, they all brought up large families as well as supporting their husbands in their work. Ethel, the youngest daughter, did not marry, but she was a very lively, precocious child and in adult life also was active in various good works. We are fortunate in having her scrapbook (not in very good condition, with no covers, but with the contents intact.) It covers the period from 1877 to 1884 from the time she was thirteen till her twentieth year. At thirteen she was already handling the distribution of various magazines to eighty local subscribers; the periodicals included *The Church Missionary Gleaner*, *Illustrated Missionary News*, *Cottager and Artizan* and *Friendly Visitor*. She had a handbill printed which

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<sup>11</sup>A citation from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography makes the point well: "Louisa's intellect and energy were acknowledged by her family, who considered her the most talented of them all. She shared more quietly in the concerns and campaigns which occupied her more famous relatives—the anti-slavery campaign of her brother-in-law Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, and the prison reform movement of her sister Elizabeth Fry and her own husband. She was, for example, one of the founders of the Ladies' Society for Promoting Education in the West Indies (1825), an organization supported by Hoares, Gurneys, Buxtons, and Ricardos, the work of which continued for more than a half-century.

"Education was Louisa's chief concern, particularly the education of parents to raise their own children. Her first book on the subject, *Hints for the Improvement of Early Education and Nursery Discipline* (1819), claimed to be the 'simple result of experience', an expanded version of the rules she had written down for the nursemaid she employed for her first-born, as her mother had done. Her experience, however, was shaped by family tradition and influenced by such eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century authorities as Locke, Fénelon, John Foster, Thomas Babington, and Philip Doddridge, with a list of contemporary recommended reading such as Sarah Trimmer and Hannah More. Her second book, *Friendly advice on the management and education of children, addressed to parents of the middle and labouring classes of society* (1824), was intended to supplement schooling, treating parenthood as a Christian discipline for both child and parent. Her insistence that discipline should 'preserve children from evil, not from childishness' anticipates the Victorian celebration of childhood. In the call for parents to respect their children, to deal justly with them, not to 'infringe upon [their] rights', and to help children learn through doing, the books express a view not unlike the child-centred educational theory of the second half of the twentieth century.

*Hints* was a particularly successful book, editions appearing both in Britain and in the United States for more than eighty years after its first publication. A third book, *Letters from a Work-House Boy* (1826), concluded Louisa's literary career, though she continued a literary and artistic acquaintance." Susan Drain, 'Hoare, Louisa Gurney (1784–1836)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004

<sup>12</sup> Oliver Barclay, *op cit* p 58.

indicated that she was willing to get complete yearly sets bound and also to supply back numbers for those who wished:. “Subscribers who wish their numbers bound up should send them to her with their own names clearly written on the parcel, before Sunday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>. She will be at the School on Friday, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>, from 4 to 5 o’clock with a supply of back numbers for those subscribers whose 12 numbers are not complete.”

In May 1878 she organised an Essay Society and three months later a Drawing Society, for both of which she had rules printed! Presumably she intended to encourage local talent but she has two letters in her scrapbook, one from London and the other from Clitheroe, asking for copies of the rules. The Rules are worth reprinting:

ESSAY SOCIETY. RULES. I. Members are requested to put name or initials at the End of their Essays and leave space for Votes. II. The Essays will leave Easneye on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, March, May, July, September and November. Essays arriving later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> of those months will be considered as not written, and the sender will be fined 2d. III. Members are requested to send clear, neatly written Essays. All quotations made in the Essays must be marked as such, and authority give. REMARKS. 1.- Votes will be given by the Members to the Essays. *1<sup>st</sup> Vote* to the one they consider best, and *2<sup>nd</sup> Vote* to the next. 2.- A Prize will be awarded at the end of the year to the Member having the greatest number of Votes. 3.- An entrance fee of 6d. to be paid by each Member on joining the Society, and a fine of 2d. for not writing. Members are requested to write on “Sermon or Essay” paper.

The Rules for the Drawing Society are similar, and are signed Secretary - ETHEL M. BUXTON, Easneye, Ware.

A formidable young lady! Who needs a university education?!

Ethel was Confirmed on May 30, 1879, six days after her fifteenth birthday, by the Bishop of St Albans, and she preserved her Confirmation Certificate with details of her first Communion. Three years later she started to attend Grand Balls; the Dance Cards which record the partners who accompanied her in the Polkas, Lancers, Waltzes, Mazurkas etc. are in the scrapbook. She did not sit out any of the dances according to the cards! In May 1883 she and her sister Effie were presented a debutantes in the Queen’s Drawing Room. According to the *Court Journal*, “Misses Effie and Ethel Buxton, two charming young debutantes, lovely as May flowers, whose simple springlike dresses suited them admirably, were much admired.” ! One wonders whether she simpered or cringed when she read that description! As we shall see, she did not marry, but she used her time and talents in a variety of useful ways.

## CHAPTER V: FAMILY LIFE AT EASNEYE OVER THE FIRST FORTY YEARS

We may perhaps get some kind of picture of family life at Easneye, with its comings and goings, over the forty years of Thomas Fowell Buxton's life there by looking at the censuses for the years 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901. They provide us with a slightly arbitrary grid by which to view the period; on the other hand they may be said to supply us with vignettes of who is there and who is not, and enable us to ask the questions, "Why?" and "What happened in between?" The second half of Queen Victoria's reign (she came to the throne in 1837 and died on January 22, 1901) saw the British Empire at the height of its power and world-wide influence. There was no major conflict in which the nation was involved between the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny in the 1850s and the Boer War (1899-1902). Prince Albert died of typhoid fever in 1861; the third Reform Act of 1884 extended the franchise to all **men** paying an annual rental of £10 or all those holding land valued at £10, which meant that the electorate numbered around five and a half million. In 1885 General Gordon was killed by the Egyptians in the Fall of Khartoum; in 1886 an Irish Home Rule Bill was defeated and Gladstone resigned as Prime Minister. The "Jack the Ripper" murders took place in Whitechapel in 1888 (one of them took place in Hanbury Lane near the Truman, Hanbury and Buxton brewery); the Independent Labour Party was founded by Keir Hardy in 1893; Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee took place in 1897. These provide the broad background to the life of the Buxtons at Easneye and beyond.

By **1871** the family were well settled in their new home. Thomas Fowell was aged forty-nine and his wife Rachel Jane forty-seven. Their eldest daughter, Rachel Louisa, was twenty-five. She had returned home from boarding school in Brighton in 1864; she was rather delicate, did not marry and continued to live at home until her father's death. Elizabeth Ellen, aged twenty-three, was already married to Robert Barclay; they were living in Wanstead, Essex and had one child, Robert Leatham. John Henry Buxton was aged twenty-one; he had graduated from Cambridge the previous year and had immediately joined his father in the brewery. On the census form he is proudly declared to be a "B.A. of Cambridge"! Fowell Arthur, aged twenty, had gone up to Cambridge in 1870, but was home for the Easter vacation when the census was taken; Geoffrey Fowell, aged eighteen, had left Cheam and was studying at a private school in Anderby, Lincolnshire, prior to going up to Cambridge in the autumn; Alfred Fowell, aged seventeen, was at Rugby School, and would go up to Cambridge in 1873. The five youngest children, Catherine Emily, aged fifteen, Margaret Jane (referred to as Janet), aged eleven, Barclay Fowell, aged ten, Effie Priscilla, aged nine, and Ethel Mary, aged six, were still living at home.

Ten years later, in **1881** there were a number of significant changes recorded in the census returns. Elizabeth Ellen, with her husband Robert Barclay, had moved to High Leigh, Hoddesdon. He was now recorded on the census form as "Banker, Magistrate and Farmer of 250 acres." He was already making his mark in the City and eventually organised the merger of twenty banks into Barclay & Co Ltd.<sup>1</sup> They now had five children; in addition to Robert Leatham who in 1881 was away at boarding school, they had two daughters, Mary Dorothea and

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<sup>1</sup> The merger between Barclay, Bevan & Co of London, Gurney & Co of Norwich and J. Backhouse & Co of Darlington took place in 1896. The new bank was named Barclays (Limited).

Clemence Rachel, and two sons, David Buxton Barclay and Joseph Gurney Barclay. They had eleven members of domestic staff, including a governess for the children.

In 1874 John Henry had married Emma Maria Pelly<sup>2</sup> (b.1852), who was a second or third cousin, and moved out of Easneye, first to Cheshunt, where Henry Fowell, their first son was born in 1876, then to 20 Hanover Terrace, Regent's Park, London, and thence to Bury House, Hunsdon<sup>3</sup>, just a few miles away from Easneye, where they were living at the time of the 1881 census, and where they continued to reside until the death of Thomas Fowell Buxton in 1908, at which time they returned to Easneye. Two more sons, Leonard and Andrew Richard were born, in 1878 and 1880 respectively. The family had a total of nine members of domestic staff. In addition to his position as one of the directors of the brewery, he was Chairman of the London Hospital from 1877 to 1884 and then Treasurer for the next twenty years.<sup>4</sup> He also involved himself in the Abbey Street Sunday Schools, succeeding his uncle Charles as President in 1872, and he increasingly involved himself in all kinds of Christian activity. Like his father, he was a generous supporter of the Church Missionary Society and of the Moravian Mission Society. He was also a strong supporter of the London City Mission, being particularly concerned for poor and deprived areas in the East End, and was president of the Church Pastoral Aid Society from 1895 till 1909<sup>5</sup> He supported the work of the Church Army which had been founded by the

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<sup>2</sup> Her grandfather was Sir John H. Pelly, Governor of the Bank of England as well as Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Her father R Wilson Pelly was a captain in the Royal Navy and married Katharine Fry, a grand-daughter of Elizabeth Fry, Lady Hannah Buxton's sister.

<sup>3</sup> Described in the *Kelly's Directory* of 1890 as "Hunsdon Bury, the property and residence of John Henry Buxton esq J.P., a gabled mansion standing in park-like grounds of about 80 acres." As we see, he was already a local magistrate (from 1879), and he later became a Deputy Lieutenant of the County of Hertfordshire, and High Sheriff in 1897. The Hunsdon Bury Visitor's Book for 1895-1905 has many interesting entries, at times reading like an Evangelical *Who's Who*. There were visits from H Grattan Guinness (author of books on prophecy, founder of Harley College, London), H. C. G. Moule (first principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, Norrisian Professor of Divinity Cambridge, Bishop of Durham, Keswick speaker, writer), Eugene Stock (secretary of C.M.S. and author of the definitive history of the society) and John Harford-Battersby (son of one of the founders of the Keswick Convention Canon T D Harford-Battersby, vice-principal of Ridley and principal of the Midland Clergy College; he was married to Edith Rachel Pelly, Mrs J H Buxton's sister; he later changed his name to John Battersby Harford). Also the bishop of Sierra Leone, Japanese and Indian Christians, a missionary from South America, and innumerable Buxtons, Barclays and Pellys spent pleasant weekends there!

<sup>4</sup> The London Hospital had a leading role in many innovations, including the first operating theatre in the country. The Royal Family were patrons of the hospital and attended many functions there; John Henry was involved in all such activities.

<sup>5</sup> "CPAS was founded in 1836 by a number of prominent Christians, led by the great pioneering Christian social reformer Lord Shaftesbury. We were established as a Christian response to the massive social change brought about by the Industrial Revolution. What were once small village churches found themselves swamped by the rapidly expanding new cities, and were at a loss to know how to cope with the new urban poor on their doorsteps. Lord Shaftesbury and his friends stepped in to set up a new Society that would resource these churches to cope with this change, through giving them grants to enable them to employ extra members of staff. Their aim was simple - that the gospel should be taken 'to every man's door, with a single eye to the glory of God.'" (from the CPAS website.)

Rev Wilson Carlile in 1882.<sup>6</sup> He arranged a meeting at his home in Hunsdon in September 1886, to which he invited a large number of clergy and other influential people, and at which Wilson Carlile spoke of his vision to reach the working classes with the Gospel using working men trained for the task. An evangelistic meeting was held in the schoolroom at Hunsdon at which Carlile and one of his officers spoke. He was also involved in various charities, including the well-known Orphan Working School in Haverstock Hill, of which he was chairman. He was a frequent speaker at political rallies on behalf of the Liberal Party, although he did not stand for Parliament, unlike his grandfather, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, his uncles Sir Edward North Buxton and Charles Buxton and his cousin Edward North Buxton (who was unsuccessful in standing both in Norfolk and in Essex.) John Henry's concern also extended to animals; he was responsible for providing large granite troughs in London, filled with water, for the relief of the many workhorses in the capital, and was a trustee of the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association. For many years he was Chairman of the Naples Society for the Protection of Animals, and a member of the National Equine Defence League. He strongly advocated the abolition of bearing reins<sup>7</sup> and of the practice of docking horses' tails;<sup>8</sup> apparently he had the classic children's book *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell (1820-1878) translated into Italian, in an effort to secure the abolition of the bearing rein and in general to promote greater kindness to animals.

Fowell Arthur Buxton, who had gone up to Trinity, Cambridge, in 1870, had graduated in 1873 and been ordained as an Anglican clergyman. As we have seen, his father had appointed him as his chaplain in 1878 for the year he was High Sheriff. He was a curate for a time at Bengoe in nearby Hertford. In 1881 he was appointed as curate of All Saints, Knightsbridge in London. However, his health was not good, and by the time of the 1881 census (April 3) he was living back home at Easneye. The census note reads "Clergyman of Ch of Eng without cure of souls." He died three months later on July 31, 1881. He was buried in the churchyard of St James

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<sup>6</sup> "The Rev Wilson Carlile founded the society in 1882 during his time on the staff on St Mary Abbots Church, Kensington, London. As a dynamic and unconventional Church of England curate his vision was to encourage and enable ordinary Christian people to live the good news of Jesus Christ in such a way that others would be attracted to follow Him. Carlile believed very much that the Christian message had to be shared through words and action and he encouraged grooms, coachmen and other working people to witness to their faith in the open air and at packed indoor gatherings. Such was the impact made by this new "Church Army" that Carlile sought official approval from the Church of England Congress in 1883. His suggestion that carefully selected laymen, after a period of training, should be allowed to assist in consecrated buildings was thought of as "dragging the church into the gutter". Carlile persisted and the Upper Convocation of Canterbury unanimously passed a resolution of approval in 1885" (from the Church Army website.)

<sup>7</sup>A bearing rein was "a fixed rein passing from the bit to the harness pad, serving to keep the horse's head up and its neck arched" (OED). Its cruelty was eventually recognised and it was abolished.

<sup>8</sup> A rather flowery, but essentially accurate, description of his many concerns came in the dedication to him of a book by the Bishop of Norwich: "To John Henry Buxton, president of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, whose tender heart quenches the thirst of our jaded horses, assuages the physical agonies of the diseased, and has long found in Jesus Christ the sole remedy for human sin and sorrow."

Church, Stanstead Abbots, the first Buxton to be buried there. His tombstone has the verse from Philippians 1:23, "With Christ, which is far better."

Geoffrey Fowell Buxton went up to Cambridge in 1871 and graduated in 1874. Four years later he married Mary Harbord, the daughter of the Rev John Harbord the chaplain of Morden College, Blackheath, and settled in Norfolk, from where his wife's family had originated and where he became a banker with Gurney, Birkbeck, Barclay & Buxton.<sup>9</sup> Their first child, Geoffrey Charles Buxton was born in 1880. Another eight children were born over the next several years, Bernard, Joan, Ivor, Olive, Avery, Hazel, Rose and Guy, a total of four sons and five daughters. They already had eight servants in 1881; by 1901 this had increased to fifteen! In 1896 Geoffrey was involved in the merger of twenty banks which was initiated by his brother-in-law Robert Barclay of Hoddesdon. He became a director of the resultant Barclays & Co Ltd, was a local J.P., served as High Sheriff of Norfolk, Mayor of Norwich, Major and Honorary Lieut.-Colonel of the Norfolk Yeomanry, Governor of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, and of the Lowestoft Convalescent Home, and was eventually invested as a Companion, Order of the Bath (C.B.). He was involved in hunting and promoted the establishment of the Dunston Harriers.

Alfred Fowell Buxton followed his brother to Cambridge two years later, graduated in 1876, returned home to Easneye and initially went into banking. He seems to have enjoyed foreign travel; the Norfolk Record Office contains a large amount of material relating to Alfred and the Jex-Blake family into which he later married. A photograph album dated 1866 belonging to him has views of places in Europe (Chillon 1866, Mer de Glace 1866) which he had presumably visited, either with his parents or perhaps with a party from Rugby School. There is also the diary of a tour of Egypt which he made in 1879 to 1880.<sup>10</sup>

Barclay Fowell Buxton was the last to go up to Cambridge, to Trinity College like his father, uncles and brothers before him. He had started in 1879<sup>11</sup> and so in 1881 was in his second year;

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<sup>9</sup> Although the wedding, and presumably the reception, took place in Blackheath, Thomas Fowell Buxton gave all his Easneye employees a half-day holiday and a slap-up meal to celebrate the wedding of his third son. According to the *Hertfordshire Mercury* of September 5, 1878: "All the employés [sic] and their wives, numbering about 90 persons, on the Easneye estate were entertained by the kindness of T.F. Buxton, Esq., to a good dinner of roast beef and plum pudding, after which they amused themselves with cricket and other games, concluding a pleasant afternoon by drinking the health of the bride and bridegroom and of their worthy employers. Later on the head servants were entertained to a capital supper, after which a very pleasant evening was spent in toast drinking, music, etc."

<sup>10</sup> The summary as given in the archive reads: "Tour begins in Alexandria ("nothing of Cleopatra's needle can be seen as it has been boxed up previous to being taken to America"), then to Cairo visiting pyramids and sphinx, visit to Herbert Spencer and his party ("there are 3 ladies and 2 men and all are quite determined to be miserable the whole time"), then the party hire a boat and sail up Nile to Luxor, Philoe, Aboo Simbel, Wady Halfeh, and return journey as far as Maghaga when the journal ends 27th March 1880." When he later married Violet Jex-Blake, they took a number of foreign tours together to France, Germany, Italy, Spain, North Africa and India!

<sup>11</sup> C T Studd had gone up to Trinity College Cambridge at the same time as Barclay Buxton. They met and soon became good friends, sharing an interest in worldwide mission.

he was home for the vacation when the census was taken.<sup>12</sup> All his five unmarried sisters, Rachel the oldest, and the four younger, Catherine, Margaret, Effie and Ethel, were living at home.<sup>13</sup>

In the Michaelmas Term of 1882, just after Barclay Buxton had left Cambridge, the American evangelist D. L. Moody conducted an evangelistic mission there which had a profound influence on many of the students who heard him.<sup>14</sup> Moody had toured Britain from 1873 to 1875 accompanied by Ira D. Sankey, and he returned for a number of shorter visits in the 1880s. When he eventually left to return to the U.S.A., Thomas Fowell Buxton, who had attended Moody's meetings at Cambridge, bought the portable tin tabernacle that Moody had used for some of his meetings and erected it at Waters Place Farm on the Easneye estate as a cowshed! There was already a "reading room" also used as a mission hall, on the farm, where Ethel Buxton held a regular Sunday School for the estate children, as well as other meetings for their parents. Over a number of years, several of the estate workers came to living faith, some remaining in their jobs, while others embarked in full-time Christian work.

Thomas Fowell seems to have been a popular employer with a good relationship with his workers and a concern for their welfare. An item in the local paper for 1880 (probably the *Hertfordshire Mercury*) gives the following account, which is worth reproducing in full for the picture it gives of life at Easneye in the nineteenth century:

WARESIDE. HARVEST HOME. – On Tuesday afternoon the labourers and their wives (80 in all) employed on the Waters Place and Briggins farms were called upon by their employer, T.F.Buxton, Esq., to do justice to a substantial dinner, to celebrate the ingathering of the harvest. Dinner was served in one of the Waters Place barns, which was prettily decorated for the occasion. After dinner Mr. Buxton addressed the men, expressing the pleasure he had in speaking to those who had gathered in his harvest; he heard they had worked early and late in order to finish it while the weather continued fine, and he was glad to hear they had worked with real steadiness. He was pleased to see several old faces before him, and he hoped to see them for many years to come; it was unfortunate for both employers and employed when a master changed his labourers too frequently, or when the men adopted the same course-. He recommended them to persevere in putting their money, however small the amount they could spare, into the Savings Bank, a system which they had so well begun, and showed them the great advantages that would accrue to them in doing so, in case of sickness or other

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<sup>12</sup> While at Cambridge he taught in the Jesus Lane Sunday School which, according to Eugene Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society* London 1899 vol II:62, was "the most famous Sunday School in the kingdom."

<sup>13</sup> According to the 1881 census, one of the persons living at Easneye at the time was Francesca Von Tidebohle from Riga, Russia (Latvia was then part of the Russian Empire) a "Teacher Of German". Presumably she was appointed to teach the Buxton daughters.

<sup>14</sup> J E K Studd, C T Studd's older brother, who was president of CICCU, had organised D L Moody's Cambridge mission, and had defended it against those who opposed and mocked at the start. See article in *Christian History* Feb 2006 "Campus ministry Cambridge Style" Collin Hansen <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/2005/004/7.13.html> Barclay Buxton returned to Cambridge from London to hear the American evangelist, and was greatly helped in his own spiritual life as a result.

emergencies. The Rev. R. Higgins next gave a short but suitable address, and was followed by the Rev. A. Oates, of Christ Church, Ware [he had been appointed earlier that year to the position of vicar. He had previously been a vicar and Rural Dean in Cumberland, had originally been trained at the Moravian College in Fulneck, Yorkshire and had spent time in Niesky, Prussia (information from the *Hertfordshire Mercury* and *Kelly's Directory for 1890*)], who contrasted the deficient harvest of last year with the successful one of the present, which he said was undoubtedly an answer to special prayer for a good harvest, as only two months back things were looking very gloomy. The rev. gentleman concluded his remarks by calling their attention to the great harvest at the end of the world. Mr. Burford then proposed the health of Mr. and Mrs. Buxton and family, which was heartily drunk by all present. All then proceeded to the meadow, and there they enjoyed racing and other sports till dark, articles useful for wearing apparel being given as prizes. The company then proceeded to the barn, where they enjoyed a pleasant evening, concluding by singing the National Anthem.

On the estate, Thomas Fowell Buxton had a herd of dairy cows, but far more notable was the flock of Hampshire Down sheep which he purchased in 1874 and judiciously added to over the years, until they numbered around seven hundred ewes, in addition to a number of rams. He did not concentrate only on quantity but also on quality, and over the next several years won many prizes, including 1<sup>st</sup> prize for ewes at the Smithfield Show four years in succession, as well as several awards at other shows in places like Peterborough, Norwich, Reading, Watford, and more locally in Hertfordshire and Essex. The annual sale of ram lambs took place at Hitchin or Hatfield and always attracted a good number of buyers.<sup>15</sup>

The next decade (from 1882 to 1891) was an eventful one family-wise with various happy events, including several births and three marriages. The Barclay family at nearby High Leigh grew with the arrival of Gilbert Arthur Barclay in 1882, Rachel Elizabeth Barclay in 1886 and Christiana Octavia Barclay in 1888, giving a grand total of four boys and four girls. John Henry Buxton and his wife Emma at Bury House, Hunsdon, not to be outdone, produced four more children, Arthur born in 1882, Dorothy Rachel born in 1883, Margaret Katharine born in 1886, and Rosamund Lilian born in 1889.

In June, 1882, Margaret Jane Buxton (usually referred to as Janet) was married to Richard Arnold Pelly, a second or third cousin.<sup>16</sup> He was also the brother of Emma, who was married to John Henry, Margaret Jane's brother! Born on December 25, 1856, he had not gone up to Cambridge until 1877, and when he graduated he chose Anglican ordination rather than following the career of either his father or grandfather. Following a curacy in Tunbridge Wells,

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<sup>15</sup> The whole flock was eventually sold off in July 1907, six months before Thomas Fowell died.

<sup>16</sup> His mother, Katharine (nee Fry) was a grand-daughter of Elizabeth Fry (nee Gurney), who was the sister of Lady Hannah Buxton (nee Gurney), Margaret Jane's grandmother. His paternal grandfather was Sir John Pelly, Governor of the Bank of England and of the Hudson's Bay Company, and his father Richard Wilson Pelly was a Captain in the Royal Navy. Other of his siblings were also active Christians. His sister Edith Rachel who married John Harford-Battersby, and his brother Edmund, ran a mission to railway workers in Wood Street, Walthamstow, until they were both married in 1887.

he was a vicar for a time in Dorking, before being appointed vicar of St Paul's Church, Stratford, West Ham in 1890.<sup>17</sup> By the time of the 1891 census they had five children, Arnold Claude, born 1883, Donald G, born 1885 (at Easneye!), Richard L born 1887, Francis Brian born 1889 and Janet Catherine born 1890.

The next marriage was that of Alfred Fowell Buxton to Violet Jex-Blake from Rugby in 1885. They lived at Easneye for a number of years before their first child was born in 1892. In October 1886 they took a three-month trip to Italy and India, and in subsequent years visited Germany, France and Spain, all before the arrival of the children!

The following year, 1886, Barclay Fowell Buxton married Margaret Maria Amelia Railton in Kensington, London. He had graduated in 1882 and was ordained as an Anglican deacon in June 1884 and as a presbyter in May 1885.<sup>18</sup> He served his first curacy at St Paul's Onslow Square in London, where the vicar was Prebendary H Webb Peplow, and then a second curacy in Stanwix, Cumberland, just north of Carlisle, where their first child, Murray Barclay Buxton was born in July 1889. Barclay offered himself to the Church Missionary Society for service in Japan (offering also to fund the mission there). He first began to consider the possibility of overseas missionary work at the time of his ordination as a presbyter in 1885. He shared the idea with some of his family and his eldest brother John Henry was against it. He wrote to Barclay, saying:

You are one exactly cut out for the real work which is now needed in a home parish, singularly fitted to win young men, and by nature, manner and even appearance (to say nothing about earnestness) cast in a mould precisely as now wanted in England. You feel it your duty to go to the mission field as you are anxious not to be stinting in work and in self-denial, feeling that whatever is most sacrifice is your right course. There is a danger that your enthusiasm be your guide instead of godly wisdom.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The parish was strongly Evangelical and had an amazing number of activities. The church building held 1000 and was full for most services. In addition to the vicar there were three curates and eight full-time lay workers, together with thirty district visitors, eighty Sunday School teachers (with over 2000 children on the registers) and a large number of other voluntary workers. There was a large church hall at some distance from the church, where a children's service was held on a Sunday morning (500 was the average attendance) and a mission service in the evening, and two more mission halls where work was carried on among the poorer parishioners, including among other things a Sunday School, Mission services, mothers' meetings and a work among the factory girls. The church also ran a number of day schools, plus night schools, clubs, a gymnasium, a YMCA, thrift agencies, a self-help society and many other organisations and activities. Quite a church! (This information came from an interview which the vicar gave to a reporter of the *Stratford Express* and which was printed in a "Supplement" on Saturday, March 10, 1894.)

<sup>18</sup> During the first part of 1882 he had decided after much prayer and soul-searching that he should be ordained. Rather than study at the newly-formed Ridley Hall where the Rev Handley Moule was Principal, he chose to spend a year attending the lectures of B F Westcott and reading under his guidance. He then spent six months working as a layman under the Rev H Webb Peplow at St Paul's Onslow Square before going on a four-month tour of Italy, Palestine and Egypt in the company of Arnold Pelly, his brother-in-law.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in B Godfrey Buxton, *The Reward of Faith in the Life of Barclay Fowell Buxton 1860-1946*, London, 1949:41. Barclay had recently conducted a very successful mission in Hunsdon, where his brother lived, so he knew his potential as an evangelist in the UK. It is interesting that John

Four years later his sister Elizabeth Ellen, who was married to Robert Barclay of High Leigh, was also against his going overseas as a missionary, saying much the same thing as John Henry and adding further reasons:

We must use the gifts that have been given us and not expect to be endowed with new ones. Your gifts are for home work and not to teach the heathen. Then your mother-in-law is not as young as she was.<sup>20</sup> Do not be a rolling stone. Be satisfied to be used in your own little sphere, and do not expect to convert the world. Knowing the Buxton constitution, I should say that was in itself enough to prevent you. With your power to influence young men, you may do more by teaching and preparing others than by going yourself.*(op cit. p 48.)*

His father, however, was more positive: “If you believe you are called by God to Missionary work, and decide that is your clear duty, I need not say how heartily we shall acquiesce in your decision, and shall trust that you have been guided to that which is your appointed work according to the will of God.”<sup>21</sup>

Towards the end of 1889, the family moved to Easneye, and Barclay spent a number of months taking evangelistic missions as preparation for the work in Japan. In 1890 they set sail for that country,<sup>22</sup> where they were to spend the next twelve years (with a home furlough in 1894), and where their next three sons were born. They were accompanied by a party of six (whose travelling expenses and support were paid for by the Buxtons), including at least five of the Easneye workers, among them the estate carpenter, Mr Parrott and his wife, and Jane Head, a children’s nurse, who initially looked after the infant Murray but continued there as a missionary until she eventually retired at the age of seventy. The Parrotts also gave long-term service in Japan, the husband eventually becoming the Bible Society representative in the country.

By **1891** Thomas Fowell Buxton was seventy years old. The census records him as “Justice of the Peace”, and makes no mention of his brewing connections. Presumably he had retired from the brewery a few years before, leaving it to his oldest son, John Henry, to carry on the family tradition. As far as the presence or absence of family members on the night of the census were concerned, Rachel Louisa, the oldest daughter, was staying with the Pellys in Stratford. The

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Henry was extremely concerned for evangelism in Britain. He was president of the CPAS, as well as a supporter of the London City Mission and the Church Army (see above). On at least two occasions when he was chairing the annual meetings of the CPAS, he publicly bemoaned the fact that more people attended the annual meetings of CMS that were present at the CPAS ones!

<sup>20</sup> Mrs Amelia Railton, Margaret’s mother, was a widow and aged sixty-eight.

<sup>21</sup> In fairness to John Henry and Elizabeth Ellen, there is no evidence that they did not support him once he had made his decision. Barclay and his family stayed at Easneye many times after John Henry inherited.

<sup>22</sup> His father, his brother Geoffrey and his sister Ethel saw them off at Liverpool, and his sister Effie and his nephew Robert Leatham (Robin) Barclay accompanied them on the ship from Liverpool to Canada! (Effie later joined him in Japan as a short-term missionary. See next note but one.) On the train journey across Canada from the east coast to the west, the carriage in which they were travelling was derailed, and turned upside down, although no-one was hurt. Barclay spoke at meetings in several places where they stopped, including Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver. From leaving Liverpool to arriving in Kobe, the journey took them about eight weeks.

census form records her as “Living on own means.” John Henry’s three daughters were staying at Easneye with their grandparents when the census was taken, accompanied by their governess, Alice Yewlett, while John Henry, his wife Emma and their four sons, were all on holiday at Melcombe Regis, Dorset, staying at a small private hotel. Among the Easneye servants listed, a maid, Elizabeth Nash from North Wales, went to Japan in the following year as a missionary, to join Barclay Buxton’s party at Matsuye.<sup>23</sup> The Gamekeeper was a Scotsman, Alexander McDonald, who later established the first Salvation Army Citadel in nearby Ware. It was not only the members of the Buxton family, but others connected with them, who shared in making Easneye a blessing to the church and the wider world, in fulfilment of Lady Hannah’s prayer.

In July-September 1893 Effie Priscilla, who by now was thirty-two, married the Rev Thomas Lancaster, from Burton, Westmorland, who was four years her senior.<sup>24</sup> He had been brought up on a farm and possibly orphaned as a child; he and his two brothers were working as farm labourers for another family by the time he was fourteen. In 1881 he was a schoolmaster in Northallerton, Yorkshire; he then studied in Durham, obtaining an L.Th. and later an M.A.. He had two curacies in Nottinghamshire and was vicar of St Paul’s, Halliwell, Bolton, Lancs from 1889 to 1899. Their first son, Stephen, was born in 1895; Effie May was born in 1898, and Cuthbert in 1899, all of these in Halliwell. In 1900 Raymond was born in Islington, London, where Thomas was vicar of Holy Trinity, Cloudesley Square, Islington (an offshoot of the strongly Evangelical St Mary’s Islington) from 1899 till 1910. They were on holiday in Cromer, Norfolk at the time of the 1901 census.

Alfred Fowell Buxton and his wife Violet had moved to London, to No 32, Great Cumberland Place, Marylebone, by the time their first child, Patrick, was born in 1892. Denis was born in 1895, and Violet Elizabeth in 1900.<sup>25</sup> The Pellys had one more child, Roland, born in 1896. Geoffrey and Mary Buxton’s daughters, Hazel and Rose were born (in 1893 and 1898 respectively). Six thousand miles away in Japan, Barclay and Margaret (known as “Daisy” in the family) Buxton had three more sons, Alfred, born 1891<sup>26</sup>, George, born 1892, and Godfrey born 1895. By the turn of the century, Thomas Fowell Buxton and his wife Rachel Jane had over

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<sup>23</sup> She stayed in Japan until 1945 and left when she was eighty-three on a British cruiser! When she retired from C.M.S. she remained in Japan, living in Yonago, south-east of Matsuye. During the Second World War she quietly witnessed to all who visited her.

<sup>24</sup> In February 1892, with the approval of the C.M.S. she left for Japan to join her brother in Matsuye as an “honorary missionary” for a year. Elizabeth Nash travelled with her. Robin Barclay went with them on the journey and returned to England after a short stay. Effie used her time well, touring the villages and speaking at meetings with an interpreter. She also arranged tea parties for the local rickshaw workers. She returned to England the following year and married the Rev Tom Lancaster.

<sup>25</sup> In 1910 they moved to a country estate at Fairhill, Kent, north of Tonbridge.

<sup>26</sup> In April 1891, Barclay Buxton had moved to Matsuye but had left his wife Margaret (Daisy), who was expecting their second child, in Osaka. Six months later, a large earthquake devastated the city, destroying eighteen thousand houses and killing thousands of people. Mercifully Margaret escaped injury and gave birth to a son, Alfred, during a second earthquake soon after.

forty grandchildren!<sup>27</sup>

The census of **1901** shows only Louisa the oldest daughter, and Ethel the youngest, still living at home. Thomas was eighty years old by now and Rachel seventy- seven. Murray Barclay Buxton had come home from Japan and was staying with his grandparents. Presumably he had returned to start at Repton School, as he was now eleven. The rest of the family came back the following year.<sup>28</sup> At Hunsdon, only Margaret and Rosamund were at home. Their parents, together with Arthur and Dorothy, may have been away on holiday, perhaps on the Continent; they do not appear on any census records for the time. The previous year, Henry Fowell,(1876-1949) the eldest son, had married Katharine Tayspell Round (1881-1945) from Lexden, Colchester, and they were living at Sewardstone Lodge in Waltham Abbey , Essex. He had graduated from Cambridge in 1897 and joined his father in the management of the brewery.<sup>29</sup> Leonard had broken with the family tradition by not going to Trinity College, Cambridge. Instead he had gone to the Other Place (!), had graduated from Christ Church, Oxford in 1900, but had then made partial amends by studying theology at Ridley Hall, Cambridge for a year! At the time of the census he was in Bermondsey, possibly getting practical experience of ministry.<sup>30</sup> Andrew (known as “Curly”), was in his final year at Trinity College, Cambridge, having been before that at Harrow, and at the time of the census was staying at High Leigh with his sister Elizabeth’s family.

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<sup>27</sup> On February 4, 1895, Thomas and Rachel celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. In addition to a service of thanksgiving, a luncheon and an “at home”, their grandchildren gave them a golden salver engraved with the names of their fifty-two descendants, including children and grandchildren. Then “all the employees and tenants on the estate, and the servants at the house, **numbering in all between 150 and 200** [emphasis added], were entertained to a first-rate tea in the coach-house” *Herts Guardian* February 9,1895. Thomas and Rachel presented each of their grandchildren with a Bible (the one given to J Gurney Barclay is in the Easneye archives.)

<sup>28</sup> The family made a short visit home in 1899 but returned to Japan for another three years.

<sup>29</sup> The first of their sons, John Fowell Buxton, was born on June 21, 1902. In 1913 they moved from Waltham Cross to Rose Hill, Hoddesdon (on the edge of High Leigh, and owned by Robert Barclay, his great-uncle) and then a year or so later, to Manor of Groves, High Wych.

<sup>30</sup> Before he became a curate in Nottingham in 1902, he made a “grand tour” in Asia, visiting missionary friends and relatives in India, Burma and Japan. In India he met his future wife, Kathleen Wingfield Digby.

### A Decade of Transition

The first decade of the new century was one of transition, both nationally and in the Buxton family. In 1901 Queen Victoria died and was succeeded by her son Edward VII who only reigned for nine years until his death in 1910. The Boer War ended in 1902 with a British victory, but at a cost of 5,774 British soldiers killed and 22,829 injured.<sup>31</sup> The British public were heartily sick of the war, and the army's poor showing led to a cessation of aggressive imperialism for a while and a great national self-examination, especially of her "decadence".

Barclay and Daisy returned from Japan in 1902, because of the needs of their children's education. They stayed initially at Easneye,<sup>32</sup> but the following year moved into a new house on the edge of Ware, Widbury House<sup>33</sup>, where they lived for the next ten years. Alfred went off to Repton School, followed the next year by George. Godfrey, who was only seven when they returned, stayed at home. He remembers spending time with the shepherd of his grandfather's prize flock of Hampshire Down sheep who knew every one of them by name. He also recalls walking from Widbury House to the Reading Room at Watersplace and remembering that it took 2,222 steps to get there! In 1905, there was a new arrival: Rachel Jane Buxton was born on June 11, and named at her grandfather's request after her grandmother who had died in January. On June 8, 1907, Barclay shared in the opening of the Salvation Army Citadel in Baldock Street, Ware, which had been established through the work of Alexander McDonald, the Gamekeeper at Easneye for many years. Although an ordained Anglican, he was a fervent exponent of the kind of "Holiness" teaching to which the Salvation Army was committed.<sup>34</sup> In 1908 he made a visit to Japan without the rest of the family, in order to consult with Paget Wilkes on the progress of the work. At the Keswick Convention in 1903, he and Alpheus Paget Wilkes (1871-1943), who had joined him in Japan in 1897 as a lay worker<sup>35</sup>, had formed the Japan Evangelistic Band, which they conceived of as an undenominational group committed to

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<sup>31</sup> No members of the Buxton family were involved. However, Capt M R S Backhouse DSO, who was severely wounded, was mentioned in dispatches and received various medals, later (in 1904) married Olive, second daughter of Geoffrey Fowell Buxton and Mary. He later served in the Great War as a Major. His family owned the Backhouse Bank of Darlington, which was one of the banks incorporated into Barclays (Limited), of which Geoffrey Buxton (originally with Gurney & Co, another of the amalgamating banks) became a director.

<sup>32</sup> Godfrey remembers as a young boy getting up late and missing the start of family prayers which his grandfather held in the main hall at Easneye for the family and the servants. He arrived at the top of the main staircase and prayers had begun so he went down the back stairs used by the servants and crept into the hall, hoping that he would not be noticed!

<sup>33</sup> The previous house had burnt down. Thomas Fowell Buxton had it rebuilt and Barclay and his family moved in.

<sup>34</sup> The "blood and fire" on their insignia was the blood of Christ's Death and the fire of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>35</sup> Barclay Buxton's contact with Paget Wilkes came initially through his father, Thomas Fowell Buxton, who had heard of him in the Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union, had got to know him and had invited him to join Barclay Buxton in Japan. Paget Wilkes had a real evangelistic gift; many Japanese came to faith in Christ through him.

evangelism and organising conferences for the ministry of the Word and prayer. Paget Wilkes had returned to Japan in 1903 and by 1905 had started two projects which were aimed at training an indigenous ministry, the Kobe Mission Hall and the Kansai Bible College. He returned to England where he and the family stayed for the next five years.

On January 14, 1908, Arthur Buxton, John Henry's fourth son, now an Anglican curate at St Stephens, Clapham Park,<sup>36</sup> was married to Esmé Caroline Pixley at Holy Trinity, Brompton. Arnold Pelly, Barclay Buxton and Leonard Buxton took part in the service. His sisters Margaret and Rosamund were among the bridesmaids.

In 1903, Margaret Jane[t] Pelly, nee Buxton, died in Norfolk, possibly at Northrepps Hall, at the age of forty-four, leaving her husband and six children aged from two to eighteen. Two years later on January 6 1905, her mother Rachel Jane Buxton died at the age of eighty-two, followed three years later by her husband, Thomas Fowell on January 27, 1908. They had enjoyed married life together for nearly sixty years,<sup>37</sup> and Thomas had lived at Easneye for close on forty years. An era had undoubtedly come to an end. The obituary in *The Times* (January 29, 1908) gave a long list of his Christian activities and added: "and his house and woods were liberally opened for philanthropic purposes." It concludes: "Mr Buxton leaves four sons and five daughters, 43 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren." Their graves in the St James churchyard in Stanstead Abbots are side by side, next to that of their son Fowell Arthur and adjacent to their daughter Margaret Jane and her husband Richard Arnold Pelly. On Rachel's tombstone are the words: "He shall receive me" and on Thomas's: "We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2).

As we have said already, Thomas Fowell was not a public speaker or preacher, so we do not have any addresses or sermons to give us an indication of what he believed or what made him tick. We do have his many activities which we have already mentioned and "actions speak louder than words", and there are several other indications of the nature of his spiritual life. The interleaved Bible he was given at the age of five and which he used for several years show that he was a diligent student of the Scriptures. He has a list of "verses which I have learned" starting from 1827 when he was six and extending to 1832 when he was eleven. They are paragraphs and lengthy passages rather than individual verses and include many of the Psalms. Also there are hundreds of verses he has underlined in both Old and New Testaments, dealing with conduct and living, but also noting the key doctrines of Christ's Divinity, the Cross and many others. In the front of the Bible there is a list compiled in November 1834 of "Images of Regeneration" found in the Scriptures., also of "Promises to the Meek" inserted in June 1835. The Psalms and the Pauline Epistles were obviously among his favourite passages in the Bible. Inserted in the Bible was a hymn by the Baptist John Ryland Jr. (1753-1825) which was a favourite with Evangelical families in the nineteenth century. Presumably it was given to Thomas Fowell by his parents when they gave him the Bible. Perhaps the sentiments may not

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<sup>36</sup> He had studied at Trinity College, Cambridge and Ridley Hall, had been ordained as Deacon in 1907 and appointed Curate at St Stephens the same year. In 1910 he moved to the Church of the Marys at Leicester and then in 1913 to All Saints, Southport.

<sup>37</sup> As a sign of gratitude to God for their sixty years of marriage, they planned to make a gift of four bells to the church of St Andrews but Rachel died in January of their jubilee year; the bells were donated by Thomas, and his son Alfred shared in the cost.

appeal in the present century but they probably represent the young Thomas Fowell's spiritual attitude as a child as he kept it in the Bible he continued to use for several years.<sup>38</sup> He had also kept in his Bible a letter from his father written from London in September 1833. In it Sir Thomas expresses his great desire to be home with his family and to see his son studying in his room and also playing cricket. He urges him to "seek Christ and his Spirit" to enable him to fulfill the desires his son had mentioned in his own letter to his father and to resist the devil in whatever he tempts him to do. Again, the fact that Thomas Fowell had kept it in his Bible shows that it chimed in with his own desires as a child.

The Bible which he presented to his son John Henry on March 26, 1898 has a few words of dedication which also show us the mainspring of his life: "John Henry Buxton with much love from his very affect[ionate] Father T. Fowell Buxton. The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me." The citation from Galatians 2:20 speaks of living a life of faith, or trust, in Jesus Christ, God's Son, Who out of His great love for us, gave His life for us and died for our sins. As Martin Luther commented on this verse: "For me" with its personal emphasis is the essence of faith in the New Testament. And as a more recent writer, James Denney, said: "In the New Testament theology is grace and ethics is gratitude." "Grace" speaks of the undeserved love of God in giving His Son to die for us; "gratitude" means that we respond in thankfulness to Him by seeking to live for His glory. This was the dominating factor in his Christian experience.

The letters he wrote to his son Barclay Buxton about his missionary work in Japan, a number of which are recorded in his grandson's biography of his father, evidence spiritual wisdom and good common sense. They also show that, while he was a committed Anglican, he was also a true Evangelical who was more concerned for the growth of Christ's kingdom wherever it was found, than for a narrow denominational interest.

The only recorded talk which we have from his lips is the address he gave to the London City Missionaries whom he invited to spend the day at Easneye in July 1882.. He spoke of the many "signs of the times" in which they lived and preached. One was "the great wickedness and infidelity that is now prevailing in the world." But countering this there were "the many agencies that existed for the promotion of God's work... societies for sending missionaries to foreign parts, societies for promoting Christian knowledge at home [including] the Salvation Army." They may not approve of their mode of working but...they were doing their best to promote His glory and they should wish them God speed. "Another sign of the times was that atheism and infidelity are raising their heads with greater importunity than they have ever done before", the probable reason being that as there was more work being done by the various Christian agencies, they were exerting themselves the more to counter this. Yet another sign of the times was the state of the Jewish people at that time, their desire to return to their own land, the cruel persecutions they were suffering in Russia and also "the general breaking up of the

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<sup>38</sup> "Lord teach a little child to pray/  
Thy grace betimes impart; /And grant thy holy Spirit may/  
Renew my infant heart.// A sinful creature I was born,/  
And from the birth I stray'd, / I must be sinful  
and forlorn / Without thy mercy's aid.// But Christ can all my sins forgive,/  
And wash away their stain; /  
And fit my soul with him to live, / And in his kingdom reign.// To him let little children come, /  
For he has said they may: / His bosom then shall be their home, /  
Their tears he'll wipe away.// For all that  
early seek his face, / Shall surely taste his love; /  
Jesus shall guide them by his grace, / To dwell with  
him above."

Turkish Empire. All these things should mean that we should “look up for our redemption draweth nigh.” It is clear that Thomas Fowell Buxton was a firmly committed Evangelical in his beliefs and not at all affected by the theological liberalism which was increasingly affecting the Church with its belief in “the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man.” It is also clear that he was influenced by the eschatological speculation which was affecting, and dividing, Evangelicals at the time. In his interleaved Bible he inserted a list of “Prophecies respecting the Restoration of the Jews” opposite Romans 11:15ff which deal with Israel. It is not clear whether he had opted for one of the forms of Millennialism i.e. Postmillennialism or the newer Premillennialism. He was certainly a proactive Evangelical who believed in getting things done, not waiting for them to happen.<sup>39</sup>

When he died in 1908, he had no idea of the awful catastrophe that was to befall Europe and much of the world in the Great War, nor of the suffering in which his own family would be involved. His youngest son, Barclay, was with him as he died and records the fact that he was lucid to the last. Barclay had just returned from a mission at the church in Malton, Yorkshire, where his cousin David Barclay was vicar, and was shortly to leave for Japan. His father asked him how the mission had gone and expressed his own strong Christian hope as he passed away.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> In *Some Recollections...* (see next note) Barclay prints a Bible Reading that his father wrote and sent to the Religious Tract Society who printed it. Headed “Thine for ever, God of love” it brings together verses on the topic, “Thine by choice...Thine by creation...Thine by redemption...Thine by adoption”, something which was obviously precious to Thomas Fowell Buxton.

<sup>40</sup> “Arriving at 4.30 a.m. he [Barclay Buxton] was greeted by: ‘Barclay! How nice of you to come. I hear your opening meeting at Malton with David Barclay was greatly blessed.’ In these last hours Thomas Fowell was often repeating: ‘With Christ...far better’, and other verses of Scripture. Yet while eagerly looking to the life to which he was passing, he remained full of welcome to those who came into his room and concerned to see they had rest and food. Finally he passed peacefully ‘through the gates into the City’ “ (B. Godfrey Buxton, *the Reward of Faith in the life of Barclay Fowell Buxton 1860-1946* London, 1949:167.) Barclay wrote *Some Recollections of the Last Few Days of My Father’s Life* which was privately published in 1908.

## CHAPTER VI: THE GREAT WAR

John Henry, the eldest son, inherited Easneye on the death of his father, and he, his wife Emma (known as “Minnie”), their son Andrew and their two unmarried daughters, Margaret and Rosamund, moved from Bury House, Hunsdon, into the family home.<sup>1</sup> At the same time Rachel Louisa, one of Thomas Fowell’s unmarried daughters who had been living at home, moved to Ponsbourne Manor House, near Hatfield. Ponsbourne Park belonged to the Carlile family who were Evangelical Christians and friends of the Buxtons.<sup>2</sup> Ethel, the other unmarried daughter, made a three-month visit to Japan from October 1908 to January 1909. She possibly travelled out with her nephew Donald Pelly, and spent time with another nephew, Joseph Gurney Barclay and his wife who were C.M.S. missionaries in Matsuye and Kobe. Her brother Barclay was also in Japan at the time for a short visit. When she returned in January (on her own!) she went to live with her sister at Ponsbourne.<sup>3</sup>

The coronation of King George V took place in 1911. Although there were ominous signs of the possibilities of war as a united Germany coveted a “place in the sun” like the British Empire and patriotism became obsessive in many European nations, no-one could have guessed that within three years a conflict would have begun which left eight and a half million men dead, and irrevocably changed the face of Europe. The Buxtons of Easneye, and their relatives, were deeply affected, as was nearly every household in the land.

One of the Easneye Visitor’s Books which survives in the archive covers the period from January 1, 1912 to December 31, 1919. The record of the comings and goings of the host of visitors over that crucial period, together with their comments, provides us with a wealth of invaluable information on the family, as well as raising many questions, not all of which can be answered!

The first entry, for January 1, 1912, is that of the Anglican curate in Stanstead Abbots, originally from County Antrim in Ireland, the Rev Edward Louis Longfield McClintock, who was courting Margaret Buxton. He quoted a verse from the hymn, “O perfect love!” He later

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<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Rachel had been married to Sir Arthur Grey Hazlerigg (1878-1949) [created Baron Hazlerigg in 1945, Lord Lieutenant of Leicester 1925-1949], of Noseley Hall, Leicester, on July 14, 1903. Bishop Taylor Smith, the Chaplain -General to H.M. Forces, led the service with other clergy. In April and May of 1903, Sir Arthur had, for some reason, made a visit to Japan. Barclay Buxton and family were in England at the time, so it was not in order to visit them. (The Russian-Japanese War began Feb 6, 1904) The Hunsdon Visitor’s Book records his arrival at Victoria Station on May 19, having left Nagasaki on April 30.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Wilson Carlile, the founder of the Church Army, was related to the owner of Ponsbourne. Murray Buxton later married Mildred Carlile, the daughter of Sir Hildred Carlile, M.P., J.P., of Ponsbourne Park. In 1906 Arnold Pelly had married another daughter, Dora Isabel.

<sup>3</sup> In the Visitors’ Book in Matsuye in October when she had just arrived, she had put down her Home Address as “None” so at that time she had not made up her mind.

added a note in pencil: "Vici [ I conquered!] see Dec 12/10." We do not have the Visitors' Book for 1910, but presumably that was when he began the courtship; on New Year's Day she probably accepted his proposal! Two months later on March 4, he makes another visit with the words "Maggie's Exeat!"<sup>4</sup> An Exeat was a permission which a bishop grants to a priest to leave his diocese, so possibly this was when Margaret's father, John Henry, gave his permission for the marriage. Very soon, on June 8, his parents from Ireland visited to meet the prospective in-laws, and finally on July 9, the wedding took place, followed on the next day by the Estate Show and the day after that by a Children's Treat! In August they were living in the Vicarage in Stanstead Abbots, but only "pro tem" according to their note.

In April 1912 two members of the Swedish Royal Family stayed at Easneye, Sofia and Elsa Bernadotte of Wisborg, and solemnly signed their names and gave their royal address in Stockholm!

There were frequent visits from various family members: John Henry's eldest son, Henry (Harry) Fowell<sup>5</sup> with his wife Katharine and their son John; Leonard the next eldest, now a vicar in Redbourn, Birmingham, with his wife Kathleen (Kitty) and their children;<sup>6</sup> Arthur, the youngest son, with his wife Esme and their young children; his brother Geoffrey and his wife from Norfolk; and brother Alfred and Violet from Fairhill, Kent. with their children, and others too numerous to mention.

Civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries visited Easneye. The Earl of Verulam and his wife Fanny, from Gorhambury, St Albans, stayed overnight in September, 1912,<sup>7</sup> and in April 1913 the Bishop of St Albans, the Right Rev. Edgar Jacob, visited with his wife, signing as "Edgar Alban, Verulam House, St Albans." He made another visit in July 1914.

Missionaries also visited. In April 1912, Donald W Carr and his son Donald N Carr, missionaries in Isfahan, Persia, stayed for a few days. A number of C.M.S. missionaries stayed there, either on the way to India (Sophie Bland, April 25, 1912) or home from Sierra Leone (G G Garrett, February 8, 1913). The wife of C.T. Studd, Priscilla, with two of their four daughters, stayed for a few days in April, 1912; in January, 1913 they were visiting again, this time with C.

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<sup>4</sup> He seems to have enjoyed quoting Latin and maybe other languages as well, although at times his hearers must have groaned. Seven years later at the end of the Great War in which he had served as a Chaplain to the Forces, there is the entry (April 10, 1919): "Demobilized, glad I was not "gauche derriere" [left behind] in Belgium."

<sup>5</sup> According to the *Kelly's Directory* for 1914, his father had made him lord of the manor of Stanstead Abbots, even though he was not living at Easneye at the time, and did not move in till his father's death in 1934.

<sup>6</sup> Leonard's oldest son Edmund recorded many of his memories of their frequent visits. He writes of Easneye as a self-contained community with an engine room providing its own electricity, the staff houses, the laundry, carpenter's shop, kennels, the Eton fives court where John Henry played up into his eighties, peacocks patrolling around the house, and details of family life with daily prayers, frequent games, visits etc. Edmund Buxton, *Easneye Memories* Privately printed 1999

<sup>7</sup> In 1904 Bernard Buxton, second son of Geoffrey Buxton, John Henry's brother, had married Lady Hermione, the daughter of the Earl of Verulam and his wife Fanny.

T. Studd himself, although he gives his address as Niam-Niam, Africa, while hers and that of her daughters is 17, Highland Road, West Norwood. Thereby hangs a tale! C(harles) T(homas) Studd had met and married Priscilla Stewart, a young Irish missionary, in China, and they had four daughters. They came home in 1894 because of his poor health, but he travelled in the U.S.A. and Britain on behalf of the Student Volunteer Movement for six years, before moving to India in 1900 to serve as minister of the English-speaking church at Ootacamund. They again returned to England in 1906 because of his health and he resumed his speaking ministry. In 1910, although he was still unwell, and against Priscilla's wishes (she was also in poor health), he embarked for Africa, returning a year later to establish the Heart of Africa Mission, and then in January 1913, very soon after the visit to Easneye, he left for Africa, accompanied by Alfred Buxton, who was later to marry Edith, one of the Studd's daughters. Priscilla made one visit to Africa in 1928 and died in 1929.

In 1913, Barclay Buxton and his wife made the decision to return to Japan. He had made short visits there in 1905 and 1908, when he had also visited Korea; he had also made a trip in 1910 to the U.S.A to preach to Japanese groups in New York, Chicago, Seattle and San Francisco. By 1913, Murray had graduated from Cambridge, and George had taken up an appointment as assistant manager of the East African Industries agricultural estate at Maseno in British East Africa. Godfrey went up to Cambridge in the autumn. Murray had felt a call to be a missionary and had worked as a layman in a London parish for a few months. He accompanied his parents and his sister Rachel Jane when they left for Japan.<sup>8</sup> Godfrey's entry in the Easneye Visitor's Book for December 24 to 30 has his address as "Trinity College and Ponsbourne", staying with his unmarried aunts. His aunt Ethel had promised Barclay long before that she would give all the help she could if the family ever returned to Japan. The young man makes the entry: "A typical Easneye Christmas and shoot. Perfectly ideal fun." Very soon he would not be shooting pheasants but his fellow human beings, which was not so much fun!

John Henry and his family were on holiday in Killiecrankie, Scotland, when the war began on August 4, 1914. They did not immediately return home although one of their guests, Kathleen Pelly from Epping did, recording in the Visitor's Book for August 7, "Visit shortened owing to the war!" By 1915 other entries give an indication of what was happening across the Channel in Belgium and France e.g. May 15, 1915 Stanley McClintock is at Easneye, "recovering from his wound." In May a nurse from the London Hospital stayed for a few days. At the request of the Government the London had been the first hospital to take wounded soldiers from the conflict, and by the end of the war, it had treated some 6,600 wounded.

On July 18, Leonard Buxton, John Henry's son, called in on the way from Birmingham to Etaples in the Pas de Calais where he ministered to the wounded. During the First World War the town became a vast Allied military camp and then a giant 'hospital city'. Many medical facilities were established by the Australians, New Zealanders and British. Wounded soldiers were consequently often sent to Etaples to recover or en route for Britain. Leonard returned home on September 4. It seems that at this point he was alternating between his parish duties in Birmingham and chaplaincy work at the Front. Later in the War he was a full-time chaplain

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<sup>8</sup> Barclay had been offered the living of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, which was a key church and a centre for C.I.C.C.U. activities. C T Studd, the Rev Tom Lancaster (Barclay's brother-in-law) and others, urged him to take it. His sister Ethel felt he should return to Japan and this is what he did.

with the 34<sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery Brigade, but also seconded to other units. He returned to his church in Birmingham after the war. His brother Arthur, who was a vicar in Southport, resigned his living in 1916 and enlisted as a chaplain; he served with various units including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rifle Brigade and the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion Middlesex Regiment.<sup>9</sup> At the end of the War he took charge of the Embassy Church in Cologne and did not relinquish his Army Chaplaincy till 1920. Edward McClintock enlisted as a chaplain in October 1917, but literally “missed the boat” three months later in January 1918, when he “ought to have gone to France but could not.” However, he eventually made it, serving in the closing months of the War and was demobbed in March 1919. Richard Pelly, the son of Margaret Jane[t] Buxton and Arnold Pelly, also served as a chaplain, as did Arnold himself.

Other entries show Henry Fowell Buxton, John Henry’s oldest son, serving as a Captain with the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion Suffolk Regiment, Andrew Richard, another son, serving as a Lieutenant with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rifle Brigade, Murray Buxton, Barclay Buxton’s oldest son, as a Captain with the 1/5 Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment, one of his brothers George Barclay Buxton as a Second Lieutenant with the Royal Flying Corps, and Godfrey, the youngest son, as a Captain with the 1/6 Duke of Wellingtons Regiment. In 1917 Ethel Buxton, who by that time was fifty-three years old, volunteered for work with the YMCA/YWCA in France which provided support, refreshment and accommodation for soldiers resting away from the trenches. In 1919 she received the British War Medal in recognition of her service.<sup>10</sup> Rosamond, John Henry’s unmarried daughter, was a nurse at the Mildmay Mission Hospital which received many of the seriously wounded. Other relatives and friends serving with the Royal Navy, the Royal Medical Corps, and various regiments, stayed at Easneye on the way to or from the conflict across the water.<sup>11</sup>

Henry’s regiment remained in England during the whole of the conflict, being based in Norfolk, so he escaped any involvement in the fighting; according to an entry in the Easneye Visitor’s Book, he became “a civilian once more, 5.1.1919”. Andrew Richard (“Curly”) survived the trench warfare for two years before he was killed on June 7, 1917 near

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<sup>9</sup>In September 1917 both Leonard and Arthur stayed at Easneye and then “started for the front” according to the Visitor’s Book.

<sup>10</sup> “The British War Medal 1914-1920, authorised in 1919, was awarded to eligible service personnel and civilians alike. Qualification for the award varied slightly according to service. The basic requirement for army personnel and civilians was that they either entered a theatre of war, or rendered approved service overseas between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918” (from the National Archives Website.) At the beginning of 1918 Ethel came back to England, and spent three and a half months at Easneye. She did not return to Ponsbourne but moved to London and lived in 10, Eaton Terrace, S.W.1. She later moved to 20 Lower Belgrave St, S.W.1. Her sister Rachel Louisa died around this time, possibly in 1922. There is a Rachel Buxton, born 1846, who died in Weymouth in 1922. Her sister Effie, married to the Rev Tom Lancaster, was in Melcombe Regis, Weymouth, so Rachel Louisa might have been staying or even living there when she died.

<sup>11</sup> Sir Arthur Hazlerigg, John Henry’s son-in-law, was a Lieutenant with the R.N.V.R. 1915-1916, and then a Captain on the General List. Robert Leatham Barclay was a Major on the War Office Staff, 1917-19; the Rev David Barclay was an Honorary. Chaplain to the Forces at Boulogne, 1915 and with the Church Army on the Somme, 1917. The Rev Gilbert Barclay was attached as Chaplain to the London Regt. in Flanders, 1915-16 and was wounded and mentioned in despatches. Later he was Chaplain to military hospitals in London and Leicester from 1916 till 1919.

Oosttaverne, after the successful attack on the Messines Ridge. He was buried in the north-east corner of Oosttaverne Wood with a simple wooden cross marking his grave. The tributes of his commanding officer and many of his men were to a very brave man and a fine Christian.<sup>12</sup> A week later, on Thursday June 14, a memorial service was held at St Andrew's Church in Stanstead Abbots (presumably the coincidence was noted and commented on) with a large number of family and friends present. The Visitor's Book has their names<sup>13</sup>; it also contains the entries he made for the times of leave he enjoyed from 1915 to 1917, which make poignant reading. His last leave was for a month in February-March of the year he died. A memorial plaque was eventually erected in the church in Stanstead Abbots and his name is also on the Roll of Honour of the War Memorial outside Cromer Parish Church in Norfolk. His study at Easneye remained untouched for a number of years after his death, probably till 1924 when his mother died.

Just over seven weeks later, on Saturday July 28, 1917, his cousin, George Barclay Buxton, was shot down and killed over the enemy lines beyond Passchendaele, where Godfrey, his brother was involved in the fighting on the ground. When the war began, he had been in East Africa as assistant manager of an agricultural estate. He had intended to join his brother Alfred as a missionary in the Belgian Congo, but volunteered for service in the King's African Rifles. In late 1915 he returned to England and was commissioned in the 1/5 Norfolk Regiment and sent out to Egypt in 1916. He was appointed ADC to the divisional commander but found this so dull that he volunteered for the Royal Flying Corps, returned to England for further training, and by July had qualified as a pilot of scout aircraft, after training in Lincolnshire and at the School of Aerial Gunnery at Turnberry. He visited Easneye for a weekend's leave on July 14 - 16, and left immediately afterwards for France.<sup>14</sup> He was at once ordered to join 1 Squadron, stationed at Bailleul, on "a very hot part of the line." The reconnaissance activities of the R.F.C. were increasing in importance at that point in the war. On one of his first patrols, he was not wounded although his aircraft was "absolutely riddled with bullets" ( 25 July 1917), but on 28 July he was involved in a dogfight with nine enemy planes and was shot down and killed. His body was never recovered, and he is remembered on the Arras Flying Services Memorial. Of the many tributes to him, perhaps the one he would have appreciated most came in a letter to his parents (they were still in Japan when the news came) from an officer with whom he had served in Egypt. "When many grew cold and careless about spiritual things under the awful conditions of Army life dear George stood steadfast."<sup>15</sup>

His oldest brother Murray, and his youngest brother Godfrey were both seriously wounded in

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<sup>12</sup> Edward S Woods ed. *Andrew R. Buxton The Rifle Brigade: A Memoir* London 1918:284ff. (The editor was married to Clemence Barclay, a cousin of Andrew Buxton, and later became Bishop of Lichfield.)

<sup>13</sup> His brother Arthur, who was present, had actually been seconded to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rifles as a chaplain, and they had been together in the trenches for a number of months in 1916.

<sup>14</sup> According to David Morris (who presumably heard it from Godfrey Buxton), before George left for France, he landed his plane in a field in England where men and boys were working in the fields (probably too early in the summer for harvesting?) He told them he had come from the skies to tell them of God's love for them, and proceeded to preach the Gospel to them!

<sup>15</sup> This information, including the testimony, comes from the National Archives website A2A.

the war, both gaining medals for bravery, Murray the Military Cross and Godfrey the Military Cross and Bar. Murray had returned home from Japan soon after the outbreak of war and was a captain in the 1/5 Royal Norfolk Regiment. He was involved in the battle of Suvla Bay in 1915, part of the disastrous Gallipoli offensive in the Dardanelles against the Turks (His battalion lost twenty-two officers and six hundred men in the first attack.)<sup>16</sup> After the allied evacuation from Gallipoli, the regiment was involved in the Palestine Campaign, also against Turkish forces. Murray was an Intelligence Officer on a Brigade Staff at the battle of Gaza. Having already done two reconnaissances over open country in full view of the enemy, he asked permission to go and tend the wounded who lay fifty yards in front of the Turkish trenches. He was severely wounded while out on this task and was awarded the Military Cross. He was eventually brought back to England for recovery and convalescence, which took several months. In April 1918 he spent a few days at Easneye while he was still convalescing in the Hall Walker Hospital; his comment in the Visitor's Book was "A delightful escape from hospital!" There are four other entries, one in May for a nine day visit, when he gives his address as 1/5 Battalion Norfolk Regiment, and then on August 10, when he was back home with his parents, who had returned from Japan the previous November and were now living in Sherborne House, Hoddesdon. A week later he had moved to London, living at the home of his aunt Ethel, who had now left her work with the Y.M.C.A. in France among the troops, and also Ponsbourne Manor House where she had lived with her older sister Louisa before the war, for 10 Eaton Terrace, S.W.1.

Godfrey went up to Cambridge in the Autumn of 1913, but left after his first year to join up when war was declared in August 1914. He seems initially to have joined the Royal Army Medical Corps as a Private, then later at the suggestion of a friend obtained a transfer to the Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding). He said:

I'd had one year up at Cambridge and then volunteered for the Army. We were quite clear that Germany would be defeated by the 7<sup>th</sup> of October when we would go back to Cambridge.

He commented further:

During that time one was naturally trying to find out what the Bible said, and it was interesting to find out how many battles in the Old Testament were 'by the word of the Lord'. And in the New Testament neither John the Baptist nor Our Lord ever said anything against a soldier - only told them to do their job within the limits of war. These things in my young mind built up to a confidence that if death was abroad, if wrong was to be resisted, a Christian should be right in amongst it.<sup>17</sup>

After two years he was promoted to the rank of Captain and given command of D Company 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion. They were involved in the Battle of the Somme from July to November 1916 and the Battle of Passchendaele from July 31 to November 6, 1917. An entry in the Visitor's Book for 27 Nov-Dec 10 reads: "B Godfrey Buxton. Passchendaele. 1/6 Duke of Wellingtons B. E. F. Leave!!" A wealth of meaning lies behind these words! "Passchendaele" became a byword for

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<sup>16</sup> It was in this battle that the 150 men of the Sandringham Company of the 1/5th Norfolks completely disappeared and were never seen again, creating the myth of the "Vanished Battalion." Royal archives released recently show that they were captured by the Turks and executed. A number of Buxton relatives were killed or wounded at Gallipoli.

<sup>17</sup> Cited in Max Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of the Great War*, Ebury Press, 2002: 16, 18.

all that was most terrible and nightmarish in the Great War. It was fought in terrible conditions as torrential rain filled the craters produced by prolonged bombardment by both sides so that horses and men drowned in them, and the awful numbers of casualties (325,000 Allied and 260,000 German) resulted in little more than a few miles of muddy territory gained and lost. In the words of the poet Siegfried Sassoon: "I died in Hell (they called it Passchendaele)..." Captain Godfrey led his company forward as part of the main attack on the Passchendaele Ridge:

We moved out in artillery diamond formation... There were some horrible sights of wounded men which we passed on the way up...we started going under machine gun fire from across the valley.. The mud was so dreadful, that it was impossible to move in any line formation because it was only possible to walk on the ridges between the shell holes...We were now going under tremendous machine gun fire and we had to go forward in short rushes and then lie flat in the shell holes mostly covered by water, many bullets dropping around you, within a few inches, splashing your face. We naturally lost a number of men there.<sup>18</sup>

It was here that Godfrey with his batman captured a German machine gun post armed only with his revolver! For his bravery he was awarded the Military Cross. And all this from a man who was only twenty-two years old! His Christian faith sustained him, but the peace of Easneye must also have helped to restore his jangled nerves after such an ordeal. He was also able to see his parents who had just returned from Japan and stayed at Easneye at the same time as he was there. They would have grieved together over the death of George. Then he had to return to the horrors of war.

In the Spring of 1918 the Germans launched a heavy offensive which they hoped would end the stalemate of the trench warfare. The October Revolution in Russia in 1917 had resulted in the Russo-German Armistice signed at Brest-Litovsk, and allowed the Germans to transfer large numbers of troops from the Eastern Front, as well as from Italy, to the Western Front. With the resulting superior numbers they began to attack in the middle of March. The large battles that ensued were terribly costly in lives on both sides; the British suffered 163,500 casualties, the French 77,000 and the Germans 239,000. The 1/6 Duke of Wellingtons were involved in the Battle of Messines, (part of the larger Battle of the Lys) which took place on April 10 and 11, 1918. Godfrey was wounded four times in the space of the twenty-four hour battle, the last time severely. The other three men in the trench with him were literally blown to pieces as a shell made a direct hit. He was buried in mud from the blast and his batman dug him out with his bare hands. He was taken to hospital and it was found that apart from other injuries including leg fractures, his pelvis was broken in several parts. It took a total of fourteen operations and a long, painful period of recovery to "patch him up" before he was able to leave hospital on crutches and return to civilian life.. He was awarded the Bar to the Military Cross he already possessed. He was able to attend the Boxing Day Party at Easneye the following year (1919), although he was still on crutches.

The Great War did not see the heavy, sustained bombing of the kind endured by London and many other English cities in the Blitz of the Second World War. However, there were a number of raids by Zeppelins on London and other places which caused a certain amount of damage

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<sup>18</sup> From his typescript memoir in the Imperial War Museum, Department of Documents, cited in N Steel & P Hart, *Passchendaele: The Sacrificial Ground*. Cassell & Co, 2000:273-274.

and loss of life.<sup>19</sup> The giant craft were vulnerable to fighter attacks which punctured the great balloons and sent them down in flames. The Easneye Visitor's Book in 1916 has three references to Zeppelins. In September someone, probably the young John Fowell Buxton from Manor of Groves, has written: "Sunday Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> 2-4 a.m. A Fine Zeppelin Raid experience - one Zeppelin down at Cuffley - !!"<sup>20</sup> On October 1<sup>st</sup> we read: "11.55 p.m. Watched another Zepp. Fall."<sup>21</sup> And for November 25 "Two Zeps down - at Billericay and Mersea Island!"<sup>22</sup> Later in the war the Germans developed the Gotha bomber which was less vulnerable than the Zeppelins and did considerable damage in raids on London.

The war finished at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918, four years and a hundred days after it had begun. Barclay Buxton with his wife and daughter, who were now living in Sherborne House, Hoddesdon, spent Christmas at Easneye that year. The comment in the Visitor's Book is "A delightful Christmas together in the old home of blessing!" For Barclay, Easneye was "home". He had lived there from the age of eight, had returned there on vacations from Harrow and Cambridge, and wherever he went, for however long, he always came back with a sense of returning home.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> On the night of October 13, 1915 Zeppelin L16 (commanded by Oblt-z-S W Peterson) part of a force of five sent to attack London, got lost, meandering over Hertfordshire. Apparently Peterson mistook the River Lea for the Thames (!!!) and dropped his bombs over Hertford, killing eight civilians and a baby boy. On his return he reported that he had bombed industrial and railway targets in east London!

<sup>20</sup> This was Zeppelin SL11 (commanded by Hptmn W Schramm), the first enemy airship to be shot down on British soil. Lieut W L Robinson in a BE2c using the new explosive and incendiary ammunition attacked several times and finally succeeded in setting it ablaze and it crashed near Cuffley, killing all on board.

<sup>21</sup> This was Zeppelin L31 commanded by the highly experienced and almost legendary Kptlt Heinrich Matty, shot down by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut Wulstan Joseph Tempest. Following attacks with the incendiary bullets "the hull began to go red inside like an enormous chinese lantern" and crashed to the ground at Potters Bar. There were no survivors; Matty jumped from the airship but died as he hit the ground. The wreck hit an oak tree at Potters Bar which survived for several years and was known as the Zeppelin Oak. There are roads named after Wulstan Tempest in Potters Bar today.

<sup>22</sup> Young John Buxton was relying on hearsay at this point; there were no Zeppelin raids on November 25. On the night of November 27/28 Zeppelin L21 (commanded by Kptlt K Frankenburg) was shot down over Lowestoft.

<sup>23</sup> A year earlier when they were newly arrived back from Japan and had no home of their own, they stayed at Easneye for two months. The entry in the Visitor's Book for that time is, "A most loving welcome, and a delightful home to us on our return from Japan. We have been refreshed and helped in every way by the atmosphere of home here. May the Lord continue to bless this house."

## CHAPTER VII: BETWEEN THE WARS

A year later, on Boxing Day 1919, Easneye had a total of forty-eight guests, mostly Buxtons and Barclays, but others in addition. The habits of peacetime were returning, although there were also some gaps at the table as sad reminders of the previous years, and Godfrey Buxton still on crutches would have been a further reminder. It would not be correct to say that everything was back to normal because nothing could ever be the same again, but people adapted to the new reality, as they always do, and got on with their lives. As committed Christians, the Buxtons believed firmly in the unchanging faithfulness of God who would continue to be with them through all the changes and chances of life.

The Barclays of High Leigh<sup>1</sup> were not present at the Boxing Day celebration; Elizabeth Ellen Barclay (née Buxton) had died on September 20, 1919 aged seventy-one.<sup>2</sup> She had been born on January 17, 1848, and married on February 12, 1868. She and her husband Robert had celebrated their golden wedding the year before she died. They had a total of four sons and four daughters, who, like their parents, were committed Christians. The oldest son, Robert Leatham (known in the family as Robin), followed his father in pursuing a career with Barclays Bank, but he was also a lifelong supporter and advisor of missionary and other Christian work. He served as honorary treasurer of the Church Missionary Society and was particularly involved with the Student Christian Movement.<sup>3</sup> Two of the other sons, David<sup>4</sup> and Gilbert<sup>5</sup> were evangelical Anglican ministers; Gilbert married Dorothy Catherine Studd, one of the four daughters of C T Studd and his wife Priscilla in March 1912, and served as chairman of W.E.C., the mission which grew out of C T Studd's work in Africa. The remaining son, Joseph Gurney Barclay, went into the family banking business initially, but then felt called to go out to Japan as a missionary with the C.M.S (like his uncle Barclay Buxton, he was unpaid).; in later

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<sup>1</sup> During the Great War they seem to have lived in a flat at the headquarters of the bank in Lombard Street, London.

<sup>2</sup> Her eldest son Robin wrote of her: "There never was a better woman nor a better mother. Her life was summed up in ceaseless care for the spiritual and material benefit of her children and other people. Lovely in person and lovely in her life she could have had the world at her feet. Instead of that she gave herself to the poor and lonely and lesser fry. All our early training Godward was due to her directly or indirectly. As children we spent a few minutes devotion in her room every morning of our lives before breakfast."

<sup>3</sup> He was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. He lived initially in Frogmore Lodge, St Albans and then in 1906 purchased Gaston House, Little Hallingbury, near Bishop's Stortford, which became his home for the rest of his life. He inherited Higham, an estate in Bury St Edmunds where he also spent a considerable amount of his time. He was Deputy Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, and later of Suffolk, and was also High Sheriff of Suffolk in 1921. He died in Edinburgh on May 22, 1939 aged seventy.

<sup>4</sup> After studying at Trinity College Cambridge and Ridley Hall, David had several pastorates, a number of which were in Essex. From 1936 to 1938 he was Rural Dean of Harlow. He retired to Grove Cottage, Cromer in 1938 and died on January 17, 1954 aged seventy-seven.

<sup>5</sup> Gilbert also studied at Trinity College, Cambridge and Ridley Hall. In addition to several pastorates, he was very active in supporting overseas missionary work, especially that of W.E.C.. He retired to Wheathampstead, Herts and died in 1970 aged eighty-eight.

years he served as Far East secretary of the society and in general used his financial expertise for the good of the mission. His first wife, Gillian Mary Birkbeck whom he married in 1905, died in Japan in May, 1909, three months after their son Roderick Edward was born. In 1915 he married Gwendoline Rose Watney. They returned to England in 1926. Their youngest son, Alexander, with his wife Pauline, served as a medical missionary (he was an eye specialist) with the C.M.S. in Jordan, Pakistan and Afghanistan. In later years he was a G.P. in Hoddesdon and served on the council of All Nations Christian College. He died in 2004.<sup>6</sup> Of the four daughters born to Robert and Elizabeth Ellen, Christina Octavia remained single and was a missionary with C.M.S. in Egypt, Rachel Elizabeth also did not marry and was an independent missionary in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Mary Dorothea married Edward Batchelor Russell and Clemence Rachel married the Rev Edward Sydney Woods, who later became Bishop of Lichfield.

Two years later, Elizabeth Ellen's widowed husband, Robert Barclay died, on July 19, 1921 aged seventy-seven.<sup>7</sup> In addition to being a director of Barclays Bank, which he had been instrumental in creating from the merger of twenty small banks, he had been a J.P. and had served as High Sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1893. His Christian activities included being the treasurer for many years of the British and Foreign Bible Society (to which he left £1000), and also of the Bishop of St Albans' Fund. In 1908 he donated the land in the Rye Park area of Hoddesdon on which St Cuthbert's Church was erected and which was intended to cater for people in the poorer part of the town. In 1909 he was one of a number of Christian businessmen who founded "First Conference Estate" with the express purpose of providing conference facilities at an affordable price for various missionary and other Christian societies. The Hayes, Swanwick, in Derbyshire, was opened in 1910. In his will he left his estate of High Leigh to his son Robin, who made over the house to the First Conference Estate for use as a Christian conference centre. In 1937 Robin gave half of the estate to the town of Hoddesdon, whose inhabitants continue to enjoy the open spaces of "Barclay Park" with little or no idea of the Christian businessmen to whom they owe the pleasure!

On October 22, 1924, Emma Maria (Minnie), the wife of John Henry Buxton, died at Cromer, Norfolk, just three weeks short of their golden wedding anniversary. She was seventy-two years old. She was a fine Christian lady, who had supported her husband in his various activities and commitments, and was widely known for her ministry of "doing good". According to the *Herts Mercury* for Nov 1, 1924, which quotes from the tributes paid at the funeral, "She endeared

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<sup>6</sup> His daughter Christine's (Chrissie) main childhood memory of her great-uncle Gilbert was his booming voice! Joseph Gurney Barclay died in 1976 aged ninety-six. His wife Gillian died eleven days later.

<sup>7</sup> His son Robin described his father as "A fine product of the old Evangelical environment, great simplicity of character, faithful piety and ever present willingness to help other people, talents always held in trust and made the most of, absence of ambition to do great things, but a ready will to seek first the Kingdom of God were all his. With them all a great humility and the strength which comes to the meek who know their own insufficiency and rely upon a Power greater than themselves." Robert and his wife were buried in the churchyard of St Augustine's Church, Broxbourne. "Heirs together of the grace of life" is the text on the gravestone. Later their daughter Rachel Elizabeth Barclay, who had been a missionary in Ceylon, was buried in the same tomb, and also the ashes of Joseph Gurney Barclay and his second wife Gwendoline Rose (nee Watney), sometime missionaries in Japan.

herself by her gentle influence, sympathy and ever-ready help, not only to her immediate relations and friends, but to all whose sorrows and difficulties came to her notice. Like her great-great-grandmother, Elizabeth Fry, it was her delight to visit the sick and needy, giving practical help as well as comforting words.” The funeral at the old church of St James on the edge of Stanstead Abbots<sup>8</sup> was unusual in several respects. To cite again the contemporary newspaper report:

In accordance with a wish expressed by Mrs Buxton, the service was made as bright as possible. There was no tolling of the church bell, and no intoning by the clergy, whilst instead of the “Dead March” the organist played by special request of the family the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s “Messiah”. There was no choir, and it was the wish of Mrs Buxton that the hymns chosen for the service should be heartily sung by the congregation... The clergy taking part were the Revs. Leonard and Arthur Buxton (sons), the Rev. E. L. McClintock (son-in-law), the Rev. Barclay F. Buxton (brother-in-law), the Rev. Canon R. A. Pelly (brother), Canon E. S. Woods [husband of her niece], Canon Harford [brother-in-law], the Revs. D. B. Barclay and G. A. Barclay [nephews], and the Rev. G. F. Grace (vicar of Stanstead Abbots.)

It must have been quite an occasion, with the church packed to overflowing and the scores of floral tributes. However, it must have been terribly lonely for John Henry to return to Easneye and to say farewell to the large numbers of relatives and friends who had supported him at the funeral.

Although he was already seventy-five years old, he lived another ten years on his own before he died in 1934. However, there were still visits from his many relatives: his eldest son Henry Fowell who lived just a few miles away at Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth with his wife Katharine and five sons; his son Leonard with his wife Kathleen, their four sons and two daughters, (from 1923 to 1930 he was vicar of St Mark’s, Southampton); his other son Arthur, from 1920 to 1935 Rector of All Souls, Langham Place, London, with Esme and their son Nigel and three daughters, Richenda, Mary and Priscilla; John Henry’s own three daughters, Margaret and her son David and five daughters, in Frinton where her husband, Edward McClintock, was Rector of St Mary’s Church from 1919 to 1925; Dorothy, now Lady Hazlerigg, married to Sir Arthur of Noseley Hall, Leicester, with their children; and Rosamond who was unmarried and a nursing sister at the Mildmay Mission Hospital in London. There were also his remaining siblings: Geoffrey and Mary in Norfolk with their nine children, now all adults (Geoffrey died in 1929); Alfred and Violet in Kent with their three children, also grown up (Alfred lived to the age of 98 and died in 1952)<sup>9</sup>; Barclay, now vicar of Holy Trinity,

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<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, in 1915 the Bishop of St Albans had consecrated a portion of St Andrew’s Churchyard as a private burial ground for John Henry Buxton and his family, but it was not used, either on this occasion or subsequently. Thomas Fowell, his wife Rachel, their son Fowell Arthur and their daughter Margaret Jane Pelly had all been buried in the old graveyard.

<sup>9</sup> He made his career in banking, but with what became the National Provincial Bank, unlike his brother Geoffrey and his brother-in-law Robert Barclay. He eventually became a director of the bank; he was also a director of the Alliance Assurance Company, Chairman of the London County Council (1916-1917), a governor of Rugby School, and a member of the Church of England House of Laity and of its Pensions Board. He was closely involved in the production of the *Two-Version Edition* of the Bible in 1899, which was the Authorised Version of 1611 with the differences of the Revised

Tunbridge Wells,<sup>10</sup> with Margaret and daughter Rachel Jane<sup>11</sup> (their sons Murray, Alfred and Godfrey were married by this time); Effie and her husband Tom Lancaster, vicar in Melcombe Regis, Weymouth since 1910, and from 1932, Rector of St John the Evangelist, Little Leighs in Essex, with their six children;<sup>12</sup> and Ethel, unmarried and living in London (she died on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1931, aged sixty-seven and was buried in the Buxton family plot in the cemetery of St James' Church, Stanstead Abbots.)<sup>13</sup> Canon R Arnold Pelly, whose wife Margaret Jane[t] had died in 1903, also visited, as did his children, two of whom were clergymen and served as missionaries in India with the C.M.S.<sup>14</sup> And there were many more!

Those men who survived the conflict and returned from the front either resumed their previous careers or branched out in new directions. Murray Buxton, Barclay Buxton's oldest son, found that the wounds he had sustained prevented him from returning overseas as a missionary. He went into business at the age of thirty-one with no previous experience, and was soon chairman

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Version of 1811 in the margin. It was of great value for serious Bible study at a time when the AV was still the most popular version. The present writer used it when he was a Baptist minister and for a few years after moving to Easneye, not recognising the connection, which was mentioned in the Preface by the Bishop of Gloucester, the Rt Rev. C. J. Ellicott. His words were: "The volume owes its origin to a suggestion of Mr Alfred F. Buxton, and it is to his continued interest in the work and to his generous support that its final publication are mainly due." In 1936 his nephew Alfred left Abyssinia following the Italian invasion and brought with him a manuscript copy of the Amharic version of the Bible which had recently been translated under the influence of the Emperor. His uncle Alfred encouraged him to print it and helped financially in the project.

<sup>10</sup> Barclay was at Tunbridge Wells from 1921 till 1935. He and Margaret then retired to Wimbledon, although he undertook one last visit to Japan in 1937. He continued to give Bible readings, or expositions, right through the war and the blitz. He died on February 4 1946, his wife on April 21 1947.

<sup>11</sup> Rachel Jane was sixteen in 1921 when her parents moved to Tunbridge Wells. At some point in the 1940s (she was still living at home in Wimbledon in November 1940), although she was unmarried she fell pregnant and had a son, David. She left home and moved into a large house at Stanway, near Colchester, which the family bought for her, where she lived for the rest of her life. For decades she was ostracised by her family, although in later years they relented and re-established contact with her. She took in boarders and bred kittens; she died in 1998. For the whole of her life she refused to name the father of her child. The reaction of the Buxtons, especially the family of Barclay Buxton, to her pregnancy, and their subsequent shunning of her and her illegitimate son for many years, do them no credit whatsoever. To preach the Gospel of God's forgiveness to the greatest of sinners and then to refuse it to their own flesh and blood could be seen as pure hypocrisy, itself unforgivable. From what Rachel Jane confided to David Morris and his wife Trenna in later years after Godfrey's *rapprochement* with her, the only contacts she had for many years were with friends of the family who sought to aggressively evangelise her, scaring her rather than befriending her.

<sup>12</sup> They both died in November and December of 1940, within three weeks of each other.

<sup>13</sup> The announcement of her death in the *Times* refers to her as "beloved sister and aunt; counsellor and friend to many." Emily, married to Thomas Morris McKnight, a tea-planter, died childless on January 9 1925. Her husband had died in April 1906.

<sup>14</sup> Arnold Pelly remarried in 1906, three years after the death of his first wife, this time to Dora Isabel, a daughter of Sir Edward Hildred Carlile. Her sister Jean Mary Muriel later married Murray Buxton.

of a number of structural engineering companies. He was eventually elected as President of the Institute of Structural Engineers. He used his influence to improve the conditions of workers in the industry and also to found a benevolent fund for them. He also formed an alliance of small firms able to compete with the large steel combines and so maintain their employees in work. His Christian business ethics were widely known and respected.<sup>15</sup> He gave generously to many missionary enterprises, including the work of his brother Alfred in Africa. He was vice-president of the Church Army, chairman of the Christian Police Corporation and on the board of the Mildmay Mission Hospital. In 1920 he married Janet [Jean] Mary Muriel Carlile (1884-1942), the daughter of Sir Hildred Carlile and niece of the founder of the Church Army, Wilson Carlile. They had two children, Jean and Ronald.

Godfrey Buxton, the youngest son, returned to Cambridge in 1920 to complete his studies which had been interrupted by the war. He was still on crutches at the time, two years after he had been wounded in the Battle of Messines. Ten of his fifteen Cambridge friends from before the war, some of whom he had led to personal faith, had been killed in the conflict. Almost immediately he was elected President of the Cambridge Intercollegiate Christian Union (CICCU). It was a critical time in the development of Christian work in the universities as liberal views on the inspiration and authority of the Bible, which were already well-established in the university faculties, were affecting undergraduates. Godfrey led the fight in the battle to uphold the Evangelical view in the Christian union at Cambridge. He recalls how inadequate he and his like-minded friends felt: "Ignorant, unlearned men as we were, we set ourselves against the massive scholarship of mature intellects. We could not argue with them, but we were sure of God's word" (Ian Dobbie, *Captain Barclay Godfrey Buxton, MBE, MC, MA* nd pp 6-7.)

During an evangelistic mission in Cambridge, Godfrey met Dorothea Reader Harris, the daughter of Richard Reader Harris, a prominent KC and well-known Christian leader.<sup>16</sup> Dorothea was an assistant missionary for the women's colleges. They got engaged in 1922 and married the next year. Godfrey desperately longed to go overseas as a missionary but his serious war wounds prevented this. "What can God do with a broken bag of bones?" he asked his family and friends. His brother Alfred, who was home briefly from Africa and was soon to return, mentioned the need for practical missionary training for men who would go to pioneer situations. The Rev Gilbert Barclay, their cousin who had recently been appointed Home Overseer of the Heart of Africa Mission (soon changed to Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade, W.E.C.), agreed. A large field in Norwood, South London, at the back of the house where Gilbert Barclay and his wife Dorothy (née Studd) lived, was purchased and some old army huts erected. The living accommodation was basic and the training rigorous. There was Bible teaching from Godfrey Buxton and possibly others including Gilbert Barclay and Barclay Buxton, and plenty of experience of open-air preaching and practical evangelism. Godfrey Buxton had obviously found his niche. From 1921 till 1939 nearly three hundred men were

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<sup>15</sup> It is a sign of the deep impression made by Murray Buxton that in 1966, a quarter of a century after his death, a series of Murray Buxton medals and awards was set up by the Institute in memory of him.

<sup>16</sup> He was a Methodist minister and the founder in 1909 of the Pentecostal League of Prayer (there is no connection with the Pentecostal Movement which was growing at the time).

trained at what was known as the Missionary Training Colony.<sup>17</sup> In his vacations Godfrey was in demand as a speaker for the Inter Varsity Fellowship, and travelled extensively in the U.S.A, Scandinavia, Germany and Hungary, accompanied by Dorothea who had a speaking and counselling ministry. They also managed to bring up their two children, Christopher and Joanna!

Alfred Buxton had spent the war years as a missionary in Africa with C T Studd. In 1914 his brother George had expressed his willingness to stand in for Alfred in his work in the Congo so Alfred planned to return to England and enlist; in fact he had even started out on his journey when the news came that George had changed his mind and had himself enlisted in the King's African Rifles (as mentioned above, he later joined the R.F.C. and was shot down and killed in 1917.) Alfred felt that he could not leave the work in Africa so cancelled his journey. In his correspondence with his father in 1916 he said he was still willing to come home and enlist but the authorities had introduced a directive that men who had studied medicine for three years were required to complete their studies before enlisting. In 1913 Alfred had left his medical studies at Cambridge before completion in order to go out to Africa with C T Studd, so he fell into that category. Consequently he decided against returning to England. The following year (1917), C T Studd returned to Africa, bringing his daughter Edith, to whom Alfred had got engaged shortly before he had left England three and a half years before. Alfred and Edith were married. In 1920 they returned home with their little daughter Susan. Lionel was born a year later. They returned to Africa for another three years; in 1924 a rare tropical illness caused a partial physical collapse and recurring bouts of ill-health through the rest of his life.

Differences between C T Studd and his colleagues caused a breach with his father-in-law in the 1920s, and Alfred and some of his fellow missionaries linked up with the Sudan Interior Mission to open up new work in Abyssinia and British Somaliland (Ethiopia and Somalia) where he went on trek in 1931-1933. He also encouraged the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society to evangelise in northern Kenya. Alfred and Edith sailed for Abyssinia in 1934 and worked there for two years until the Italian invasion in 1935 forced them to return to England in 1936;<sup>18</sup> they settled in Devon in a home given to them by a friend. He spent much of his time working on the revision of the Amharic Bible translation but also involved himself increasingly as an Evangelical in Anglican church affairs.

John Henry Buxton died on March 21, 1934 and was buried alongside his wife in the graveyard of St James Church, Stanstead Abbots. He was eighty-four years old. The Scripture verse he had chosen for the gravestone was: "In Thy presence is fulness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). As with his father, he had a living faith in Jesus Christ, Whom he sought to serve in every possible way during his life, and Whom he trusted to take him into His presence at death. In the Bible presented to him by his father in 1898, there are a number of notes he had added which show the direction of his life and faith. On John chapter 20 he has the comment:

"4 appearances. To John who believed easily. To Mary, emotional, impulsive. To

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<sup>17</sup> There is more detail of the training and the reactions of some of those trained in C David Harley, *Missionary Training: The History of All Nations Christian College and its Predecessors (1911-1981)* Utrecht University PhD dissertation, 2000:54-56.

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth Buxton FRCS a cousin of Alfred, had gone out to Ethiopia in 1935 with his wife, to start a medical school in Addis Ababa. However, they had to return at the same time as Alfred due to the Italian invasion.

disciples, who half believed, but fully now. To Thomas, pessimistic - to him the patient Lord makes a special revelation, as so often now to men. These 4 are types of most temperaments. The 4 were only given to those who really wanted Him. We need a living faith that comes from a personal sight of the Lord. 4.07[April 1907]."<sup>19</sup>

Henry Fowell Buxton (1876-1949), his eldest son, inherited Easneye and after his father's death moved in with his wife and their unmarried son Joseph.<sup>20</sup> They had been living at Manor of Groves, near Sawbridgeworth, and at the same time or soon after, his eldest son John Fowell Buxton (1902-1970), who in 1930 had married Katherine Mary Bacon (1906-2000), moved into Manor of Groves. Their first daughter, Bridget Jane, was born in August 1931 and they eventually had a total of five daughters and one son, Henry Alexander Fowell Buxton.

It seems probable that, as Henry's father had made him lord of the manor at least twenty years before, he was already involved in the running of the estate, as well as being involved in the brewery in London. We do not know what changes had taken place since the death of Thomas Fowell back in 1908. During the Great War, a number of the staff and workers must have left to join the armed forces, some of them returning and others not, either killed in action or moving on to other positions. In 1924, at the funeral of Emma (Minnie) Buxton, John Henry's wife, there had been deep sympathy expressed by four different groups: the Easneye Estate Farm tenants, the household staff, the Easneye garden staff, and the workmen on the Easneye Estate, so there must still have been considerable numbers employed. For the last ten years of John Henry's life after his wife's death, there must have been some reduction in the number of household staff, as he was the only family member living there.

David Morris summarises the whole period from 1919 to 1939:

The inter-war years saw a resumption of quiet yet purposeful living at Easneye. Ambassadors, Missionaries, Bishops, Barclays and Buxtons came and went. Still the Bible was at the heart of the family. The home was still 'inhabited by faithful servants of God' - men and women who believed in practical Christianity - in business and sport, in fact in all parts of human activity. *The Story of Easneye*, nd p 10.

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<sup>19</sup> In 1886 during the Irish Home Rule debates in Parliament at Westminster, John Henry wrote to the *Harlow Paper* suggesting a series of parallels between the Scheme for Land Purchase which would benefit the Irish peasantry and the scheme of Joseph in the land of Egypt 3500 years before (recorded in Genesis chapter 47). A diligent Bible student! In 1895, as president of the C.P.A.S. he gave a rousing speech to their annual meeting at Exeter Hall, in London, declaring his support for the Evangelical, Protestant stance of the society, stating his belief that England was the "heart of the Protestant world" and that we must keep that heart healthy by establishing "bright spots of light" i.e. strong Evangelical places of witness around the country, and that the society needed the increasing support of Christians to do this. The society report spoke of the Evangelical ministers and workers needed as "real men, full of the Holy Ghost and of power, men of love and sympathy, manly men" and this was his plea. He concluded: "Let us each, in our place and sphere, occupy ourselves in keeping very near to the Lord, and in helping forward the Gospel of Christ by helping forward this great Society."

<sup>20</sup> The other two sons, Robert James (1908-1968) and Michael Auriol (1914-1990), were also married by that time. A fifth son, Henry Adrian (1916-1970), did not marry. He, like his mother, suffered from mental problems and was institutionalised. He died in Severells Hospital, Colchester.

At least one Government minister also stayed at Easneye! In November and December 1936 the Constitutional Crisis over the proposed marriage of the King, Edward VIII to Mrs Wallis Simpson was in progress. The Minister for Coordination of Defence, Sir Thomas Inskip (later Viscount Caldecote) was spending the weekend of December 5-7 with his wife Angela at Easneye.<sup>21</sup> Arthur and Esme Buxton were there (Arthur had been Rector of All Souls, Langham Place from 1921 to 1936 and had recently retired), together with a few more friends. Sir Thomas was expecting to leave on Sunday afternoon for a Cabinet meeting at 5.00 p.m., but was sent for at 8.00 a.m. when he was in Church to attend a hurriedly convened meeting.

David Morris continues: “The family had their tragedies and failures. This was part of human living, but somehow the Bible text, ‘Do it with thy might’ over the fireplace carried them on.” One of the tragedies from which they suffered was the deteriorating mental condition of Henry’s wife Katharine. We do not know when the first signs appeared, nor the precise nature of the illness; she was at home for Christmas 1936 and on Easter Sunday, March 28, 1937 for a Christening, but in March 1938 when the Family had a special weekend together, with the sons and their wives, and in the case of Joseph, his fiancée, she was absent, as she was in June of that year when Arthur and Esme Buxton’s daughter Richenda had her wedding reception at Easneye. Henry was obviously not able to look after her and she was hospitalised, hopefully in a private nursing home rather than a mental asylum. She occasionally came back for short periods, but, sadly, she ended her days away from her husband and family home. Their remaining son, Joseph Gurney Fowell Buxton (Joe) was married to Elizabeth Langley Barbour in 1938 in Tattenhall, Cheshire, and their first child Andrew was born in April 1939. Presumably, Katharine was not able to share in either of these happy events.

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<sup>21</sup> He had strongly opposed the 1928 Prayer Book when it was debated in the House of Commons, believing that it strayed too far away from the Protestant principles of the Church of England enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer. The new book was rejected but the Anglican Convocation then declared an emergency and used this as a pretext to use the new Prayer Book for many decades afterwards.

## CHAPTER VIII: THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The clouds of war had been gathering for some time as Adolf Hitler led Germany to rearm and make more and more unacceptable demands of its neighbours. The annexation of the Sudetenland and the partition of Czechoslovakia in 1938 were followed in 1939 by the seizure of the Free City of Danzig and the invasion of Poland with blitzkrieg tactics by the Luftwaffe. The British ultimatum to the Reichstag was ignored and at 11.15 a.m. on September 3, 1939 Great Britain was once again at war with Germany.

Leonard Buxton, who in 1930 had moved from Southampton to North Mimms, where he remained until October 1944, wrote a letter in the parish magazine for September 1939 which expressed the views of the majority of British Christians at the time about the war which was just beginning.

My Dear Friends

On September 1st Hitler's troops and aeroplanes invaded Poland. And on September 3rd Great Britain and France, in fulfilment of their promise, declared war on Germany. That very briefly, as we all know, was the immediate cause of war. But we also know that we are not only fighting for Poland but for those eternal principles of righteousness, mercy and good faith upon which alone security and peace can be based. It is those principles that we must keep in mind and thus carry on the struggle for victory and calmness with courage and confidence. It is for this reason that I believe we, as Christians and members of the Church, have a supremely important part to play in this war. All that is best in our Western civilization is the result of the Christian faith. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and that in Him and Him alone, can be found the way of reconciliation between all nations. It is for us during war to lift high the torch of faith, hope and charity. We must show the spirit of Christ in quietly doing our duty, bearing suffering and loss without complaint in showing compassion to all who are in trouble. We must eschew all feelings of hatred and bitterness, and endeavour to sow the seeds of justice and mercy, which, please God, will one day bring forth the harvest of peace.

In our parish we can try in every way to do our duty. One obvious task is to care for the children whom we are sheltering in our home, to provide occupation for them, and to make their lives happy. We can also volunteer for various forms of service and, as far as possible, give our time freely to the service of our country. Above all we can attend our gatherings for public worship, whether at the Holy Communion or at other services. There we can meet God and find in Him unfailing sources of strength and courage. There too we can offer our intercessions for our rulers, for the men engaged in war, for our enemies, and for the final victory of the truth.

The Church is entrusted with the faith which alone can save mankind. Let us be sure of that ourselves and not be afraid to bear witness to it...

Yours sincerely, Leonard Buxton.

Three of Henry Fowell's sons served in the armed forces: John Fowell was a major in the Essex Yeomanry and served in the Middle East, Joseph was a captain in the Grenadier Guards and was also in the Middle East, and Michael Auriol was a Royal Navy officer, initially on board the HMS Birmingham, a light cruiser. However, the first Buxton casualties of the war were Murray and Alfred, Barclay Buxton's sons. On October 14, 1940, they were meeting in the new Church House, Westminster, where Murray had rooms to be near his business; after a light evening meal they adjourned to the Club Room to continue their talking, which was about the shorter Moffatt Bible in which they were both involved as a means of reaching outsiders. At 7.40 p.m. a German bomb smashed through three floors and exploded just outside the Club

Room wall. Murray, Alfred and four others in the room were all killed instantly.<sup>1</sup>

Godfrey Buxton donned his uniform again, but this time as a travelling secretary of the Officers' Christian Union. Dorothea was also appointed in a similar role, and they were great demand as speakers by all three of the armed services. Godfrey had closed the Missionary Training Colony at the outbreak of hostilities, and they moved to Woodend in Camberley, near the British Army Staff College there and also just a few miles from Sandhurst, the site of the Royal Military Academy. Their "At Homes" were the means of reaching future officers, not only from Britain but from many other nations, with the Gospel. Jean Carlile Buxton, Murray and Muriel's daughter, was in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (A.T.S. later known as the Women's Royal Army Corps.) Her brother Ronald was in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (R.E.M.E.).

The war brought other changes to Easneye. Henry Fowell was living by himself; his wife Katharine was in a mental asylum or a nursing home; John's wife Katherine and her children continued to live in Manor of Groves; Joseph's wife Elizabeth with baby Andrew was living with her widowed mother at Bolesworth Castle, Cheshire; Michael's wife Betty was living with her children at Mardock's Mill, a property on the Easneye estate; Robert and his wife Alyson were living at Rockdunder, Wrington, Somerset, where he was a doctor, and also the local scoutmaster!<sup>2</sup> In January 1940, under the auspices of the London County Council, Easneye received its first evacuees, a number of babies from London accompanied by eight nurses.<sup>3</sup> The numbers increased over the next few years; in December 1943 there were fifty-three babies and twenty-four nursing staff. Two years later there were twenty-seven nurses. The house was once again full, with plenty of noise! Henry retained a few rooms for his own use, even when the babies and nurses were there in their maximum numbers. The Visitor's Book also continues to record visitors staying right through the war years, although he was probably not able to accommodate many at any one time. Among the staff, there were still the butler, the cook and at least one maid.

Early in 1940, when the threat of German invasion was a real possibility, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Wessex

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Murray's widow, Muriel, did not survive him for long. Two years later in Autumn 1942, she caught a chill when speaking at a women's meeting and died suddenly.

Lionel, the son of Alfred and Edith, was a lieutenant in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Coldstream Guards. He was wounded in Sicily in 1943 and died on September 30. Susan, their daughter, married the surgeon Michael Wood, who became the original African Flying Doctor and founded the African Medical Research Foundation. She is aged 88 and blind, living near Nairobi.

<sup>2</sup> Some reminiscences on the Internet of a local boy from Wrington aged twelve in 1940 say: "The Scout Master Dr Buxton lived at a place called "Rockdunder". Rockdunder was a mansion which had belonged to H H Wills a tobacco millionaire.

<sup>3</sup> Widbury House nearby was also used in the same way. The LCC Archive summary (on the A2A website) states: "Easneye Residential Nursery, Ware, Herts, and Widbury House Residential Nursery, Ware, Herts, were leased by the [London County] Council as a war-time measure and continued in use after the Second World War ended. In 1958, a separate House Committee for the two nurseries was appointed and was also made responsible for the family homes at Stevenage New Town. Easneye Nursery was closed in 1963."

Regiment, comprising 15,000 men, were billeted in the region of Hertford. The officer in charge of supplies, together with his staff (a total of two officers and thirty-six other ranks), encamped in Easney Woods, with four large marquees concealed among the trees. The two officers were billeted in the chauffeur's cottage (now known as "Ricketts") next to the Laundry (the present Premises Manager's house) where the housekeeper prepared the meals for the eight or so nurses. The senior officer Captain or Major H J Long, tells of his contacts with Henry Buxton. In his initial tour of the estate to see if it was suitable for their needs, "I suddenly came across a tall gentleman, elegantly dressed in tweeds, with a long thumb-stick, and followed by two dogs. This was Harry Buxton...to whom the house belonged." They discussed the situation and Henry initially expressed concern that the nearness of the army to what was now a children's nursery might be dangerous in the case of bombing, but saw the point put by the officer that in the case of invasion the presence of the army would be an advantage. He agreed and the unit moved into the grounds. The two officers made arrangements with the housekeeper that in return for them giving her their daily rations (which were considerably larger than the civilian allowance) she would cook their meals. However, every Thursday she had her day off, so they needed to make other arrangements. Henry Buxton generously offered to provide them with a hot meal on that day "and accordingly every Thursday we had the extraordinary sight of the butler, followed by a maid, walking across from the house to our cottage bearing a large covered dish, generally pheasant, and other delicacies!" The account continues: "Mr Buxton used to invite us over in the evening for a talk, and as we left to go back to our billets he would frequently pick up a basket of peaches or strawberries and hand them to us. He was most generous and kind."

One bomb fell in the woods but did not go off - even when two of the sergeants rattled it and tried to move it! There was another false alarm when a shot was fired, and an alarm was sounded that enemy parachutists had been sighted. It turned out that the guard commander had tripped over a guy rope and his rifle had gone off by mistake! The officer dashed out of the cottage holding his trousers up with one hand! It seems that the TV series "Dad's Army" was true to life, although this was the real army, not the Home Guard!

Henry sustained good relations with the LCC staff. An original notice survives which he typed and put on the notice board (the marks of the drawing pins are still clearly visible!)<sup>4</sup> His guests for Christmas 1943 were: "Adrian & Emma Strygesen and 24 Nursing Staff & 53 babies."! There was "a tea party for all the Matrons nearby" in May 1944, and for Christmas 1945 he received a Christmas card (which he pasted in the Visitor's Book) signed by the matron, A.D. Cooper, and all twenty-six nurses.

Henry had his own share of losses to bear. On April 23, 1943, his son Joseph Gurney Fowell Buxton (Joe), Captain in the 5th Battalion, Grenadier Guards, was killed in the Battle of Medjez Plain in Tunisia, which occurred when, following the Battle of El Alamein, the Allies pursued the German and Italian armies through Tripoli and Tunisia until they surrendered in

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<sup>4</sup> The notice reads:  
"EASNEYE 29<sup>th</sup>. January, 1941. MUSTARD GAS - THE EYES. In the event of the eyes becoming affected by Mustard Gas, the following is a very simple and effective treatment:- Bathe the eyes with a solution of warm water and 1% Bicarbonate of Soda. An eye-bath and a quantity of Bicarbonate of Soda are to be found in the Gas-proof room in the Cellar. (Signed) H.F.B."

May 1943. He was buried in the Medjez-El-Bab War Cemetery, Tunisia. By that time, he and his wife Elizabeth had three children, Andrew Robert Fowell, Meriel Rose and Joseph William Henry.<sup>5</sup> Less than two years later, on January 4, 1945, Henry's wife Katharine Tayspel Buxton died. Her body was cremated and her ashes scattered in the area of the Buxton graves in the St James Churchyard. A private memorial service was held for her in Stanstead Abbots on July 20, led by Henry's brother Arthur.

On August 25, 1945, at the age of sixty-nine Henry remarried, this time to Mairi Milne, a lady fifteen years his junior (she was born in 1890). The wedding took place at the Crown Court Church, Covent Garden, and his brother Arthur took part. Mairi Milne had also been married before, to Norman Clarke Neill, who had presumably died several years previously. Mairi Neill seems to have been an old family friend; she first appears in the Easneye Visitor's Book in October 1936 and then several times in 1938, in January, April and June (including Richenda Buxton's wedding.) She lived in Winchester, in Prior's Acre, so there is the vague possibility that her first husband had been connected with Winchester Cathedral. At the time of her marriage to Henry, she had reverted to her maiden name.

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<sup>5</sup> Three years later, in April 1946, she remarried. She and her second husband Alexander (Sandy) Ludovic Grant had two children.

## CHAPTER IX: 1945 ONWARDS

The war in Europe had finished on May 8, 1945 and the war in the Far East on September 2, 1945. Peace - and austerity - returned. John, Henry's eldest son, returned to civilian life in August 1945. Relatives and other friends continued to visit Easneye; the L.C.C. nursery continued to use a large part of the premises.

In the Visitor's Book, Henry's notes of explanation expand some of the cryptic entries; they also show that his remarriage had lifted his spirits, following the long distressing illness of his first wife Katharine and the death of his son Joe.

In October 1946 he notes:

Godfrey and Dorothea brought over about 60 members of the Officers' Christian Union - many with their wives - who were holding a Conference at High Leigh. General Dobbie (of Malta fame) spoke in the Hall, and had invited the Nursing Staff and any who could come from the Estate.

In March 1947, Michael and his family from Mardock's Mill on the estate are "refugees" in the house:

The Mardock's party came as they were twice flooded out in a week. After a month's frost, snow, thaw and gale, the whole country was devastated. Chaplin on the Tractor (the only vehicle high enough to go along High Street) evacuated numerous families to Parish Hall. A number of trees down across Railway, drive and at Mardocks. Noseley [Noseley Hall, Leics, the home of the Hazleriggs] blocked by snow for weeks.

The following month they moved out of Mardock's Mill for good; Betty and the boys, Gervase, Christopher and Jonathan, left to spend six months in Rispond in Scotland, a remote manor on the north coast of Scotland at the mouth of Loch Eriboll (her original home?); in October they moved to Oakham in Rutland. A few years later John and his family moved into Mardock's Mill from Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth.

At the end of May 1947 Henry and Mairi visited Norfolk for five days, staying with his brother Arthur and his wife Esme and their daughter Priscilla at Upton House in Cromer, and meeting Buxtons, Barclays, Gurneys and tenants from the estate at Trimingham which the family owned there, and where they spent many holidays. Meeting the in-laws must have been quite an ordeal! However, Henry says that they "had a delightful visit" so it must have gone off well.

It seems that they were still able to organise garden parties at Easneye. In May 1947 they had a large one and in May of the following year there was "the Brewery Party" for the staff in Spitalfields, which was "a great success" according to Arthur and Esme who attended.<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> It would seem that among his siblings, indeed among his relatives in general, Arthur was the closest to him. Back in 1938, Richenda's wedding reception was held at Easneye (she was Arthur's daughter); Arthur christened Christopher Robert Buxton, one of Henry's grandsons; he took the memorial service for Katharine when she died and also took part in the marriage service of Henry and Mairi. Arthur and Esmé visited him regularly and he and Mairi stayed with them in Cromer. Arthur's last clerical position was at All Souls' Langham Place, from where he retired in 1936 at the age of fifty-four. He did not enjoy very good health, so this may have been the reason why he did not

years 1946-1948 saw many visitors to Easneye; the accommodation they still used in the house was well used. Many of the visitors were from overseas and were often on the point of returning home. Several family members stayed there for short periods. Joe Buxton's widow, Elizabeth, who had remarried in 1946, stayed in 1948 on the way to settling into a new home in Whitchurch, Salop.

The last family visit before Henry died on January 16, 1949 was that of Kenneth Buxton and his wife Agnes and four children, Paul, Andrew, Angela<sup>2</sup> and Susanna on January 11. Kenneth was one of the six children born to Henry's brother Leonard and his wife Kathleen.<sup>3</sup> Following his brief time in Ethiopia (see above) he went out to Burundi in 1938, where he designed and built a hospital from scratch, and organised and ran it under extremely adverse conditions. He returned to England for a brief visit in 1948 and it was at that time that he and his family visited Easneye. The address he gave in the Visitor's Book was "Sheldon, Chorley Wood, Herts, & Africa"!

Five days later Henry died; his body was cremated and his ashes scattered on the Buxton burial site in the Stanstead Abbots graveyard. The brief inscription reads: "In memory of Henry Fowell Buxton of Easneye, 1876-1949, and of his First Wife, Katharine Tayspel Buxton, 1881-1945. Their Ashes are Scattered Here."<sup>4</sup> Mairi probably stayed on at Easneye for a few months

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seek another pastoral position. He and his wife lived in Norfolk for the rest of their lives, firstly in Trimington-on-Sea, then at Upton House, Cromer. In *Crockford's Clerical Directory* his address was given as Upton House, Cromer, and the Athenaeum Club in London [!]. His ministry at All Souls was not especially notable, according to the official history of the church. He described himself as a Liberal Evangelical who "tried to make All Souls a central church and community in which all can feel at home" ["central" meaning broader and less narrow than the traditional Evangelical position of his predecessor, Prebendary F S Webster]. He introduced a number of High Church practices including the "eastward position" of the priest at the Communion Table with his back to the congregation, and coloured stoles (R Luker, *All Souls Langham Place: A History* London, 1979: 46-51.) He died on January 6, 1958. His successor, the Rev Harold Earnshaw-Smith (under whom John Stott served as curate from 1945) was a committed Evangelical who brought the church back to its previous position, and moved it forward as a vibrant witness in the centre of London. As a five year old John Stott, with his sister, attended Esme's Sunday School class - and was often sent out of the room for bad behaviour (usually provoked deliberately by his sister!) See T Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: The Making of a Leader* London 1999:45.

<sup>2</sup> In 1971 Angela came to All Nations Christian College as a student, the first, and so far the only direct descendant of Thomas Fowell Buxton to do so - but that is to anticipate!

<sup>3</sup> Leonard had retired from North Mimms in 1944 and died in 1946. His widow, Kathleen, died in 1958. One of their sons, Edmund Digby Buxton (1908-2001) was an Evangelical Anglican minister who studied at Trinity College, Cambridge and Ridley Hall. After several pastoral charges in England, he became the Chaplain to the island of Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic for three years before retiring to Sherborne, Dorset. His son Edmund Francis (in India) and his daughter Mary Ethel (in Nigeria) served with the C.M.S.. Leonard's youngest son, Digby Hugh Buxton (1902-1987), remained unmarried and was a missionary priest in the backwoods in Quebec, Canada for nearly thirty years.

<sup>4</sup> The absence of any Christian reference on the stone may have been as a result of his own wish, or it may have been the choice of his son, John Fowell Buxton. Henry Fowell Buxton was obviously not in the same mould as his father, John Henry, although he probably accepted the Evangelical faith, albeit in a diluted form, rather like his brother Arthur, to whom he was so close. His

(there are a few names in the Visitor's Book for May, and then the entries cease.) She died on July 29, 1962 in Blackpool. We do not have any more information about her.

Henry's son, John Fowell Buxton inherited Easneye but did not live in it. At some point he move into Morley Hall, Wareside. The L.C.C. continued to use the mansion as a children's home until 1963, when it was closed.

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wife's attitude (see above) as well as her sad mental state must have had its effect on his own faith.

## CHAPTER X: A NEW CHAPTER!

So the story of the Evangelical Buxton family of Easneye came to an end. Or did it? Christians who believe in the Providence of God know that: “God works in a mysterious way/ His wonders to perform” (William Cowper). And, we may say reverently, God had not finished with Easneye yet! Godfrey Buxton, who, in spite of being a “broken bag of bones”, was still active in Christian work, especially with the Officers’ Christian Union and the “At Homes” he and Dorothea continued to hold for the Sandhurst officer cadets. He was also on the council of the All Nations Missionary College (formerly the All Nations Bible College) at Taplow, Maidenhead, Berkshire. The college had recently been through a traumatic period of upheaval and, in addition, the building was in very bad repair and needed large amounts of money to be spent on it. A building developer was offering a very attractive price for the site on which he proposed to build. It seemed right to look for new premises for the college. At a meeting in June 1963, Godfrey Buxton told the council that Easneye Mansion in Hertfordshire was available to rent as the L.C.C. had recently closed down the children’s home there, and his cousin John Fowell Buxton was looking for a new tenant.<sup>1</sup> The building was in need of several repairs and alterations, and it took a year for the arrangements to be completed, but in 1964 a twenty-one year lease was agreed, with options at seven and fourteen years. The mansion, the stables, North Lodge and the cricket field were leased for a rental of £250 per annum. In September 1964, All Nations Missionary College began a new phase of its life with thirty-five men students.

Easneye had begun a new life as the home of an Evangelical training college but the future of the college was by no means secure. There were a number of other similar Bible colleges in existence and All Nations had a poor reputation in the Evangelical world as a result of the bad publicity surrounding the dismissal of the previous principal a few years before. In the words of the new principal David Morris, it was “the dustbin of the Bible colleges”! However, David Morris, Godfrey Buxton, the members of staff, and some at least of the council were aware of Lady Hannah Buxton’s prayer and the fine Evangelical heritage of the Buxton family. David Morris had been a missionary teacher in Nigeria and he in particular had a vision for the college as not just another Bible college but a training centre for men (and women) which would prepare them for cross-cultural missionary work anywhere in the world. The number of good quality applicants grew over the next few years, as did the reputation of the college for the cross-cultural training it was giving.

David Morris found someone with a similar vision to his own, and who also agreed with him that men and women should be trained together for such work. Meg Foote, had been an I.V.F. Travelling Secretary for many years, particularly after the Second World War in Europe. She was the principal of Mount Hermon Missionary Training College in Ealing (for women only), and, after many conflicts, she was able to persuade the Mount Hermon council to plan for a

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<sup>1</sup> While John retained his links with the Anglican Church, he was not in sympathy with the Evangelical stance of Godfrey and his forebears. At a later date, he said to a mutual acquaintance, “Keep Godfrey away from me. He is always talking to me about my soul!” Apparently, when he was younger he had been to the Keswick Convention and enjoyed it but his mother warned him against getting too involved, telling him she feared that he might get “religious mania” like other members of the family! John’s wife Katherine was more Evangelically inclined than her husband.

merger with All Nations. The council of Ridgeland Bible College, another women's college, also agreed, and so the merger went ahead. It was felt that the combined college would need new premises rather than remain at Easneye, which was only leased and could not be adapted or added to as would be required. There was a period of many months when every available property of the right size in the Home Counties was looked at and rejected.

Then in 1970, John Fowell Buxton died. He had hoped to avoid large death duties being paid by his son, but the legal arrangements had not been put in place early enough. He died within a year of the fulfilment of the statutory period so the property was included in his estate. His son Henry Alexander Fowell Buxton<sup>2</sup>, therefore decided to sell the property to pay the death duties, and in 1971 the house, together with nine acres of the estate, was bought by the new college for £31,500. Another £328,000 was needed to build an academic block and a new hostel. Characteristically, it was Godfrey Buxton who proposed that the council take a step of faith in trusting God to supply the finance necessary. They agreed and by June 30, 1972, all the necessary funds had been obtained through loans, an overdraft and several gifts.

When the new combined college opened in September 1971, there were 128 students in total, thirty-five were single men, fifty-eight were single women, and there were eighteen married couples, some with children, a nursery being provided for those under school age. Over the next years, numbers grew as the reputations of the college spread far and wide. For several years the total student number was 185; there were always more applications than places available, but the staff felt that if the numbers grew any higher, the quality of the college community life would suffer and also the accommodation would be inadequate.

Those who were aware of the Buxton and Easneye heritage felt that truly Lady Hannah's prayer was being abundantly fulfilled and indeed, that "the glory of this latter house [was] greater than of the former" (Haggai 2:9). In the last forty years, approximately three thousand students have gone out from Easneye to serve the Lord in Britain and around the world. In an average year, around a third of the student were non-British and came from about thirty different countries. There have, inevitably, been problems over the years of the college's life - human life is like that, and Christians also believe that in a spiritual battle there will be ups and downs, but "the future is as bright as the promises of God." As a Christian poster of the nineties says, "Be patient, God hasn't finished with [us] yet!"<sup>3</sup>

Speaking personally, I have been unspeakably privileged to spend the last forty-one years closely connected with Easneye and to share in the "glory years." I was Resident Tutor in the men's college from 1964 to 1968; for thirteen years from 1971 to 1984, I was Director of Studies. Latterly I was Senior Tutor and then Director of Postgraduate Studies. Over the years I occupied seven different rooms as my study/office, five of them in the main mansion. I

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<sup>2</sup> Henry and his wife Victoria who live in Mardock's Mill have three children. Henry is a church warden at Holy Trinity Parish Church, Wareside.

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that of all the large mansions in the area which were once family homes, only Easneye and High Leigh are used for Christian purposes. The rest, for example, Poles Hall [now Hanbury Manor], Fanhams Hall, Briggins, Manor of Groves, Broxbournebury and Ponsbourne Park, are all luxury hotels or country clubs.

remember Godfrey Buxton telling me of the original uses of the rooms I occupied. I also remember Godfrey lecturing to the students. As a young theologian trained in academic methodology, I was unhappy with some of his allegorical interpretations but the students loved him; he was a truly godly, humble, gentle and courteous man whom it was a privilege to know. Eventually he was too frail to continue making the journey to Easneye. His wife Dorothea died in 1967, and he died in 1986, but he was honoured by H.M. the Queen in 1979 with the M.B.E., and in 1999 a seminar room was named “The Godfrey Buxton Room” at All Nations. He was a true “son of Easneye.”

Another member of the Buxton family who had grown up at Easneye was Margaret McClintock, the daughter of John Henry Buxton. As we have seen, she married the Rev Edward McClintock who was at the time the curate at St Andrew’s Church, Stanstead Abbots.<sup>4</sup> Following their marriage in 1912, he became a curate for a year at Jesmond Parish Church, Newcastle, then in 1914 vicar of Holy Cross Church, Haltwhistle, Northumberland. He resigned from this in 1917 and became a Chaplain to the Forces. After the Great War he was Rector of St Mary’s Church, Frinton-on-Sea for six years, till 1925. Then from 1926 to 1933 he was Organising Secretary for the C.M.S. in the Oxford and Coventry dioceses.<sup>5</sup> He returned to parish ministry in 1933 as Rector of St Mary the Virgin, Hayes, Kent, and in 1945 became Rector of St Mary’s, Platt, Sevenoaks, Kent. He and his wife retired to Bishop’s Stortford in 1952, but some time later the returned to Stanstead Abbots, buying “Lyndhurst”, a house in Cappell Lane, near the bottom of the main drive to Easneye. He died there in the Spring of 1961 at the age of seventy-five. His widow continued to live in “Lyndhurst” and a few years later in 1964 shared her home with Miss Ada Housego, a fine Christian lady who, for a number of years worked on developing the All Nations Former Students’ Fellowship which had become alienated from the college following the problems with the Principal Leslie McCall. Miss Housego had been the pastor of Sandhurst Baptist Church and had known Godfrey Buxton who lived in nearby Camberley. He introduced her to All Nations at Easneye - another connection with Godfrey! Margaret McClintock eventually moved to a nursing home near Saffron Walden in Essex and died there on December 8 1974, aged eighty-nine.<sup>6</sup>

The saga continues, especially as the Buxtons seem to turn up everywhere!<sup>7</sup> However, for those of us with no family connection to the Buxtons, but with links to All Nations Christian College, we can claim to be spiritually “sons and daughters of Easneye”, sharing the blessings and the vision of the fine Christian family who lived there for so long.

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<sup>4</sup> He had studied at Trinity College, Cambridge and Ridley Hall.

<sup>5</sup> He and his wife may have made a trip to Sudan during this time. David Morris was sure that at some point the McClintocks spent time in Africa. His wife was CMS Candidates’ Secretary when he was Organising Secretary for Oxford and Coventry.

<sup>6</sup> Her sister Dorothy Lady Hazlerigg died in 1972 aged 88. The other sister Rosamond had died in 1969 aged 80.

<sup>7</sup> Cindy Buxton, the wildlife photographer, who was on the island of south Georgia when the Argentine army invaded on March 19,1982, at the start of the Falklands War, is another relative.

## APPENDIX 1: OWNERS AND INHABITANTS OF EASNEYE

**Thomas Fowell Buxton (1821-1908)** lived in Spitalfields (until 1847), Leytonstone House (until 1866), Ham House, West Ham for two years, and Easneye from 1869 until his death in 1908.

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**John Henry Buxton (1849-1934)** Eldest son; lived in Cheshunt, Hanover Terrace London, and Bury House, Hunsdon (until 1908) and then Easneye from 1908 until his death in 1934.

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**Henry Fowell Buxton (1876-1949)** Eldest son; lived in Sewardstone Lodge Waltham Cross; Rose Hill, Hoddesdon, and Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth (until 1934); Easneye from 1934 until his death in 1949. Building also used as LCC Children's home 1944-1963.

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**John Fowell Buxton (1902-1970)** Eldest son; lived in Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth and Morley Hall until his death in 1970. Owner of Easneye from 1949 but did not live there.

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**Henry Alexander Fowell Buxton (1937 - )** Eldest son; lived in London and Mardock's. Owner of Easneye on the death of his father in 1970 but sold it to All Nations Missionary Union.

**All Nations Missionary Union/All Nations Christian College** Lessees from 1964, Owners from 1971