



The Gillard Family of Brixham

From the earliest times in the history of Higher Brixham the Gillard family played a role in the lives of the local people. A family of some wealth and influence, generous benefactors and the gentry of the time. Their own lives given to vocations and worthy professions, with ready access to education, in stark contrast to the lives of those in more lowly occupations living beside them.

During my recent research into the everyday lives of the people in Higher Brixham, known as Cowtown, the name, Gillard, has cropped up over and over again. Property, land and architecture, even roads reflect their name and the important part they played in the history of the area and the community..

Of course, like all families there are many elements contributing to the whole picture and ultimately many families branching from the original sons and daughters.

For the Saint Mary's Gravestone Project we are studying the lives of those who lived and worked in Cowtown during the Victorian era between 1850-1900 and I have been mindful of that. However, to get a true picture of the family as a whole I have found it helpful to piece together their family tree from earlier times too, and in so doing incorporate some other very famous names in Cowtown history. Having traced at least one hundred members of the family over many generations, I was certain that what appeared to be several different families, just had to be connected at some point in the past. I have continued to go back until I finally made that connection.



Eveleigh Cottage was a Gillard House

It has been a discovery and I look forward to sharing my findings with you. The relationships, connections, history, I have found it all most interesting within such a small community and hope you do too.

The family of George Gillard

The names of George and John are repeated throughout the earliest records of the Gillard family in Brixham. During the reign of Elizabeth first, one John Gillard a landowner in the town was recorded on the Muster Roll of 1569. He was identified as an “able-man” over the age of 16, appointed by the Commissioners to defend the town in the event of an invasion, the Duke of Bedford held the overall command for Devon. A scale relating to annual income of wealth, whether it be from land or from goods, determined the resources they were obliged to provide by way of Horses Armour and Weapons, with which to fight if required. As an example, under the category relating to Land, code number 4 with an income of £20 to £400 meant they had to provide **1 horse for demillance, 2 light horses, 10 corslets, 10 almain rivets, 10 pikes, 8 bows, 8 sheafs of arrows, 8 steel caps, 3 harquebuts and 3 morions.** Whereas for Code number 1, with an annual income from land of £1000 or over, it would be considerably more, amounting to **6 horses for demilance, 10 light horses furnished with harness and weapons, 40 corslets, 40 almain rivets, 40 pikes, 30 long bows, 30 sheafs of arrows, 30 steel caps or sculls, 20 black bills, 20 harquebuts, 20 morions or sallets.**



Duke of Bedford's map of Devon

The list of men consisted of **Archers, Harquebusiers,, Pikemen and Billmen,** John Gillard was a Pikeman. He was most certainly an early relative of George Gillard who died in 1676.

I do not wish to venture any further into the medieval history, I merely wanted to illustrate just how early the Gillard wealth, authority and influence manifested itself in this small community.

The land that George Gillard of Nut Tree owned included cottages and farm land stretching from Nut Tree Cottage in Milton Street to the Church Gate.

He had a family of five children, the eldest and the youngest were named John, in his Will he refers to them both in that way. He also had a daughter Elizabeth. There was a known marriage of one George Gillard to Alice, the timescale would correspond to the dates of birth of his children but they were all recorded as son or daughter of George Gillard, with no name of the mother. Alice died in 1669 stating, wife of George Gillard, four years after the birth of their youngest son John, born in 1665. There were also two sons named George, but the reason for that was because the first infant died soon after birth. The next son born in 1660 took his father's name George into the next generation. I have shown all their dates of birth below.

George Gillard was possibly married to Alice “ Wife of George Gillard she died in 1669”

John	Elizabeth	George	George	John
Born 1654	Born 1656	Born 1659	Born 1660	Born 1665

In his Last Will and Testament George Gillard made personal bequests to his children and family, his eldest son John Gillard, his daughter Elizabeth Pariam, who was his executor, his son in law Samuel Pariam. I have failed to trace their marriage, and his grandchild Elizabeth Pariam. He also refers to other grandchildren and godchildren but does not name them. He left the residue of his estate to his youngest son, the younger John Gillard. His charitable gift, to the poor of Brixham, from the annual income of rent arising from the land and tenements of George Gillard the elder of Nut Tree, and yeoman of Brixham, is well documented. George Gillard died in 1676.

The family of George Gillard 1660 and Ann Reeve - the next generation

I have no doubt about the marriage of George Gillard to Ann Reeve, they married in 1680 and produced a large family. Ann came from another distinguished family in Brixham. John Reeve, who was a well known land owner of the same era as George Gillard senior. In his will, he refers to George Gillard as his cousin. Besides various bequests of herring nets to his beneficiaries, although this sounds amusing now, would have been a serious means of enabling work in those days, he was also obliged to provide for the poor through charitable gifts. John Reeve had also been responsible for the building of alms houses, situated at the Great Gate. When they were demolished, in 1801 the Old Masonic Lodge was built on the same site, but that building was also demolished in 1886.

George Gillard Born 1660 married 1680 Ann Reeve Born 1656

John	George	Mary	George	Grace	Philip	Mary	Ann
Born 1681	Born 1684	Born 1685	Born 1688	Born 1690	Born 1692	Born 1695	Born 1698

From this family there are two main branches. The first from John, born in 1681. The other from the family of Philip Gillard born in 1692. Because they lead to two distinct branches of the family I will follow each separate branch in full before returning to the other. I have chosen to follow Philip first, because he continued at Nut Tree, whilst his elder brother created his own branch of the family in another direction.

The family of Philip Gillard 1692 and Elizabeth Edwards

In the year 1703 Philip Gillard married Elizabeth Edwards in Exeter. I have traced only three children from the marriage, George, born in 1704, Philip born in 1707, and William, born in 1709, who died whilst still an infant. Philip was a churchwarden responsible for the auditing of the charitable gifts already mentioned earlier. Such gifts were not confined to the Gillard family, every landowning family was expected to make suitable contributions to help the poor, and the whole was controlled by church dignitaries.

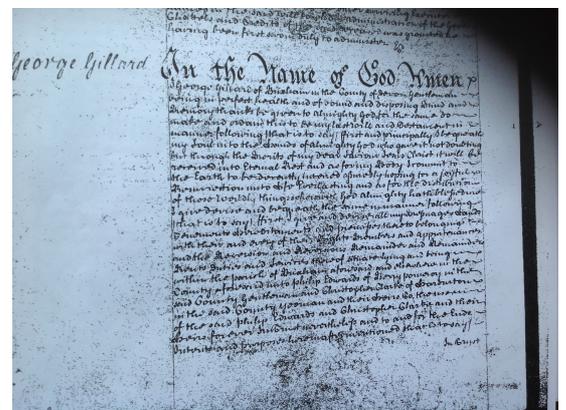
Philip Gillard Born 1692 married Elizabeth Edwards in 1703 their family is as follows:

George	Philip	William
Born 1704 died 1766	Born 1707 died 1739	Born 1708 died 1709

George Gillard, born in 1704, married Elizabeth Cundett in 1732 and had two children, George, born 1738 died in 1739 and Elizabeth born in 1740.

George senior, now a widower, died in 1766, in his Will his daughter was the sole executor, and the trustees were his brother n law Philip Edwards of Berry Pomeroy and Christopher Clarke, a yeoman, of Ashburton. George was the last survivor of his generation as his brother Philip had died in 1739, amongst the bequests of goods and lands he mentions the son of his late brother Philip Gillard as a beneficiary

Philip Gillard born 1707 the second son of Philip and Elizabeth, mentioned above, married Mary, although I do not have a surname for her, I have shown their family below,



*The Last Will and Testament of
George Gillard who died 1766*

The family of Philip Gillard 1707 and Mary

Philip Gillard 1707-1739 married Mary, their family is shown below.

Philip Ann Elizabeth...

Born 1735 Born 1736 Born 1738

Ann married William Crowte, a widower, they had a son William born in 1761 but he did not survive.

Elizabeth married the Reverend Francis Shepherd in 1772. They lived in Dean Prior where he was the vicar. I have not traced any children for them. he died in 1802. He was a trustee in the Last Will and Testament of William Gillard who died in 1786 who was from the branch of the family that I will return to later.

Philip Born 1735 married Alice Vicary in 1758 and took the Gillard family into the next generation.

Philip Gillard 1735 and Alice Vicary

Philip and Alice had four children. Mary born in 1759, Philip born in 1760, John born in 1762 and George born in 1764. Even though they were from these early times, I have discovered interesting things about their lives that I would like to share with you but in an attempt to keep the information relating to the whole family in context I have created pages P1 and J1 below, which gives more detail of sons Philip and John,

Mary Philip John George
Born 1759 died 1805 Born 1760 died 1834 Born 1762 died 1823 Born 1764

Mary Gillard, was the first born in 1759, she married Nicholas Gillard in 1786. At the time of her marriage her father Philip Gillard made a signed declaration stating that although they shared the same surname, they were not related. Mary and Nicholas had five children, Mary died in 1805.

Philip, born in 1760 was the eldest son of Philip Gillard and Alice Vicary he married Elizabeth Gayle who came from West Allington, which is situated near Kingsbridge in what is now known as the South Hams,. Their family consisted of six children and I have continued their story below, reference P1.

John Gillard was born in 1762, the second son of Philip Gillard and Alice Vicary. His wife, Ann Gillard, born 1765 came from a family of Gillards living in Drewsteignton. His family details are shown below, reference J1.

George Gillard born 1764, the youngest child of Philip and Alice, married his first wife Mary Hayman in London in 1789, they had one son, named George before Mary died in 1796. The young son born 27th June 1794 was baptised privately on 4th July, two years later he was baptised again, I am unable to confirm that he survived. During his lifetime his father, George Gillard sold some of the land of Nut Tree, which he had inherited from his father, Philip Gillard. This amounted to a house, an orchard and some farm land, all within the proximity of the church. This was all part of the original Nut Tree estate. The new owners were, John Lane, William Brown and Nicholas Gillard, his brother in law mentioned above. In 1797 George, a "Gentleman" and a widower from Brixham married by licence, Mary Bodley in St Davids Exeter, they had a son John, born in 1798 he became the vicar of Davidstowe and died in 1875, he had no issue.

In the years of 1785 to 1789 the charitable gifts, initiated by George Gillard who died in 1766, had not been paid. It appeared that when the land had been sold to Nicholas Gillard, he in turn passed it on to his son Nicholas Junior, who did not realise that by acquiring the land and tenements, he would also be responsible for making these payments and they fell into arrears. It was decided that they should now be paid. So I am sure that little matter was cleared up.

The family of Philip Gillard 1760 and Elizabeth Gayle (Pt)

Philip, born in 1760 was the eldest son of Philip Gillard and Alice Vicary and the second of four children. Elizabeth, his wife came from West Allington, near Kingsbridge. in the South Hams, Throughout my research into the family I have found a lot of the Gillard family living in that area of Devon. They consist of a large farming community and landowners there but are separate from the Gillard family long established in Brixham, who for many generations have been contained within the Torbay area.

The family of Philip and Elizabeth consisted of six children.

Philip Elizabeth John Anne George Alice.

Born 1783 Born 1784 Born 1786 Born 1788 Born 1794 Born 1796

Before I go any further I must explain that apart from Philip, who never married, and Elizabeth, who married Joseph Chilcote, who became the vicar of Dean Prior, all of the other children married cousins.

Philip, the eldest son of Philip and Elizabeth was educated in Newton Abbot and Kingsbridge before entering Sidney College Cambridge from where he graduated with a BA degree. He was ordained to become a Deacon in Exeter in 1808 and the following year ordained as a Priest. He first served as a Curate in Marystowe and Thrushelton and then as a Curate in Kingswear. where he was made a Perpetual Curate and served until 1819. He often officiated at baptisms and burials at St. Mary's Church in Brixham, his name appearing in the registers of that church. Sadly in 1836 aged fifty three. he died an untimely death by drowning whilst swimming. Philip never married.

Elizabeth, second child of Philip and Elizabeth, married Joseph Chilcote in 1805. He was a clergyman of Dean Prior and they produced nine children. Henry, born 1806, Ella born 1809, Charles born 1814, Robert Comyn born 1815, Walter Edwin born 1817, Emma born 1819 and Laura born 1823. They are all buried in the churchyard of St. Mary's Church, illustrated below.



John, third child of Philip and Elizabeth, in adult life described as a Yeoman, married his cousin, Mary Gillard born 1797. Before he died at the young age of 28 years they had two children, John Born 1813 who died in 1859, and Mary Ellen born 1815. (who in turn married her cousin, Robert Comyn Chilcote, son of the above, Elizabeth and Joseph Chilcote.) They are buried in St. Mary's Churchyard Plot 7 KK16

Anne Gillard born 1788 married William Gillard in 1807. William born in 1785 came from a different branch of the family and I will be writing in more detail when I cover that part of the story. Suffice to say, they are buried in a large family vault situated in the churchyard ref. NN18

George born in 1794, as I have been unable to trace any more information I believe he died as an infant.

Alice, born in 1796, last but not least, married Nicholas Gillard born in 1796. they too were cousins. She and her husband, along with their daughter Alice, are buried in the churchyard, but in another grave Plot 7. ref JJ18.

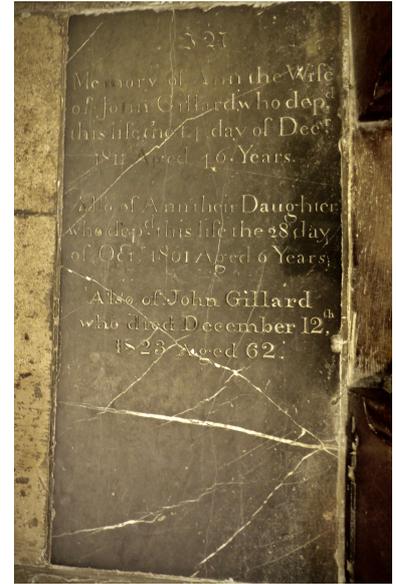
The family of John Gillard 1762 and Ann (JI)

John Gillard was born in 1762, the son of Philip Gillard and Alice Vicary. He married an Ann Gillard born 1765 who came from a family of Gillards living in Drewsteignton. Ann's family did not enjoy the wealth of the Brixham family, some members died in the poor house. John and Ann had two daughters, they named the first, Ann, after her mother, she was born in 1795 their other daughter Mary was born in 1797. Ann sadly died in 1801 aged six. Ten years later in 1811 their mother also died, she was forty six years old. John died in 1823 aged sixty two. I mention this family particularly because they are buried within the floor of the St Mary's Church, alongside other well known families of Higher Brixham. The Paige family, The Bartlett family, the Bird family and the Upham family are all buried in the same area.

In 1812, a silver paten (a plate to hold the bread to be consecrated) was given by the Gillard family as a thanks offering for permission, specifically obtained from the Home Secretary by the vicar the Reverend Holdsworth for the burial of a member of the family in their vault in the church after the Act of Parliament forbidding burials inside the church was passed.

With reference to the church silver, one chalice, is Elizabethan circa 1580 by John of Exeter, a replica dated 1859, was given to commemorate the 50th year of the Reverend Robert Holdsworth as vicar. A flagon 1704 was presented by John Fownes of Nethway House and weighs 49 ounces.

Mary, the second daughter of John and Ann is not buried within the grave mentioned above. She married her cousin, John Gillard, born 1786, they married in 1811 but sadly, he died in 1814 at the age of twenty eight. They had two children of their own, John born in 1813 and Mary Ellen baptised in 1815. Mary Gillard is buried in the same grave as her daughter, Mary Ellen and her son in law, Robert Comyn Chilcote.



In memory of John and Ann Gillard

- Church plate. The earliest pieces are:-
- An Elizabeth Chalice dated 1570
 - The Nethway flagon given by John Fownes for the use of the Brixham Parish on 25th December 1704
 - A paten dated 1771
 - A paten given by John Gillard in 1812



The Gillards occupied the house in Higher Brixham known as the 'Black House' above which is the date of 1457. It is said that Charles I once stayed there.



The family of Elizabeth Gillard and the Reverend Joseph Chilcote

Elizabeth, second child of Philip Gillard and Elizabeth Gayle, married Joseph Chilcote in 1805. He was a clergyman, the vicar of Dean Prior, they produced nine children. **Henry, born 1806, Paul born 1807, Ella born 1809, Charles born 1814, Robert Comyn born 1815, Walter Edwin born 1817, Emma born 1819**, and finally **Laura born 1823**.

They are all buried in the churchyard of St. Mary's Church, illustrated below.

Henry Chilcote, along with four of his siblings are buried in one grave, the inscription reads:

Henry Chilcote of Hill House Brixham
who died 14th October 1863 aged 57 years
son of the late Joseph Chilcote MA
Rector of Thurlestone and Vicar of Dean Prior Devon
Also of **Walter Edwin Chilcote**
who died 19th October 1870 aged 53
youngest son of the above Joseph Chilcote
Also of **Laura Chilcote** their sister
who died 7th April 1881 aged 58 years
Also of **Charles Chilcote** their brother
who died 30th November 1886 aged 72 years
Also of **Emma Chilcote** their sister
who died 9th December 1906 aged 88 years Plot 7 KK15



The gravestone of the Chilcote siblings

Paul, third son of Joseph and Elizabeth Chilcote, qualified as a doctor and surgeon, he lived in Babbacombe Torquay. Married to Juliana Willet Hurlston they had three children. Juliana was buried in London whilst Paul was buried with Emma and Henrietta in Brixham Plot 7 KK17

John, third child of Philip and Elizabeth Gillard, in adult life described as a Yeoman, married his cousin, Mary Gillard born 1797. Before he died at the young age of 28 years they had two children, John Born 1813 who died in 1859, and Mary Ellen born 1815.

Mary Ellen married into the family of Reverend Joseph Chilcote, by marrying their son, Robert Comyn Chilcote, who was also her cousin. Mary Gillard, (Robert's mother in law) is buried in the same grave as Mary Ellen, and Robert Comyn Chilcote.

In memory of Mary Ellen
the beloved wife of Robert Comyn Chilcote
born May 1815 died 28th January 1887
Also of the above Robert Comyn Chilcote
son of the late Rev Joseph Chilcote MA
who died 6th December 1893 aged 78 years
Also of Mary Gillard
who died 3rd February 1889 aged 92 years
Plot 7 KK16



The family of Robert Comyn Chilcote

The immediate family of Mary Gillard were John and Ann Gillard who are buried inside the church.

Having completed the writing about the information I have researched on the Gillard family of the Nut Tree Estate, I now return to the early family of George Gillard and Ann Reeve, to follow the life of their eldest son John. His family continues the Gillard family saga of land and property, legend and intrigue of those from the Black House. I will also put into context the marriages between the Gillard family of the Nut Tree Estate and those from the Black House. and how their wealth was always kept within the family.

The family of John Gillard 1681 and Mary Browse

John Gillard Born 1681 married 1705 Mary Browse

George Mary Honor Ann John Grace William

Born 1705 Born 1710 Born 1712 Born 1714 Born 1717 Born 1719 Born 1723

When researching family history, one often comes up against a block, the moment when no amount of checking dates and relationships make the connection one is looking for. This happened when I was piecing together the fragile fragments of the Gillard family. I had so many generations, the constant repetition of names never helps, and what looked like two completely unrelated families, and yet, somehow I felt that if I persevered I would eventually make the connection I was looking for. On the one hand there were the **descendants** of George Gillard of Nut Tree. and on the other I was trying to piece together the **ancestors** of William Gillard of Black House. In effect I was travelling in both directions, trying to find the link common to both branches.



Churston Ferrers Church

I knew that William’s father was also William Gillard, but the only William I had traced, which fitted the time scale, had been born in Churston Ferrers. However, when I checked the parish register it actually stated that although the record was in the Churston Ferrers register, it was a Brixham record, his date of birth was 1723 and his parents were John Gillard, born 1681, and his wife Mary Browse, born 1684 from Marldon, near Paignton. William was the youngest of seven children born to the couple. This information alone did not solve my puzzle, that happened only after I followed their births deaths and marriages did I find what I was looking for and another piece was added to the proverbial jigsaw.

William Gillard, born in 1723, married Abigail Peters. The marriage took place in Topsham in 1740 although they were from Brixham. His sister Grace, married Abigail’s brother, John Peters, two years later in 1742, their marriage took place at St Mary’s Church in Brixham.

William born 1723 and Abigail had five children,

William Mary Abigail Nicholas Joan

Born 1743 Born 1745 Born 1750 Born 1751 Born 1755



River Exe from Topsham

This information not only fulfilled my quest to discover the parents and grand parents of William Gillard of Black House, it also confirmed that Nicholas belonged to this branch of the family.. This was actually the very first time that I had proof that he was William’s younger brother, all the little pieces fitted together perfectly and I had at last made the connection I was looking for.

Nicholas Gillard born 1751

It was at this time that William's brother Nicholas Gillard, born 1751 married Mary Gillard eight years his junior. At the time her father, Philip Gillard made a signed declaration stating that the couple were not related, actually they were distant cousins. However this was not the only marriage to a cousin, within the extended family, I have identified five such marriages over a period of time.

Nicholas Gillard 1751 married Mary Gillard daughter of Philip and Alice

William Gillard 1785 married Ann Gillard daughter of Philip and Elizabeth

Nicholas Gillard 1795 married Alice Gillard daughter of Philip and Elizabeth

Mary Gillard 1797 daughter of John and Ann married John Gillard son of

Philip and Elizabeth whose daughter Mary Ellen Gillard, in turn married Robert Comyn Chilcote

Nicholas bought houses and land of the Nut Tree Estate from George Gillard, (his wife's brother). In his will of 1806 he refers to Philip and John as his brothers, although they were actually his brothers in law, his blood brother William, his wife Mary and brother in law George had all died by this time.

Besides that part of the estate in Brixham that Nicholas acquired from George Gillard, he also owned considerable land and property situated in other areas of Devon. In his will, already mentioned, he leaves all his land lying in or near Lypstone in Devon to John Gillard and Philip Gillard, also property and tenement buildings lying at Brixham Quay. He mentions shipyard land presently occupied by one Thomas Darodney His daughters Mary and Grace received four thousand pounds, Nicholas Junior, his son, inherited the main part of the estate. The executors of the will, proved at the Court of Canterbury, were Walter Prideaux, John Gillard, Philip Gillard and Elizabeth Gillard.

Nicholas 1751-1806 and Mary born 1759 had five children,

Mary Nicholas William Grace Nicholas

Born 1787 1790-1792 1791-1793 Born 1793 Born 1796

Sadly Nicholas and William died as infants The grave of little Nicholas stands alone in Saint Mary's Graveyard.

William died aged 2 years and Gracey died aged thirteen

Mary, their eldest child died in 1838, she never married.

Nicholas, their youngest son named Nicholas, even though it was the same name as the little brother who died, but so called because it was an important tradition to take the father's name into the next generation, married his cousin Alice, daughter of Philip and Elizabeth, in 1818.

He served in the Devon Militia and the couple lived in many different places.

In 1841, they were living at Nelson Place, Saint Helier on Jersey, in 1851 he

was back in Torbay, living at Paignton Sands, his occupation Lieutenant in

the Devon Militia, and in 1861 he was living in Burton Street in Brixham,

Nicholas and Alice had one little girl Alice, born in 1819, she did not survive,

however in all the census records they are accompanied by young nieces from the Chilcote family, Emma and Laura were both staying with them at different

times. Emma in Jersey in 1841 Laura in Paignton 1851 Emma in Brixham 1861

Nicholas died in 1864. and Alice in 1869 they are buried at Saint Mary's Brixham.



Exe Estuary from Topsham



Nicholas Gillard 1792 aged 2 years



*Nicholas and Alice Gillard
with their daughter Alice
Plot 7 ref. Jf18*

William Gillard born 1743 and Sarah

In the year 1779 William Gillard married Sarah Crewse, both from Brixham, the marriage took place in St Mary's Church. Nicholas Gillard, William's younger brother, was a witness and on the Parish record it stated that he was from Black House in Milton Street, Brixham



Front entrance to Black House

son William was born in 1785. just a short time before his father's death in 1786. In his will William left to his dear wife Sarah, all his Household Goods, Plate, China and Books and instructed his Trustees, namely Francis Shepherd and George Langdon, to allow her the seven hundred pounds , which she was to have had as her marriage portion. and requests that they should permit her to receive the interest on its investments during her natural life and for her own use, and then after her death the capital should be passed to his two daughters, Louisa and Sarah, and the child his wife was expecting. He mentions the property called Town Arms and three fields called Summerhills all lying in Brixham. He leaves his Diamond Mourning Ring to his brother, not mentioned by name, this would have been Nicholas. His trustees were, Elizabeth Gillard, Mary Harris and John Upton.

With three young children Sarah was still only twenty nine years old. After a period of eight years she remarried. In April 1794 she married Efford Spark Langworthy,, like William, he was a Surgeon. Once again her husband's brother Nicholas, was a witness to the marriage at St. Mary's Church.. Sadly the marriage was short lived because Sarah died a few months later in September of the same year.

In 1796 Efford Spark Langworthy married again, Mary Youlden Hoyles and Efford Spark were married in St.Saviours Church Dartmouth. In 1797 Mary gave birth to a daughter, Mary Youlden Langworthy,. Sadly



The Black House Milton Street

William, born in 1743, was a Surgeon, fourteen years older than Sarah born in 1757, the couple made their home in Brixham and their first child, Louisa, was born in 1781 followed by a second daughter Sarah, in 1784.

When William penned his will in 1785 Sarah was pregnant with their third child and he was sure it was going to be another girl, however their third child was a boy, William, born in 1786. In his will William left to his dear wife Sarah, all his Household Goods, Plate, China and Books and instructed his Trustees, namely Francis Shepherd and George Langdon, to allow her the seven hundred pounds , which she was to have had as her marriage portion. and requests that they should permit her to receive the interest on its investments during her natural life and for her own use, and then after her death the capital should be passed to his two daughters, Louisa and Sarah, and the child his wife was expecting. He mentions the property called Town Arms and three fields called Summerhills all lying in Brixham. He leaves his Diamond Mourning Ring to his brother, not mentioned by name, this would have been Nicholas. His trustees were, Elizabeth Gillard, Mary Harris and John Upton.



Grand side entrance to The Black House



The front of the house

Mary died in childbirth, Efford became a widower for the second time in three years. Mary born 1797, married William Hockin born 1799, in the year 1823, he was the Chaplin to the Devon and Exeter Hospital There are no records where one can view the names of individuals within households as early as this, the first was 1841 and so there is no knowing who would have cared for for the Gillard girls and their little brother, who had lost their parents at such a tender age, The home was a prosperous one but that would not have removed the responsibility and sadness of the situation.

They must have continued to live in the Black House.

Louisa Gillard born 1781

The very last thing I would wish to do is to cause a scandal in this most prestigious of households. However there is a certain intrigue surrounding the life of Louisa Gillard.

The eldest of three children born to William Gillard and his wife Sarah, Louisa was born in 1781, her sister Sarah in 1784. and brother William in 1785..



Michael Bartlett's parents are buried inside St Mary's Church

Louisa would have been five years old when her father died and just a teenager when her mother passed away.

In the year 1806 aged twenty five Louisa married Michael Bartlett, born in 1782 he was close in age to Louisa, with a similar social standing. They lived in Norton Cottage, known as a "Gillard House," said to have been built by William Gillard with certain architectural details synonymous with other houses he had designed and built for his daughters, intended as gifts to them on their marriage. However my research reveals that the William Gillard who built the "Gillard Houses".was her brother not her father.

During the twenty three years of marriage, Louisa and Michael had no children of their own and he sadly died in 1829 aged forty four years.

In the census record of 1841, which is the first record which gives details of occupants, their ages and occupations, Louisa was living at Norton Cottage with a lady servant companion, Eleanor Pillar, aged 50 years. Louisa was fifty five, a widow, twelve years had passed since the death of her husband.

However one cannot fail to be a little surprised at what happened next.

Louisa, a lady of independent means married for a second time, but it was her choice of suitor which must have caused quite a stir in the Gillard household. In 1843, two years after the census of 1841, she married Charles Williams. Charles was working as a male servant in her brother's household., he was thirty five years old, a full twenty years her junior. I cannot believe that this event would have met with the approval of her brother, William, and imagine a certain amount of tutting, pursing lips and striding around the drawing room in disapproval. I may be wrong!! But there is more to come....

Four years later in the year 1847 Louisa passed away, aged sixty-six years.

Within a year in 1849 Charles married again. He married Susan Harris, the daughter of Thomas Harris, a farmer of 60 acres at Hill Farm in Frogwell Street, she was aged twenty eight. In the census of 1841 Susan had been in service to a Merchant Gentleman in Middle Street. Charles, with his background as a male servant behind him, on the parish record of his marriage he described himself as a widower, a yeoman and landowner.. He had obviously benefitted substantially from Louisa's death with a most comfortable inheritance.

By the next census, taken in 1861, the whole Harris family, including his mother in law aged 75 and father in law aged sixty six, had moved to Townstal in Dartmouth where Charles was a farmer of 100 acres, and his wife Susan, the mother of Mary Susan born in 1850, and twins, Charles and Clara, born in 1857.



Norton Cottage in Milton Street



Hill Farm in Frogwell Street

The legend of a ghost which haunts

The Black House

Was it really a ghost or just a skeleton in the cupboard?



The story goes:

Squire "Hillard" lived at Black House he forbade his son to marry a young serving girl, instead he found another suitor for the girl in question whilst his son was away.

On returning to find his true love was married to another the son hung himself. The noises that are heard at Black House are said to be the ghost of the Squire as he walks the rooms rattling all the windows and doors in his anguish



Any parallels drawn to the residents of The Black House is purely coincidental

Sarah Gillard born 1784

Sarah, the younger sister of Louisa, was born in 1784. In the year 1807, and a year after her sister Louisa married Michael Bartlett, Sarah met and married Charles Cumby. Three years older than Sarah, Charles served in the Royal Navy, where he had a most distinguished career and served from 1790 to 1836.

Charles was born in 1779 in Norfolk. He was the son of Royal Navy Captain, David Pryce Cumby and his second wife, Susanna. He joined the navy in 1790 and served on board the Sheerness tender, commanded by his father, then a Lieutenant. From 30 January 1793, until November 1797, he served on various ships in the Mediterranean, as A.B. and Midshipman in the Brilliant frigate, Captains were Mark Robinson and William Pierrepont, in *Regulus armée en flûte*, Captain was William Carthew Alexander, and in **Swiftsure 74's**, both commanded by Captain A. Philip, and finally *Ville de Paris 110*, flag-ship of Earl St. Vincent.

Under Lord St Vincent, Sir Sidney Smith and Lord Keith on the coast of Syria and during the subsequent campaign in Egypt, he was presented with the order of the Crescent and a Gold medal for his services in Egypt in that vessel. He served as a lieutenant of the *Caesar* in Sir Richard Strachan's Action and displayed great activity in which he captured and destroyed 4 of the enemies vessels. whilst in command of the *Adrian Cutter* which he commanded for 10 months in Basque Roads and, 3 February. and 21 April, 1813, to the *Bellerophon* and *Medway 74's*, commanded at Portsmouth by Captain Augustus Brine. He attained the rank of Commander 4 December 1832 and afterwards commanded the Ordinary at Portsmouth from 18

March, 1833, until 1836. He retired aged 55 years when in 1835 he appeared on the Greenwich Hospital out-pensioner registers 1737-1858. It was a Register of Captains, Commanders and Lieutenants applying for Greenwich Hospital out-pensions.

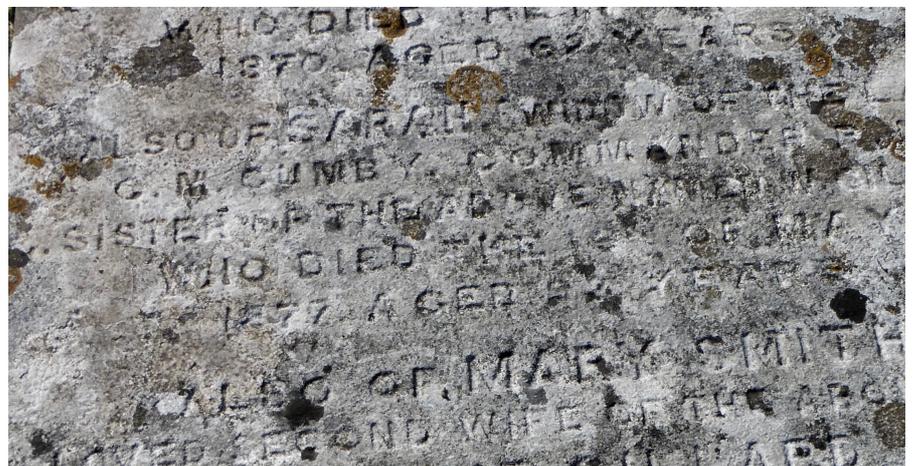
His record was endorsed with the words "Good Certificates"

After their marriage Charles and Sarah made their home at Aylmer in Milton Street Brixham. A very beautiful and quite grand house built by Sarah's brother. It is named as one of the "Gillard" houses in Brixham.



The entrance to Aylmer Home of Charles and Sarah Cumby

The couple had no children. Charles died in 1849 at the age of seventy years. In later years Sarah moved back to the Black House. In the census of 1861 Sarah was living with her widowed sister in law Ann Gillard, nephew Philip Gillard, who was a solicitor., and his family.



The family Vault ref. NN18

William Gillard born 1785

Born in 1785, William was the third child of William Gillard and Sarah Crewse. A brother to Louisa and Sarah, they lived in Black House, Milton Street Sadly their father died just a year after he was born and Sarah, their mother was left a widow, aged twenty nine. When William was about eight years old his mother married again, but tragically she died within five months. William would have been too young to have known his real father and therefore life would have seemed quite normal for him. Education was important and accessible to the Gillard family, both his father and stepfather had been surgeons, but I have not been able to confirm that William attended university. Described as a Gentleman, he inherited his father's estate and therefore being in a most secure and comfortable financial position, he would also have moved in influential circles in keeping with the social traditions of the victorian era.

The Gillard family was a close one and that, combined with the culture of the era when social gatherings would be closely guarded and controlled, in a family as large and wealthy as the Gillard family, there would have been a positive flurry of "At Home" cards or Hand Written Invitations to visit extended family members. Whether it be Christmas or Easter, Hunt Balls or Garden Parties there were festive occasions for every season, even within the area of Brixham there would have been many opportunities for such events. A daytime activity for young ladies at that time would be a visit to the dressmaker or milliner to choose the fabric and the style for every event. Followed by numerous fittings and minor adjustments.

It would have been imperative when choosing a suitor that they should be from the same social standing and for the ladies this would have been a constant preoccupation. Given the professions of the gentlemen, Surgeons, Clergymen, Lawyers and Military Officers there would have been a wide circle of well connected friends within Torbay, Devon and beyond

The Gillard family tree shows the extent of the friendships within the family, their wealth was kept within an imaginary fort, land passed between brother and brother in law, either through sale, as was the case with George Gillard and Nicholas, who married George's sister Mary. Investments and tenements also changed ownership in a subtle way and always within the family.

In the family of Philip and Elizabeth Gillard nee Gayle, four of their six children married members of their extended family. The remaining two either never married or died young. I get the idea that their household was wonderfully welcoming and a hub of social excitement for the young people of the family.

As far as William Gillard was concerned, The Grand Tour would have been undertaken by gentlemen in such positions and this is something he may well have done. To travel to exotic places like Venice, Florence and Rome to study the most famous art works, or to experience first hand the architecture and culture of Europe. Paris would have been on the agenda and Switzerland would have offered dramatic scenery. William Gillard was particularly interested in architecture and was responsible for designing four houses in Brixham, known as The Gillard Houses, they were built in what is described as Cottage Ornee style. The Victorians loved to build and there is much evidence of that in Torquay where large victorian villas dominate the hills of Torbay. Parkhill, the Warberries and the Lincombes all boasted such extravagance, in complete contrast to the tiny white cob cottages with thatch roofs in narrow lanes. I believe William Gillard would have been enamoured by all of this and set out to make his own mark on home territory.

It has been said that one William Gillard built the four Gillard houses for his marrying daughters, however I am going to contradict that with the evidence already disclosed, that they were for his two sisters, Louisa and Sarah who in 1841 occupied two of the houses, Aylmer and Norton Cottage (now known as Norton House). The remaining two houses, namely Burton Villa in Burton Street, home to Nicholas Gillard in 1851, and Eveleigh Cottage in Doctors Road occupied by Richard Douglas, a retired Naval Officer,

The House called Aylmer

Intrigued by the unusual name of the Gillard House, Aylmer, occupied by Sarah Gillard and her husband Charles Cumby, I decided to do some research and I am fascinated by the result. I have discovered two very plausible reasons as to why it was chosen for the name of their very lovely home in Milton Street.

The first is that it was named after the Admiral of the Fleet **Matthew Aylmer, 1st Baron Aylmer** born in 1650 in Ireland, he served in the Royal Navy from 1678 to 1707. He died in 1720 and is buried in Saint Allege Church Greenwich. Aylmer saw action at the Battle of Bantry Bay in May 1689, at the Battle of Beachy Head in July 1690 and again at the Battle of Barfleur in May 1692 during the Nine Years War. However it was the Torbay connection which drew my attention because he was one of the captains who sent a letter to [Prince William of Orange](#), who had just landed at Torbay, assuring the Prince of the captains' support; the Prince's response ultimately led to the Royal Navy switching allegiance to the Prince and the Glorious Revolution of November 1688.

The second reason for choosing the name is even more apt. **The 6th Baron Aylmer, Frederick Whitworth Aylmer** was born in October 1777, he fought in the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars and reached the rank of Admiral, the same rank as his great great grandfather, the 1st Baron Mathew Aylmer.. He served on many ships but it was aboard HMS Swiftsure at the Battle of the Nile in 1805 that he was given the rank of Admiral.

During his own most distinguished career in the Royal Navy, Commander Charles Cumby also served on this ship and it was during the conflict in Egypt that he was decorated with the Crescent and Gold Medal.



Matthew Aylmer, 1st Baron Aylmer



HMS Swiftsure at the Battle of the Nile



Burton Villa as it is today

Burton Villa

The Gillard House in Burton Street. Nicholas Gillard lived in many places over the years. In the census of 1861 he was living in Burton Street, the house was not named, but I think it may have been Burton Villa, one of the Gillard houses.

The House called Norton Cottage

The home of Louisa Gillard and her husband Michael Bartlett was named Norton Cottage and I have found a possible reason for that name too.

Aware of a large estate near Townstal just outside of Dartmouth called Norton Park I wondered if there may be a connection, and I really believe there was. Norton Park has been a holiday complex for many years but originally it would have been the land surrounding the original Norton House.

I discovered that Norton House in Dartmouth had been the home of Sir Henry Paul Seale, born in 1806, JP of Mount Boone Devon. In 1838 he was a Major in the South Devon Militia and in 1844 succeeded his father Sir John Henry Seale as 2nd Baronet.

The year of 1806 was an important one for William Gillard, born in 1785 it would have been the year when he came of age. A landmark in his life because it was when he would have come into the inheritance from his father William Gillard, who had died when he was just a year old. Was this the year when the young William Gillard, began to spread his wings and branch out to do things close to his heart?

1806 was also the year his beloved sister Louisa married Michael Bartlett. Four years older than her brother, she had already benefitted from her share of the inheritance, she had been left one thousand pounds, along with other inheritances resulting from rents and investments from the Gillard estate.

1806 was the year Sir Henry Paul Seale, mentioned above, was born in Dartmouth to Sir John Henry Seale MP for Dartmouth. and his wife, Paulina Elizabeth Jodrell. they married in 1805 and lived at Norton House.

This family would have been known to the Gillard family. and it is almost certain that Sir John Henry Seale born in 1780 had been a friend of the young William Gillard.

They were all wealthy landowners and the Gillard family and the Seale and Hayne families had owned part of the land of Higher Brixham in partnership since earlier times.

Now, by way of acknowledgement to someone he knew very well, and held in high esteem, the young aspiring architect William Gillard named the house he designed himself Norton Cottage. It was to be the home for his newlywed sister, Louisa and her husband Michael Bartlett.

This whole scenario is a hypothetical one, however no less believable than the myths which already circulate relating to the four houses of William Gillard.

I mention the names of Seale and Hayne and will now expand on that connection to try and bring the relationship with the Gillard family into context.

When the largest Manor in Brixham, Bolton Manor, was divided in 1272, it was originally in three parts. These elements through many generations were then sold on. The Gillard name appeared alongside that of Seale, Hayne, Yarde and Buller as joint owners of a portion of those three parts. The names involved were associated with the large estates of the area including Mount Boone and the Norton Estate in Dartmouth, home of John Seale, Churston Manor, home of the Yarde family in Churston Ferrers, Lupton House, and the Hayne family in Higher Brixham with connections by marriage to the Fownes of Nethway House and the Gillards of Black House and Nut Tree Estate in Higher Brixham.

The Haytor Hundred Freeholders lists published regularly named John Gillard, William Gillard, and Philip Gillard as landowners at different times.

With no obvious heirs in Brixham the Gillard Estate was sold by auction in 1926.



Norton Cottage in Milton Street

With an imposing entrance and long drive, Nethway House is just visible across the parkland through the trees. It was the home of John Fownes who, on 25th December 1704 made a gift of a flagon to Saint Mary's Church for the use of the Parish of Brixham. His daughter Elizabeth was the second wife



Entrance and Drive of Nethway House

of John Seale of Mount Boone in Dartmouth whose son John Seale, in 1775 married Sarah daughter of Charles Hayne of Lupton



Nethway House

Not far away and equally secluded within its own grounds lies Lupton House. Home of many very influential residents throughout its history. The original house was the home of Charles Hayne in 1765, it was modified in 1772 and in 1778 it was bought by Sir Francis Buller who later became a Baronet. After Sir Francis died in 1788 the house passed to Sir Francis Yarde Buller. In 1820 when Sir Francis died John Yarde Buller who became 1st Baron Churston of Churston Ferrers and Lupton in 1858. Sir John Yarde Buller (Lord Churston) died in 1871.



Lupton House

The very attractive Churston Manor, is immediately beside The Churston Church the home of the Yarde family and the Lords of the Manor of Churston. Connected by marriage to the Buller family of Lupton House.



Churston Manor



Churston Manor

William Gillard born 1785 and Ann

I continue with. my account of the personal and family life of William Gillard

In the year 1807 William Gillard married Ann Gillard, a daughter of Philip and Elizabeth, he was twenty two and Ann, just eighteen years old. They made their home in Black House, where they remained for the whole of their married life. In keeping with William's status as a Gentleman they had staff, some living in and others who lived nearby.

William and Ann had quite a large family of eight children who were all well educated and high achievers.

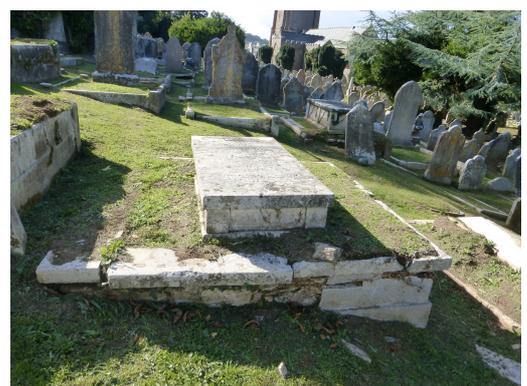
William	Philip	Edward	Francis John	Charles Richard Crewse	Lewis
Born 1808	Born 1810	Born 1812	Born 1818	Born 1818	Born 1820
Louisa Sarah	Ann				
Born 1822	Born 1823				

The family of William and Ann Gillard will be the final generation of my story of the Gillard family in Brixham. As I continue to write about them I find a great admiration for William. Orphaned as an infant, now in his mature years he shows great sensitivity in everything he does. His marriage to Ann, emphasises even more the importance of family to him. As I cover the lives of his children, one by one I come to realise that each and every one is named after members of the vast Gillard family. William, his father, Philip, his wife's brother, Francis John, an in law, Rev. Frances Shepherd, was a trustee in his grandfather's will, The name Crewse was a given name for his son Charles, Lewis, an early relative and Louisa Sarah after his own sisters, and last but not least Ann, after his beloved wife. Everything that William did reflected the importance of family life for him. I believe he was a true provider in this family that as I have said before, was incredibly close to one another. To illustrate this even further, they are all buried together, with very few exceptions, in the family vault which sits on the hillside in Saint Mary's graveyard overlooking the church, and with a view of Brixham and to the bay beyond.

William died in 1861 aged 75 and is buried in the family vault in Saint Mary's Graveyard. Ann, his wife died three years later, she was also aged 75 years.

The inscription on the vault reads:

In memory of William Gillard of Black House Brixham
Who died January 18th 1862 aged 75
Also Ann his wife who died November 18th 1863
Aged 75 years
Also of Ella the beloved wife of Philip Gillard
Who died Oct 1870 aged 62 Years
Also of Sarah the widow of the late CM Cumby
Commander RN
Sister of the above William Gillard
who died May 1877 aged 92 Years
Also of Mary Smith beloved second wife of Philip Gillard
who died 27th Oct.1885 aged 54 Years
Also of the above Philip Gillard of Black House Brixham
who died the 24th Feb 1890 aged 80 Years



William Gillard Family vault NN18

The individual lives of the children of William and Ann are given below. Many of them moved away from Brixham to follow their careers.

William Gillard born 1808

Taking the name of his father and grandfather William Gillard was born in 1808 and then, following in the footsteps of his grandfather still further, William became a surgeon. He studied medicine in London from 1827 to 1832 where he qualified as a doctor of medicine and a surgeon with the letters LSA and MRCS after his name.

In 1834 he married Elizabeth Trist Tompson born 1814 in Berry Pomeroy, she was a surgeon's daughter. William practiced as a general practitioner and surgeon in Totnes where they made their home in Bridge House, a large and beautiful house beside the bridge over the River Dart on The Plains. In the census of 1841 Laura Chilcote, daughter of Elizabeth and Joseph Chilcote, was living with them, her status was independent means. Sadly his wife Elizabeth died in 1853 aged 38 and is buried in Berry Pomeroy.

Three years later in 1856 William married for a second time. Jane Francis Bisset was considerably younger than William, having been born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland in 1832, now living in Berry Pomeroy. On the marriage papers her father's status described as a



Bridge House from the bridge looking towards Fore Street Totnes

Gentleman., In the census of 1861 William and Jane were living in Bridge House on The Plains in Totnes.

The census of 1871 finds them living at The Grove, Walton Road, Clevedon Bedminster Somerset. William now aged 62,, his wife Jane aged 39, a ladies maid, a cook and a parlour maid made up the household,

William did not have any children by either of his marriages, he died in 1885 aged 77 and was buried at Saint Mary's Church Brixham where the Rev AF Carey officiated at his funeral service on September 23rd 1885.

Philip Gillard born 1810

The second son of William and Ann Gillard was Philip born in 1810. The chosen profession for Philip was law, he became a solicitor and apart from moving away for the purpose of his education, he lived in Brixham for all of his life.

In 1838 he married Ella Chilcote, the elder daughter of Joseph Chilcote, a clergyman and vicar of Dean Prior, and his wife Elizabeth Gillard. She was a sister to Philip's mother, Ann, and consequently his aunt. Ella was born in 1809 and so just a year younger than Philip. Ella died aged 62 in 1870. They had a daughter, Mary born in 1839, she never married and died in 1889. In 1872 Philip remarried. and Mary Smith Lampen, from St Germans, Cornwall became Mary Smith Gillard. When she died in 1885 aged 54 she was buried in the family vault in St Mary's graveyard. Brixham. Philip died five years later in 1890 aged 80. He is also buried in the family vault in Plot 7 ref. NN18



Bridge House on The Plains in Totnes



Bridge House showing the bridge and proximity of the house to the River Dart

Edward Gillard born 1812

Son number three, Edward was born to William and Ann Gillard in 1811. His life has been incredibly hard to trace but at last I am sure we have all the information we need. Edward was a Mariner, he married Ann, a Milliner. In 1841 they lived in Widnells Place, Liberty of Saffron Hill, Holborn, London and Middlesex. Although they were living in London at this time Ann actually came from Exeter. Daughter of Thomas Nowell born 1779, a shoemaker, and his wife Harriet Nowell, nee Murry of the same age, 72. This was confirmed in the 1851 census, which finds them back in Brixham, living in Drew Street with their little daughter aged nine, Edward was the head of the house and the in laws were living with them, Ann continued her occupation as a milliner and Edward's occupation was sailor. The transcription says he was a Tailor, but this is wrong.

Between 1851 and the next census of Edward had died and Ann, his widow was now head of the household, which remained the same. In the census of 1871, Ann Gillard and her daughter, now aged 27 were described as school mistresses. This situation continued unchanged for the next ten years when in 1881 the two ladies were still living in the same house.

Ann, the daughter married in 1889 at Brixham St Mary's and her father's occupation was shown as Master Mariner, which means that although he was stated as being a sailor in the earlier census, he was actually a Captain and Navigator of a ship under sail, although he had sadly died many years before. It is interesting to note that Ann's husband was a widower, his name was Thomas Nowell born in 1816 to John Nowell, a shoemaker. Thomas was a retired wheelwright whose address was Milton Street Brixham. I believe that Ann's father and Thomas's father were brothers. Just another instance of a marriage within the extended family.

1891 found them living at Verbena Cottage in Milton Street, this may well have been Thomas's home before marrying Ann. The household also consisted of a daughter by his first marriage called Rhoda, aged 31 and a grandson aged 22, his name was Harry N. Lear a shipwright,. By the time the the next census was taken in 1901 everything had changed. Ann was now a widow, living in Verbena Cottage on her own, aged 53, but in 1911 she had been joined at the same premises by her stepdaughter Ann Tapper.



Eveleigh Cottage in Doctors Road and one of the Gillard Houses



Verbena Cottage in Milton Street

Meanwhile Rhoda Nowell, who had been living with Ann Gillard in 1891 was now living in Eveleigh Cottage, the home of Andrew Murry. aged 59 he was a retired Commander in the Royal Navy. (I remind the reader that Murry was her grandmother's maiden name) Rhoda was serving in his household as a live in cook, there was also a housemaid called Ruth Pocock aged 23.

Francis John Gillard born 1813

Francis John MRCs trained as a surgeon like his brother William before him. In 1841 he married Isabella Louisa Pilcher, their home was Highweek in Newton Abbot. They had three children, William born in 1842, Isabella Louise born in 1843 and Georgina born in 1850. His wife died aged 39 in 1853 and Francis married again in 1854, this time to Elizabeth Flamark. they had one son, named Francis John after his father. born in 1858 . The young man worked as a bank cashier but sadly in the census of 1901 we find him in the lunatic asylum in Exminster, he died in 1926. The reasons for him being in such an institution could well have been serious health issues about which we would show much greater compassion today. He may have suffered a nervous breakdown or onset of dementia, of which we know so much more about these days. At that time little was known about the condition, treatment was not available and care so very harsh.

Charles Richard Crewse Gillard born 1818

Born in 1818 Charles took the name Crewse which was the maiden name of his Grandmother Sarah, as one of his given names. Charles Richard Crewse Gillard died in 1829 aged 11. Yet another young death in the Gillard family.

Lewis Gillard born 1820

Lewis was born in 1820, his occupation was a Mariner, he married Rosanna Frances Chapman, the daughter of an Army Officer, she was born in Clapham in 1823. The marriage took place in Berry Pomeroy in 1844. Their family consisted of two children, Margaret Davis Gillard born in 1845 and son Lewis born in 1848.

In the Census of 1851 Rosanna and her two little children, were staying in Champion Hill in Camberwell visiting the family of Richard and Margaret Davis, his occupation was shown as a Merchant. Rosanna's children were described as niece and nephew to the head of the family. It is possible that Rosanna's daughter aged six, was named after Richard's wife, who would have been her aunt. It is not known if Rosanna was a widow at this time but in 1861 she lived in East Budleigh where the census record says she was a widow at that time, described as an independent gentlewoman living with Lewis and Margaret her son and daughter. I can find no record of a burial for Lewis, given that he was a Mariner he could have been lost at sea.

In 1869 Margaret married John Morgan Bryan from Somerset, he was a GP. In 1871 Rosanna was living with Lewis in South Grove St Pancras and in 1881 Rosanna had moved to Lyme Regis where she was living with her daughter Margaret, who was now divorced from her husband John Bryan. Rosanna died in Lyme Regis in 1893.

In 1901 Margaret was a visitor living in Bournemouth and in 1911 she had moved again to Boscombe in Hampshire where she was a boarder living on private means in a private lodging house, she died in 1915.

Louisa Sarah Gillard born 1822

Louisa Sarah, named after Williams two sisters died when she was still an infant.

Ann Gillard born 1823

Like so many of the children born into the Gillard family, Ann, named after her mother and unmarried died at the age of 20 years old in 1843 She was the last child to be born to William and Ann .

I have now completed my research of the Gillard family in Brixham. I have enjoyed exploring the lives of a family, although well known in name, there was very little information written about them. Curious to know who were the Gillards of the Nut Tree estate and any possible connection with those of the Black House, I began to delve. From the very earliest times of Cowtown and Higher Brixham, when The Prince William of Orange was carried ashore in 1688 before riding through the Devonshire lanes on horseback to Exeter, to the legends and lifestyle of the Victorian era, An era when wealth was exploited and capitalised on in a lifestyle of extravagance with servants, cooks and coachmen in contrast to the austerity and strict control in manner and countenance. Even so, nothing could save them from the cruel realities when precious children died as infants, mothers died in childbirth and disease killed without judgement of wealth or class. I hope the reader will find the information relating to the extended family interesting as they transcended the generations, each name an individual personality reflecting the way of life of the time.

I suggest that my narrative should be read alongside the family tree, which although extensive will clarify the different branches and generations of a family where there is much repetition of names.

Most of the information for my document has been obtained from Find my Past and Family Search for Births Marriages and Deaths and census records. I have also obtained information relating to charitable gifts from Google books, land ownership from the Haytor Hundred records and clarified on page 4094 of the London Gazette October 15th 1861, and visits to the Local History Room at Torquay Library. which had information relating to the Brixham Manors. Wikipedia was also consulted for some information.

All of the photographs are my own but in terms of researching the family tree I would like to make a personal thank you to my friend Ann Jenkinson who shares a passion for family history and is totally tireless in her research. Meeting up on a weekly basis, we often did individual research and discussed our findings with great enthusiasm and humour during those meetings. I must credit Ann for the Nicholas Gillard connection following the discovery of the marriage of William to Abigail Peters in Topsham. There were others too, we had very many eureka moments, some surprises and sadness at so very many infant deaths, in fact we made the observation that although wealthy and educated, many of the Gillard family died at a very young age.

Once we were sure that we had obtained as much information as possible I have done my best to put our findings into a narrative which I hope is informative but easy and interesting to read.

Many of the records are very early, which means they are church records from parish registers rather than civil registration which was introduced in 1837, hence some dates of birth may well be baptism records rather than birth records. and I hope this will not cause confusion. On the tree itself there are some gaps, mostly these are because of the repetition of names within the family we could not be really certain which George or Mary the record we had related to. Please forgive! All the main characters seemed to fall into place and I believe a reasonably comprehensive account is given.

Finally I would like to say that we have enjoyed the exercise enormously and hope it will make an interesting contribution to the project for which it was intended.

The Friends of Brixham Library, Lottery funded, Saint Mary's Gravestone Project.

Jennie Crisp

Ann Jenkinson

January 2019