

Annette Harding's "Jottings" interpreted

Anything in square brackets is not part of the jottings

February 1900

Jottings of our Family History by Annette Harding

W. Harding married Ann Prichard their son was my G. G. G. Grandfather, Hardingt. Married Ann Blood and I believe Guy's mother was a Blood, hence the cousinship.

My G. G. Grandfather W. Harding Tertius married Mary Bradburn of Winchester. William [Septimus, her brother] possesses her portrait and I have Aunt Ellen's copy. A daughter of this William and Mary Harding married Mr Byng, the Unitarian Minister at Tamworth and 2 of their daughters married Mr Pagets of Leicestershire, Humberstone is one of their places – hence our relation to the Pagets & Kenricks – both Mr Archibald K and Mr Timothy Kenrick married Miss Pagets.

The only son of William Harding [Tertius] and Mary Bradburn was my G. Grandfather W Harding [Quartus] and he married Martha Tufley of Leicester. He left a large family and died at 50 or 51. He was a banker and wool stapler. His eldest son was my Grandfather. William Quintus Harding of Copeley Lodge – he married Rebecca Pemberton. Mr Pemberton was a jeweller and married first Miss Grosvenor daughter of an Oxford surgeon and another Miss P married [Charles Lloyd the Poet](#) and they were the parents of Grosvenor, James, Owen, Lloyd and of Madame de Vallon, Mme Millet, Mrs Powell, Mrs Thompson (mother of Sophy Leaver). Another Pemberton sister was Mrs Ryland, another Mrs Stokes, indeed, a half sister married also another Stokes.

To retrace a little, William [Quartus] and Martha (Tufley) Harding had numerous sons, my Grandfather Charles (Mother's Father) was one – one of their daughters was Mrs Byng another Mrs Bage. I remember well my Great Aunt Bage. She played beautifully in the fashion of that day and her touch was very good; the snuff box waltzes come before me, played in the treble clef. It was from her window in Market St Tamworth that I saw Queen Victoria pass on her way to visit Sir R Peel 2nd Bart, at Drayton Manor. Mr Bramall, father of John Bramall, presented to her the keys of the town on a red velvet cushion. When the Bank failed Mrs Bage was very poor and had to teach music. One of her sons was Robert Bage, a medical man and when I knew him he was physician to the Embassy at Naples. He came to Copely I remember and he had great charm of manner and a lovely smile. He married a Miss Lydia O'Reilley and Mary Bage (now Mrs Holmes [she is not on the tree] was his daughter, another daughter married Mr Bonham. Then there was Charlie. So good looking with the Bage smile. He died of consumption.

Mr Great Grandfather's widow, Martha Harding, married 2nd ly Mr Willington Town Clerk of Tamworth and survived him. My Mother talked much of Great Mama Willington and how when her son Charles brought his bride home to Fazeley they passed in the lane an old lady with a lantern returning from her son's house, where she had been seeing all was ready and putting the finishing touches. She was good-tempered and an excellent housekeeper and knew what good cooking was; her ricemilk was delicious; her sister it was (Mrs Bankart) who said she "loved a custard" as many of us do like (not love) them to this day!

Another son of William and Martha Harding was Tufley; he married a Miss Bage. They were a delightful couple and many a happy day have my sisters and I passed at Styal Cottage Cheshire, in our early girlhood. My Great Uncle Tufley after the bank failures articulated himself to the law, was a lawyer in Manchester. Another son of William and Martha Harding was John, banker, at Bridlington [Burlington and Bridlington may be the same]. I never knew him but always heard my Mother speak so highly of "Uncle John", Aunt John nee Ridsdale was never a favourite in the family; their children were, Tufley (married Mr Forster's daughter by his first wife); Marianne, was Mr Forster's 2nd wife; then Edward banker at Bridlington and George who married Patty Colston. These 2 last were dear friends all our lives. The large oil portrait I have is my Great Uncle Thomas Harding, who was a merchant at Hamburg and died young.

I have said that my Grandfather William married Rebecca Pemberton, her Mother nee Grosvenor and they had 1 son, my Father W Sextus Harding, and 2 daughters. One died young and Caroline married Mr Henry Talbot of Oakland, Kidderminster.

My Grandfather Charles of Fazeley, Bolehall (my 2 Grandfathers were brothers) married Ellen Willock, her Father was a Lancashire clergyman vicar of Blackburn and married Ellen Peel a sister of Sir R Peel 1st Baronet. I possess her portrait and also the very Mechlin lace she was painted in. She was my Great Grandmother. My Grandfather Charles and his wife were very intimate at Drayton Manor, his wife being old Sir Roberts' niece and my Grandfather was in partnership for some time with the Peels in the mills at Fazeley – till the bank failure (Uncle Tufley managed the bank) old Sir Robert stood behind the counter at the bank to give confidence, I have heard. Well the failure came and my Grandfather Charles had to look to make a living for his family and managed very cleverly to start a tape manufactory close to his house Bolehall. He imported several workmen and their wives from Lancashire who understood weaving and set up machinery. This prospered but the first year after the B. failure, they had to live on £200 a year. 4 daughters to educate. Sir R Peel was very kind and allowed my Grandmother £100 a year for a time and gave each of my Aunts £1,000, Frances was not yet born, so when she appeared, her sisters divided the money so that she might have an equal share with them. My Grandmother sold her pearls, (a marriage gift from Sir R. Peel) to Mr Ryland and his daughter left them back to me. My Grandfather said had it not been for the noble conduct and courage of his wife at this time, he thinks he should have destroyed himself.

And now I come to my dear parents. My Father was an only son (his only sister married Henry Talbot of Oakland, Kidderminster), he was born at Leicester in 1806 and educated at Westminster School, where he went at 7 years of age, his parents were at that time living in London and my Grandfather had a vinegar yard [I am fairly sure this is what it says but I don't know what it means. There is a letter addressed to Vinegar Yard, Westminster as if it is a place.] My Grandmother superintended her son's Latin and taught him to write beautifully. The Westminster scholars wore no hats or caps in those days. The old custom of throwing the pancake over the beam of the large school room was observed and once my Father saw it alight on the head masters desk. Whoever caught the pancake had it. When my Father entered the school, he was asked "What catechism he knew and he said Priestley's; the master said "ah that will not do here". [click on link to read Wikipedia on Joseph Priestley who was connected to the Unitarians in Birmingham and regarded by the establishment as heretical]

I remember my Father meeting an old schoolfellow in the railway carriage, his name was also Harding and he was Bishop of Bombay after all those years they recognized each other - very

wonderful I think. Waterfield was another class mate who attained distinction in the public service.

In the old days, boys at Westminster School had pretty much the run of the lobbies of the Houses of Parliament and one day when the faithful Commons were ushered to the Bar of the House of Lords to hear the Royal Assent given to certain bills, my Father and his class mate Waterfield followed them but for some reason didn't retire when the Commons left. When the two boys realized the Situation, they were trying to escape down the centre of the House of Lords when some Bishop accosted them. "What are you boys doing here?" On hearing they were Westminsters he only gave their ears a good pull and told them to be off.

My Father could thro' life get in anywhere he chose – by his good looks and [suavita in modo](#) [see the link for what this appears to mean albeit spelt "suaviter" ie "Gentle in Manner"]. So could my Grandfather Charles and how he did laugh when he told us the tale of his interview with [General Tom Thumb](#) [this link assumed to be the person referred to] all to himself, at the General's private residence in London.

I do not know when my Grandparents came to Birmingham when my father was 17 years [?] but they lived 1st at a house in Bristol Road then on Gravelly Hill, then my Grandfather bought Copeley. My Father was articed to Mr [?] in the Old Square and when his time was up he took him into partnership. Later my Father setup for himself and soon after Sept 1st 1835 married his 1st Cousin Ann Harding of Bolehall, Tamworth.

They were the happiest couple and could easily have wrote "the [???]. Both had sunny happy temperaments and happy those who were privileged to know them. They were like lovers to the last. They lived the first part of their married life in the house adjoining by Grandfather's at Copeley then my Father bought a house from Mr [?], Harborne Hill and for a few years let it to [?] and we went there in 1854, I think. From there, their 2 sons and 2 daughters were married.

To go back a little; my Father remembered the couriers coming up to London, their horses smoking, to bring the tidings of the battle of Waterloo. He also used to tell how he with the Rylands, witnessed the procession to the Abbey at the coronation of George 4th and the Queen being refused admittance; they were on a stand near the Abbey. My Mother met many distinguished people of the day at Drayton Manor, one evening the old Duke of Wellington was there and Mrs Arbuthnot whom he greatly admired. My Mother and Miss Woolley, daughter of the Vicar of Middleton were asked to play a duet and the Duke came up to them and begged the young ladies would favour him with a march.

[Lord Peel \(later Speaker\)](#) was a little boy in those days and one evening when a round game was played after dinner he happened to lose and took it so to heart that the tears trickled down his face; his Father – Sir Robert came and patted him on the shoulder saying "never mind Arthur, you will win another night."

My Grandfather Charles used to sing and I can remember his joining in the good old glees and "catches". He used to drive over in the gig to the M.Festivals in Birmingham, then held in St Philip's Church. My Mother was told she might go to one if she could play Griffin's Concerto at 12 years of age and she did so and earned her Festival! In this way she heard Mrs Salmon and Madame Mara etc, the latter wore a black veil and looked quite a Queen. The young men Peels

were very lively and full of fun and Robert (not one of the Drayton Manor Peels but a cousin) contrived to play a practical joke on Miss Woolley who had been heard to lament she had no bonnet to go to some fete at Drayton so Robert and Edmund sent her a bonnet (such a bonnet) as coming from Lady Peel and then hid themselves in the shrubery where they could see Miss Woolley before the glass trying on the bonnet for she never found out the joke but just before the eventful day, she was obliged to be told or she would have gone to Drayton in the bonnet. The “Bolehall” Cousins were in the secret but had no hand in it.

My Grandfather and Grandmother Harding of Bolehall Tamworth had 6 daughters (my Grandmother prayed she might never have a son) namely Ann (my Mother), Ellen and Mary, unmarried, Emily (Mrs Lee) and Frances (Mrs Cripps). Also another daughter who died young. I never had an own Uncle as neither my Father or Mother had a brother. When Mr Cripps came courting Aunt Frances, we lived still at Copeley and when he and Mr Jeffreys came up on Sunday afternoons, we rambled in the Wood; full of bluebells and as a great treat I was allowed to sit up to supper. Before that meal at 8.00 the servants came in and generally my Mother read a sermon followed by a prayer, also noting the date and congregation in pencil, at the head of the sermon. Mr Cripps often read and so beautifully. Latterly at Harborne Hill this good old custom had to be given up.

Another of childhood's memories comes before me, when, as a little girl, 8 or 9 years old, I was called in from the pretty garden by the river at Bolehall, to come and see the great Sir R. Peel – he shook hands and spoke kindly to me and I can picture the great man now, sitting in the capacious round backed easy chair covered with chintz which stood close to the conservatory window in the little Bolehall drawing room. My Aunts introduced me as “little Ann”. That same armchair, Aunt Ellen used regularly to sit in at Bolehall Cottage.

Our governesses were Miss Bagnall, 2 Miss Phillips's and lastly Miss [?]. At 16 I went to school at Mrs Buschman's, corner of Brunswick Terrace, Brighton and I recollect when there hearing of the death and funeral of the great Duke of Wellington, September 14th 1852.

My singing master was Guglielmo, author of “I rise from dreams of thee” and many Italian songs. My brothers were at Mr Malleson's School at Hove. Miss Ryland who generally took a house at Brighton in the autumn often asked us out and gave us presents, I remember once how she pinned two brooches for me to make a choice, on the front of Miss Ranall's silk dress. William's first school was at Miss Karry's [?] at Brighton then to Mr Malleson's til he left school and was articled to the law. Charles went to the B... King Edward's School, then to Brighton, then to King's College School London. As a little boy he was always merry and whistling about the garden and rather mischievous, the nurse was ironing our white frocks to go to the pantomime (the ?s. came over from Moor Hall to accompany us) and Charles pushed the iron and caused ? to burn her hand so poor boy as punishment he was kept away from the pantomime. When he was still younger, we were with Aunt Mary at Southport and just before we were coming away, Charles amused himself with hammering the palings in front of our lodgings, so Aunt Mary told him the policeman would have him and I remember trying to hide him in the omnibus as we drove away; for fear of this catastrophe! So you may fancy how young we were! Charles and Emily had lovely flaxen hair and curls over their shoulders in those days.

[Sir Arthur Sullivan](#) used to come and stay with my Father and Mother at Harborne Hill, once or twice for the music festivals he was young in those days, and I remember him saying he had no

piano in his room, but composed without one! He was very good natured and I played duets with him several times notably "[the son and stranger](#)".

We had for several years a musical dinner on the Sunday before the Festival to relieve my sister Emily Peyton and there came at different times [Sir Michael Costa](#) his brother Emmanuel Costa was I think his name. Signor Schira? [Ferdinand Hiller](#), ? and very jolly they all were.