



Vale and Downland Museum – Local History Series

Visitation of the Plague to Stanford-in-the Vale in 1646

by Margaret Prentice

Some of the most valuable documents used by historians are the church registers. Among the surviving records of Stanford-in-the-Vale Church is the burial register for 1646, which includes the names of those who died in the plague. The historian is immediately curious to discover more. Where did the people affected live? Do their houses still exist? Are their descendants still resident in Stanford? Did the plague afflict other villages in the area? Was the outbreak local or national? It is possible to answer some of these queries with respect to a number of the Stanford plague victims listed below:

Martha Cully was buried the 25th of May 1646. Plague.

Katherine Tri was buried the 6th of June 1646.

Joane Cully was buried the 8th of June 1646.

Elizabeth the Daughter of Robert Hampton was buried the 15th of June.

Nary Wellman widd. was buried 21th of June.

William the Sone of William Smith was buried the 22nd of June.

William Jonson was buried the 26th of June.

Jane the Daughter of Francls Pinill was buried the 26th of June.

Mergerett Carter was buried the 27th of June.

Jane Yeate Widd. was buried the 29th of June.

John the Sone of Francis Pinill was buried the 29th of June.

Richard the Sone of Richard Greneway was buried the 30th of June.

Frances the Daughter of Henry Hampton was buried the 30th of June.

Bridgett Stone was buried the first of July.

Martha Griffen a servant to William Bassett was buried the first of July.

Mary the daughter of William Bassett was buried the 2th of July.

Mergerett the Daughter of Henry Hampton was buried the 2th of July.

John the sone of John Pinill was buried the 3th of July.

Joyce the wife of Nick. Jones was buried the 5th of July.

Francis Pinill was buried the 7th of July.

Jane the Daughter of ye Widd. Baker was buried the 7th of July.

Robert Hampton senr. was buried the 9th of July.

Robert Spinadge sen. was buried the 10th of July.

William Carter was buried the 10th of July.

James Yeate Junr. was buried the 12th of July 1646.

Joane the Daughter of John Pinill was buried the 17th of July.

Francis Cox a servant boy to William Weight was buried the 18th of July.

Ellin Ballerd was buried the 22th of July 1646.

Ame the wife of Henry Rayer was buried the 22th of July.

David Castle sen. was buried the 25th of July 1646.

Mary ye Daughter of John Pinill was buried the 27th of July.

William Weight was buried the First day of August.

Ann the daughter of Ye Widdow Baker was buried the 7th of August.

Plague ended.

It must have been a frightening time to have lived in Stanford, especially as so many families suffered such distress in June and July 1646. Over three hundred years later, traces still remain today in names, buildings and places, of the people afflicted in 1646.

In the parish church there is a tombstone, which used to be in the churchyard. It reads:

*Here Lieth Interr'd
the Body of
William Bassett
who departed
this life APRIL
Ye 23rd A:D: 1691*

William Basset was a 'felmonger' - a person who prepares skins for the tanner - who lost his daughter Mary and maid-servant, Martha Griffen, in the plague. This tombstone can now be found under the seats south of the nave and to the east end, near the pulpit.

On approaching Stanford from Wantage, Stone Farmhouse can be seen on the left, immediately before the turning into the village. It used to stand on what was originally the Lower Green, but unfortunately this area is now reduced to a mere triangle of grass.

Descendants of the Culley family still live in Stanford today and the name is remembered in Culley's Close, a field in Horsecroft, as the area leading to Charney is called. Two other families have given their names to houses in the village – Cox's Hall is a fine house to be seen on the left after entering the village from Wantage, and Pinills is a smaller house almost next door to Cox's Hall.

On the main chimney stack of Orchard House, near the Anchor Inn, can be seen

1633
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which supplies the date that Jane Cox, her son Thomas Cox and daughter Joane Cox built this beautiful house.



Thomas Cox, buried in Stanford Church, left a son Joseph, whose own son Joseph (1697-1753) married Katherine Sophia, daughter of John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham. At the head of the stackpipe east of the front door of Cox's Hall, is inscribed the date 1739, the probable date the younger Joseph Cox erected this fine house. Their only son Thomas was the Major General Cox of Cox's Hall, Stanford-in-the-Vale, in the 1780's.



In the possession of Stanford Church is a splendid piece of silver inscribed on its base:-

*This Flaggon Is Dedicated to the Use of the Altar In the Parish
Church of Stanford-In-the-Vale for ever
by Joseph Cox Esq, and Kath Sophia his wife, as an humble
testimony of their unfeign'd thanks to God
for the recovery of their three children Thomas, Sophia, and
Charlotte, from the Smallpox by Inoculation, Anno. 1752*

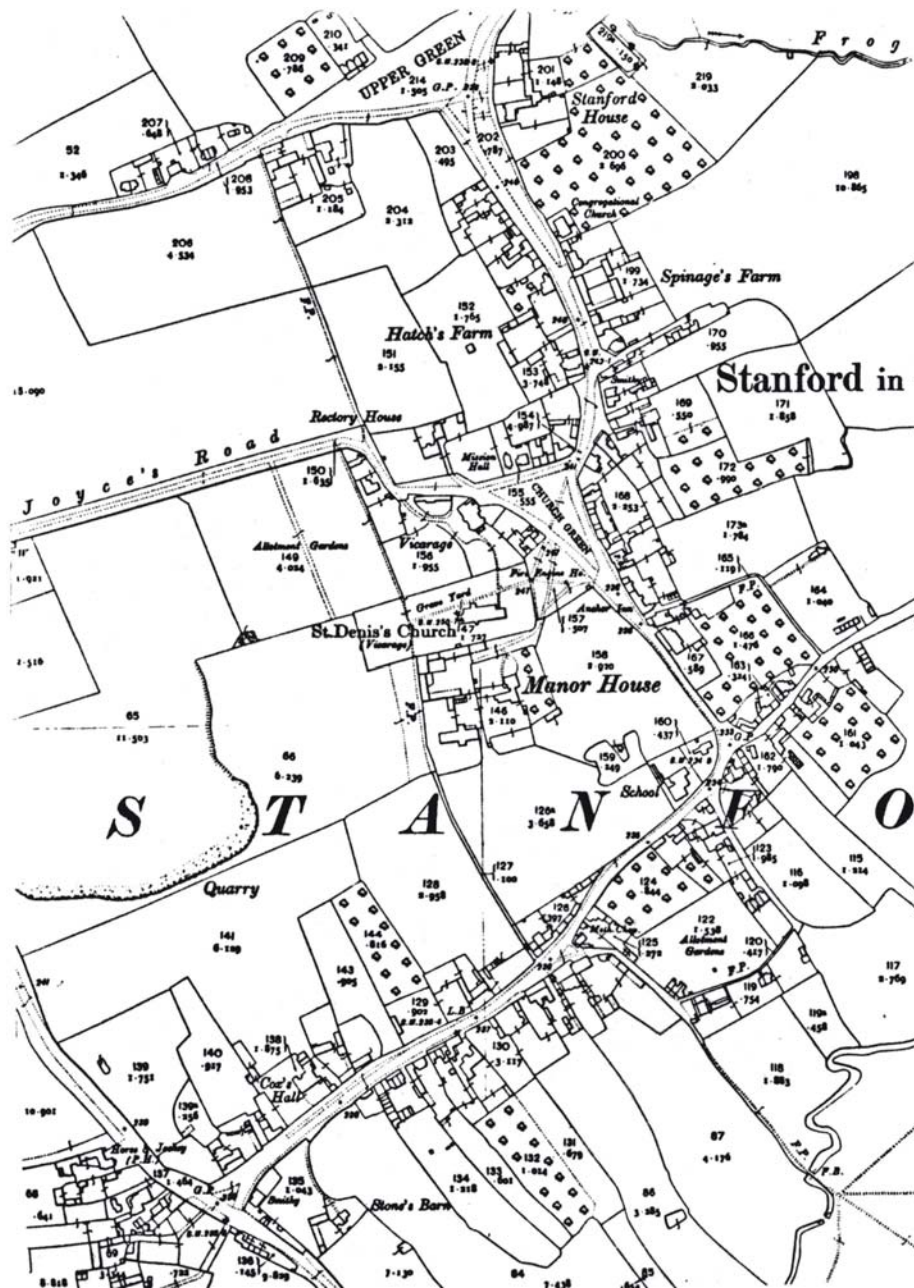
Members of the Spinage family also live in Stanford today. Spinages Farmhouse, drawn below, is the picturesque thatched house standing next to the Congregational Chapel in the Main Street.



The Yate family, who lost Jane Yeate Widd. and James Yeate Junr. in the plague, is also remembered in the village by the initials I.Y and H.Y. 1670 high up in the lovely stone house, illustrated below, which stands on the Upper Green of Stanford-in-the-Vale.



The extract from the 1912 Ordnance Survey Map below clearly shows Stone's Barn, Cox's Hall, Spinage's Farm and the Upper Green.



(I am very grateful to Mrs Violet Howse Of Stanford-in-the-vale for all the information contained in this article and to Mr H.L.H. Howse for the illustrations.)

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