

A Visit to Strensham - 1970

21 September 1970, Strensham, England

We traveled on to Strensham; the place where William Passey was born in 1839 and where Thomas Passey was buried. A freeway goes where the village was once located but the Church is still there. It was a Norman Church built in 1080 A.D. It sits in rolling hills of farm land with patches of trees, and the graveyard looked like something in a spooky movie!

The grass is never mowed and the stones are flaking apart. Some of the headstones had ivy growing on them and they were standing at every angle on the compass. Erlan said he'd hate to be there on a stormy night!

We walked to a house. This was the only house anywhere near the church. It was located at the end of a lane. A lady was pulling weeds behind the house. She was so kind to us and her married daughter came out and said, "You should do a brass rubbing in the church since your Great-great-great-grandfather is buried there." She invited us in to see her brass rubbings and before we left she said, "Put down your address and I'll send you a rubbing from the church."

Do you know what a brass rubbing is? In these old churches there are brass engravings on the top of tombs, located inside the church. Usually the engraving is of a knight or his lady from 1200-1300 A.D. They are beautiful and if colored with a crayon of a certain type, the impression comes off on the paper. They make lovely wall hangings.

We visited Twynning where John Passey was born in 1810. Twynning is a very small village. It has two stores and a few houses. The countryside is lovely. By asking around we found a lady who was 74 years old and named Miss Daisy Pates. She volunteered to be our guide.

We found grave stones in the church yard for several Pasesys. Miss Pates said one Passey named Joe went to Australia about 100 years before. He made the pews in the Baptist church before he left. We went to see the pews and they are very nice and still used every Sunday.

Miss Pates said, "The Passey's were always non-conformists about religion. They were Baptists instead of Church of England." I didn't tell her but thought laughing to myself, "Lady, if you only knew that half of them became Mormons."

We went to a farm owned by four brothers and two sisters; all named Passey. The place was called Woodend Farm; guess why that name? That's where the woods end, at their farm! The house was a two story square red brick and their family has lived there since 1900. There were stables and barns of red brick, a neat yard and a garden up to the house. They had cows too but I didn't ask how much land. The river Avon runs through their land.

Two brothers were picking apples in the orchard when we got there. Corwin took us to the house and made us some orangeade. He just retired from teaching Physics. He is about 65 years old, 6 ft., grey hair and ruddy cheeks. His two sisters are unmarried school teachers.

While he was in the kitchen with the orangeade, a man over 60 years of age in a straw hat, came to the window behind me and yelled, "Is my brother in there?" Erlan said, "Yes".

The old man went around the house and came in the back door. "Corwin", he yelled rather gruff, "who are these folks?" Corwin was trying to tell him and the old man was saying "What's that you say?"

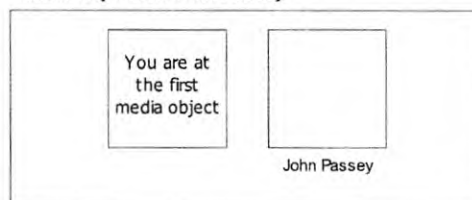
Erlan and I were ready to get up and run! The door opened and in bounced this old guy. He said, "Welcome, now that I know who you are." Erlan started to sand up, "Just sit down sonny and I'll tell you what I know."

With that he flopped into a chair. His name was Edwin Passey and he was so funny. He said his grandparents died of typhoid fever and left 5 children under 12 years of age. With their death all of the family stories died.

He asked if the Passey's in America were stubborn and hard headed! He jumped up and leaped in front of me, looked me over very carefully, turned to Erlan and said, "She looks like a Passey. She is a bonny lass isn't she?" No one has ever called me a bonny lass before! He continued with, "You look just like my sisters when they were your age."

Taken from a letter written 21 September 1970 by Freddijo Passey Burk

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