

WHAT'S IN A NAME?"

3.

One summer day I was in the garden when a van driver came up and asked me to direct him to Gorton Playne. "This is it" I told him. "This is it?" he countered, looking around at the delapidated out-buildings, and the disgust in his voice was undisguised! Obviously he was expecting something grander....a mansion in a park perhaps! Until then I'd not thought about the effect our house name could have on others, so perhaps an explanation would be appropriate.

When my parents were married in 1919, they had nowhere to live, but Mother had £200 saved from her job as dairymaid on the family farm (which Fletchers now own). This enabled them to buy a field along Milton road, and Father designed and built a bungalow. It was the only one in the village and thus christened 'The Bungalow'.

Many other bungalows were soon to go up, and by the Second World War they were a common feature of the village, nonetheless the original name stuck. It wasn't until we came back to live with Mother after Father died that she felt the time had come to give the bungalow a 'real' name, but what, was the question.

A search in an old ordnance map revealed nothing of interest on which to base a name, but as St. Michael's next door was then a cattle feed mill, and we were built on a bank, the not-very-original name of 'Millbank' was chosen. When we inherited the property nine years ago, however, I felt a name with some relevance to the village should be found, and that's when I hit upon 'Gorton Playne'.....the maiden names of my grandmothers!

Mathilda Gorton was a daughter of a 'Master Grocer' (the 1881 census description) in Milton - now Pratley's Hardware. The family had previously come from Oddington, where Gorton is still a name in the village. Mathilda was married at eighteen to a widower, Joseph Jabez Dangerfield, new to the area from Devizes. She bore him twelve children, ten of whom survived. Grandfather Dangerfield was also a grocer and the Bank Manager, and later became a farmer as well; they were strictly chapel. Martha - known as Patty - Playne was an orphan, and the only child. Her parents came from Boddington in Gloucestershire. They were both only children as well, and when they died of TB when Patty was nine months old, she was alone in the world. That is all we know of her family history. (continued).

4.

A Miss Arkell took on the financial responsibility for Patty's upbringing and education. Again, we don't know why, unless perhaps she hoped for a personable companion in her old age. If so, Patty dashed these hopes, once she had set eyes on Grandfather!

Patty came to Shipton to teach, and Samuel Bolt Coombes, a carpenter by trade, had been called to the school to do some repairs, and so they met, courted, and later, with Miss Arkell's blessing, married. Every year Patty went back to Boddington for two weeks holiday, taking the youngest children with her (she had ten altogether) until Miss Arkell died. Her legacy to Patty enabled my grandparents to buy No. 6, Church Street, which remained the family home until Granny died in 1933. The Coombes were staunchly C of E, and all the children along with Grandfather, sang in the choir.

To date there is no record in Shipton of the Dangerfield's past. They are buried in Milton Baptist cemetery; the numerous ramifications of the Coombes have been recorded for posterity, however, through 'Coombes Close'. Now 'Gorton Playne' keeps the female names alive, and with the erection of the handsome flats on the old bungalow site, perhaps future delivery people will consider the new buildings more appropriate to its name!

Elma Williams.

ASCOTT GARDEN DAY

Twelve gardens in Ascott will open on Saturday, June 11, from 2 p.m to 6 p.m. There will be a plant stall on the Green, and cake, souvenir and ice cream stalls. Teas will be available in the gardens. Entrance to all twelve gardens £1, children free. No dogs please.

ASCOTT WOMENS' INSTITUTE

We meet on the third Monday of the month in the Tiddy Hall at 7.30 p.m., and new members are always made welcome.

Our programme for the next two months is as follows:-

June 20 'Introducing William' - A talk by Mrs. Wise.
Competition: Flower of the month.

July 12 (Tuesday). An evening tour of Cogges Museum, followed by a ploughman's supper.
Competition: 'Wear a rose'.