

OUR HERITAGE - THE STOKES FAMILY.

In May 1997 an excited Benjamin and Carolyn Stokes, from Alabama U.S.A. visited Holy Cross Church realising their ancestors had contributed to it's building. They planned to return, but tragically died in a car accident in New Zealand later that year.

In May this year, Benjamin's sister Gerry and husband Ted came from Florida to see Seend Church for themselves, and it was a very moving experience for them. They have kindly given me an interesting copy of 'A Genealogical Study 1312 - 1903 by Rev. John L. Stokes. 1854. Gerry's Grandfather. Below are some excerpts of it's contents :-

1. In the time of Edward 11., the year of the birth of Edward 111., (father of the famous "Black Prince"), two years before the ever-memorable battle of Bannockburn, Adam de Stokke was married to Eva -. This was in 1312. He held the manors of Rushall (Rutishall) and Stokke, Wiltshire, England.
2. Of this pair was born Thomas Stoke of **Seend**, Wilts, in the reign of Edward 111
3. Of him came Thomas Stokes, (Seend)King Richard 11., 1381.
4.John Stokes, Seend. King Henry 1V.
5. Thomas Stokes, of the same old family seat, in the time of Henry V.
6. John Stoke, of same place, in the third year of Henry V1., 1425.
- 7 Succeeded by Thomas Stoke,King Henry V11., 1495
8. **His son, John Stokes, erected the chapel at Seend, and was buried there in 1498. He married Alice -, who sleeps beside him.**
9. His son, John Stokes, came next. He married Margery, daughter of John Nicholas of Rundwire, Wilts.
10. For nearly 200 years the family had resided in Wiltshire, but now comes a new settlement. Christopher Stokes, Stanshawes Place, Gloucestershire. d.1566.....
13. The line is continued at Stanshawes for about 235 years: Samuel Stokes married Isabella, daughter of Richard Codrington of Dodington. Gloucestershire.

(English - American line) Christopher Stokes (3) came to Virginia U.S.A. .obtained a patent for land on Charles (York) river 21.7.1635 - 'a man of prominence.....

15. John Stokes was the progenitor of the Carolina branches of the family
16. David Stokes J.P. of Lunenburg county' 1707.....
17. William, 1735...North Carolina.....
John, 1756.....Colonel in the Revolutionhe was attacked by dragoons who aimed deadly blows at his head....but recoveredStokes County was named in his honour.appointed by President Washington U.S. Judge for the Western District N. Carolina, "His bravery in battle, his benevolence of character, and elevated mind, endeared him to the affections of his country".....
Montford Stokes.....1762. Ran away from home and shipped as a cabin boy in the merchant service.....1776 captured by British, and confined for 7 months on prison ship...1816 elected to U.S. Senate from North Carolina.....1830 elected governora man of rare genius, highest courage.....
1782 Peter Stokes amassed a considerable fortune.....'

Various members of the Stokes family during the course of time were Church ministers, served in the army, and public life in the U.S.A..

.....
Taken from guide book 'Notes on monumental inscriptions' in Holy Cross Church.

'John Stokes (d 1498) and his wife Alice (d 1500) are pictured in the famous brass, now on the W. wall of the N. aisle. (*Sadly one of these was stolen, Mr. Peter Hicks has made a remarkably good replica of the 3 brass items*) The tradition that he was a clothier (probable in itself) seems to be based on the evidence of the shears and scissors which can be seen in the moulding of the W. window of the aisle, inside and out. John Stokes will asked that he should be buried 'in Capella mea noviter edificata et constructa in Capella de Sende' ('in my newly built chapel in the chapel of Seend', and he left money to embellish the chapel and for a priest to hold services there for the welfare of his soul and those of his parents and all the faithful departed. He also left money to the parish church in Melksham, the Vicar of Melksham (described as 'my curate'), and for repairing the roads in Seend, as well as bequests to his family. Alice Stokes also desired to be buried 'in the new chapel of Seend', and left money to Seend Church, Melksham church, and to the Rev. William Janyns, curate of Seend '.

Pam Muller