

# HENRY, LOUISE AND A FARNDON FARMHOUSE

by Alan Langley

A house in East Farndon called 'Farrar Farm', or more correctly, 'Farrer Farm', has on one side a plaque with the inscription 'H.M.V. 1865'. It is clear from the stone in some lower parts of the house walls, combined with brick upper parts that the 1865 date refers to an enlargement of the house at that time. So why 'Farrar' and who or what was 'H.M.V.'?



STONE PLAQUE ON THE SIDE OF THE FARRER FARM HOUSE WITH THE INITIALS HMV STANDING FOR HENRY MORGAN VANE.

Whellan's Directory for 1874 includes, in its list of Farmers and Graziers, Richard West of Farrer House. The spelling 'Farrer' occurs in all similar sources. Going back to the enclosure, which was carried out in 1781, among those allotted land when the open fields were divided up was Rev. Richard Farrer. He and his family are clearly the



origin of the name of the house and their name is always spelled in that way, not 'Farrar'.

A stone in the side wall of the farmhouse, near the foot and directly beneath the 'H.M.V.' inscription, appears in certain lights to have a date on it. The stone is very weathered

and it's hard to say whether it really is a date. It does however look rather like four digits beginning with 17, possibly even with another 7 as the third digit. It is therefore tempting to believe that the house was built shortly before the enclosure by Rev. Farrer. The Enclosure Act allotted just over 78 acres of land to him. Although no enclosure map survives, a plausible reconstruction has been made from the information in the Act and existing field boundaries. This places the 78 acres as running back from Farrer Farm and including most of the land between the houses on Main Street and the parish boundary with Great Oxendon. This conjecture is supported by a Farrer Estate Book in Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO) covering the period 1827-36. In this the fields owned by the Farrers and rented

out are listed as 'House and Homestead, Dairy Close, Gooselands, Deep Dales, Easter Sike, Patch Close and Townsend Close'. A plan of the fields of East Farndon was included in an article in no. 26 of the Historian, so interested readers could consult that issue. The West family were also tenants at that time. The family still farms in the village to this day.



FARRER FARM IN EAST FARNDON. SOME OF THE STONE WORK IN THE SIDE WALL IS LIKELY TO BE PART OF THE ORIGINAL (18TH CENTUR?) BUILDING, THE REST BEING PART OF H.M. VANE'S 1865 ENLARGEMENT.

Who was Rev. Richard Farrer? There was more than one, but the Farrer who features in the Enclosure Award lived from 1748 to 1809 and was Rector of Ashley from 1773 to 1809. He was one of the feoffees in Market Harborough and lived on the Square in Market Harborough. Confusingly, his son was also Rev Richard Farrer (1777-1852). He was also Rector of Ashley, following his father, from 1809-19 and then Rector of Fawsley at the same time for the rest of his life (1819-52). Thus the two Richard Farrers held the Rectorship of Ashley for nearly eighty years between them.



MEMORIAL IN ASHLEY CHURCH OF REV RICHARD FARRER, SENIOR, WHO WAS ALLOTTED LAND IN EAST FARNDON IN THE 1781 ENCLOSURE.

The Farrers were a well-to-do family. The Estate book lists land they owned in Ashley, Sutton Bassett, Great Bowden, Langton (which Langton is not specified), Little Bowden, East Farndon, Dingley, Medbourne, Drayton, Foxton and Earls Barton. All the Dingley property was sold in 1824 for £5000 and in 1831 all the Foxton and Langton land plus some in Great Bowden was sold for £140 per acre, realising over £10,000. The annual rent the properties brought in was over £1100 per year. Thus there can be no doubt that the two Rev Richard Farrers were men of considerable wealth.

When the younger Richard Farrer died in 1852, one of the co-heirs named in his will was his daughter Louisa, who had been born in Ashley in 1816. Probably she was named as co-heir because she was still unmarried at the age of 36, and maybe in need of a dowry. Her properties in 1853 are listed on a document in NRO. They show she had land in Ashley, Sutton Bassett, Little Bowden and Earls Barton, as well as the house and land in East Farndon, let to William West. These properties brought in an annual rent of £338. She also had £10,359 in 3% Consols, surely a reasonable fortune in 1853.

It can be no coincidence that this list of her properties was made in 1853, as this was the year that she married Henry Morgan Vane. We have seen him already in the form of his initials, 'H.M.V.' on the farmhouse in Farndon. So through his marriage to Louisa Farrer he became the owner of Farrer Farm, which he enlarged in 1865.

So who was Henry Vane? The Vane family's most famous member was a Sir Henry Vane, an ardent Parliamentarian who was executed after the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. This setback did not affect the family's long-term prospects. His son was created Baron Barnard and further titles were added to subsequent generations of elder sons, including Earl of Darlington and Duke of Cleveland. Our Henry Vane was descended from a younger son of the second Baron, so his line had run parallel with the Earls and Dukes, but without the titles.

H.M. Vane was born in 1808 in Brigg, Lincolnshire, and so far nothing has come to light about his life before 1853. In that year, at the age of 45, he married the 37 year-old Louisa Farrer. He was admitted to the Inner Temple in the same year and began practising as a barrister. Also in 1853 he was appointed Secretary to the Charity Commission. Papers that might throw more light on his earlier life are likely to be amongst the archive at Raby Castle in County Durham, for reasons that will become clear.



SIR HENRY VANE 1613–1662  
A WELL KNOWN PARLIAMENTARIAN  
IN THE CIVIL WAR.  
HE WAS EXECUTED BY  
CHARLES II AFTER THE  
RESTORATION IN 1660.

The couple had five children between 1854 and 1859, the fourth of whom only lived a fortnight. They seem to have lived in London, at 74, Eaton Place. By 1867 Henry was Lord of the Manor of Harborough and Bowden, in succession to the Earl of Harborough. However, by this date, the title 'Lord of the Manor' seems to have meant very little in practice.

In 1878 Louisa died and was buried not in London, but in her birthplace, Ashley. Henry was knighted in 1883, too late for Louisa to be styled Lady Vane. Henry lived only another three years, dying in April 1886. He was buried alongside his wife in Ashley churchyard. The heir was Henry and Louisa's eldest son, Henry de Vere Vane, who had been born in 1854. This Henry succeeded to the Lordship of Harborough and Bowden, amongst others. He was a barrister, like his father.

Meanwhile, the other line of Vanes with its array of titles had been continuing through the centuries. The first Duke of Cleveland, William Harry Vane (1776-1842), had three sons. The eldest became Duke in 1842 and died childless in 1864. The second son became the third Duke, but died childless within the year. The third son then became the fourth Duke, but died childless in 1891. All the titles then became extinct except their original one, that of Baron Barnard. A long battle followed about the succession to this title and finally the decision came down in favour of Henry and Louisa's son Henry de Vere Vane. So in 1894 he became the ninth Lord Barnard and acquired the right to occupy Raby Castle, with his wife whom he had married in 1881. She was Lady Catherine Cecil, daughter of the third Marquess of Exeter of Burleigh House. Their grandson Harry John Neville Vane (born 1923) is the present eleventh Lord Barnard.



THE TWO CROSSES ABOVE THE GRAVES OF H.M. VANE (LEFT) AND HIS WIFE LOUISA IN ASHLEY CHURCHYARD.



RABY CASTLE, DURHAM. FAMILY SEAT OF LORD BARNARD OF THE VANE FAMILY.

That is why, to find out more about 'H.M.V.' and Farrer Farm, you will need to go to Raby Castle. But note that Lord Barnard charges £50 a day to make use of the archives. I confess that I have not availed myself of the facility.