

The History of this Meaden Family

The first positive record of our branch of the Meaden's is at the Dorset village of Owermoigne.

To understand how the migration of families took place in Norman times and through the Middle Ages, it might be helpful to give a brief history of Owermoigne.

The village was in the ownership of the Le Moign Moygnes Family shortly after the Norman Conquest, being a gift of Henry 1, some time between 1100 and 1135.

During the reign of Edward I, Ralph Moygne acquired the Manor of Oweres "by service of Sargeantry of the Kitchen".

During the reign of Henry IV 1399-1413, Elizabeth, a daughter of Sir John Moygne, and heir to the estate, married Sir William Stourton from Stourton in Wiltshire, and the Village became part of his larger estate.

The Rev. Eric Woods who has been researching the Wiltshire Meaden's, found that when searching for early Meaden's in the Stourton Papers, all the references referred to Owermoigne, and concluded that Sir William had probably taken his wife and some of her staff to Stourton, hence the Wiltshire branch of the family.

Many Meaden's can be traced back to this area close together on the Wiltshire, Somerset, and Dorset border. Stourton, on the edge of Salisbury Plain, in Wiltshire. Imber, which is now a ghost village in centre of the plain, and in the middle of an Army Tank Range also in Wiltshire. And Kilmington, less than two miles from Stourton, which until the boundary change of 1896 was in Somerset, and Bourton two and a half miles from Stourton, in Dorset.

There is a record of a John Henry Meaden born in Kilmington in 1539, but as yet I cannot connect him to our family line. Whether he was in the employ of Lord Charles Stourton at the time of the murder of John Hartgill and his family or William Hartgill, lord of

Kilminster Manor is not known, but he would almost certainly have sided with one faction or the other.
(See notes on the history of Kilminster)

Our family Meaden continued living in Owermoigne for many years, and Eric was able to find several references to them in the Court and Contract or Bargain Book 1644-1708
(repaired and rebound 1964).

Some of these are: -

“ Thomas Meaden and Charles Meaden hold for their lives by copy dated 19th April 13 Charles (ie.1637) one cottage, backside and garden annex containing 6 yards of land and close of
Containing 2 acres and 11½ acres of land in Galton.

2/4/1658 granted to Charles Meaden the mansion house orchard...of Owermoigne together with a close called Slidmow & one meadow called “Middle meadow.”

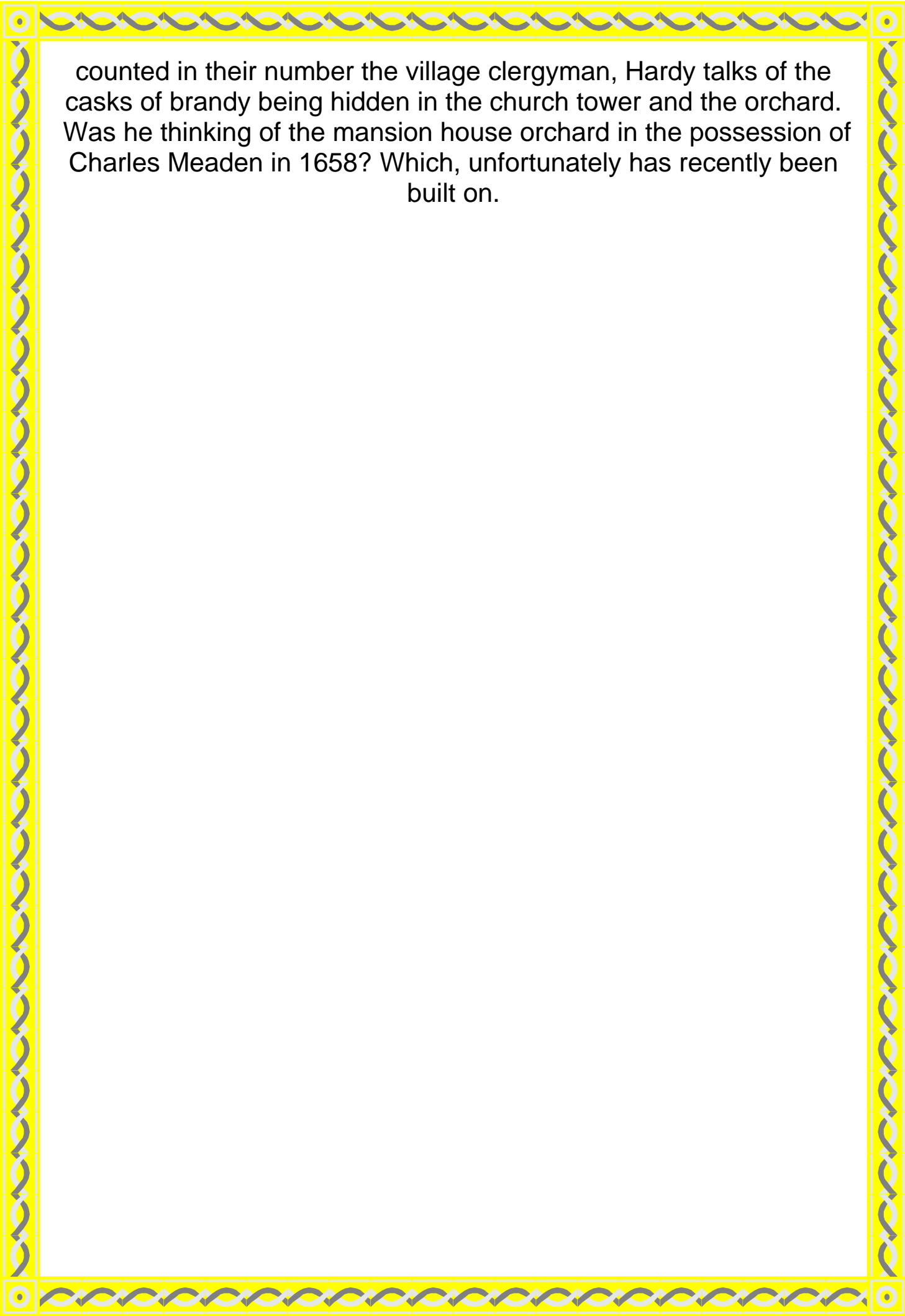
12/10/1671 Owermoigne, Granted to Phillip Stourton Gent, and Charles Meaden senior in trust for Luke Crimble and Elizabeth his wife all that cottage or tenent with a garden plot thereunto adjoining contains about 40 yards of ground heretofore taken out of a ground called Lighe Croft late in possession of the same Luke and Elizabeth his now wife (sic) live...

Charles (Junior) married Mary Meech at St Nicholas in Chaldon Herring in 1656, they lived at Hollworth Farm in Galton where they brought up nine children, Charles, Robert, William, Thomas, James, Christian, Ruth, Sarah and Joanne

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As a point of note, it was from Owermoigne that Thomas Hardy's family originated, with records of them going back to 1623. Being a small village, the Meaden's and the Hardy's would certainly have known each other. The village had long had a reputation for smuggling.

Thomas Hardy wrote about the smugglers of Owermoigne in his “Wessex tale” in the fictional village of Nethermoynton and they



counted in their number the village clergyman, Hardy talks of the casks of brandy being hidden in the church tower and the orchard. Was he thinking of the mansion house orchard in the possession of Charles Meaden in 1658? Which, unfortunately has recently been built on.