

Tearle Memorials in Stanbridge

By Ewart F Tearle

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St John the Baptist, Stanbridge

The historic clock, raised by locals to celebrate village soldiers returning from the Great War.

The parents of almost all the Tearles alive today are a Stanbridge man called Thomas b1710 and his wife, Mary nee Sibley. They had five sons who carried the Tearle name - Joseph b1737, Thomas b1737, John b1741, William b1749 and Richard b1754. There was a Jabez b1745, but he never married and had no children. In order to positively identify any Tearle, I trace them back to one of these men. So where you see the statement, for instance, that John, below is on the branch of John 1741, you will know they are a descendant of John 1741 above. The Tearle Tree is built on this basis and we can trace almost any person who enquires to one of these branches.

Another convention I have applied is to add the date of birth as a number, and forgo adding “b” or “born” in front of it, such that John Tearle 1741 Stbg means John Tearle born 1741 in Stanbridge.

The memorial to the right is for John Tearle 1840 Stanbridge; “For sixty years sexton of this parish.” Also on the memorial are other members of John’s family:

- Maria nee Bliss 1844 Totternhoe
- Frederick 1871 Stanbridge
- Sabina 1875 Stanbridge

John Tearle was sexton while the Rev Thomas Green was making major upgrades to the fabric of St John’s during the 1890s. His youngest son, Arthur 1881, emigrated to America in 1904, married and had children in Boonville, Missouri. He is on the branch of John 1741.



Eliza Tearle 1873 Stanbridge and her twin sister, Kate Tearle died within months of each other in 1954 and are in this grave by the footpath.

They are daughters of John the sexton (above) and are amongst the last people to bear the Tearle name in Stanbridge. A name which had lived in this village since at least the mid 1500s was gone by the 1970s.



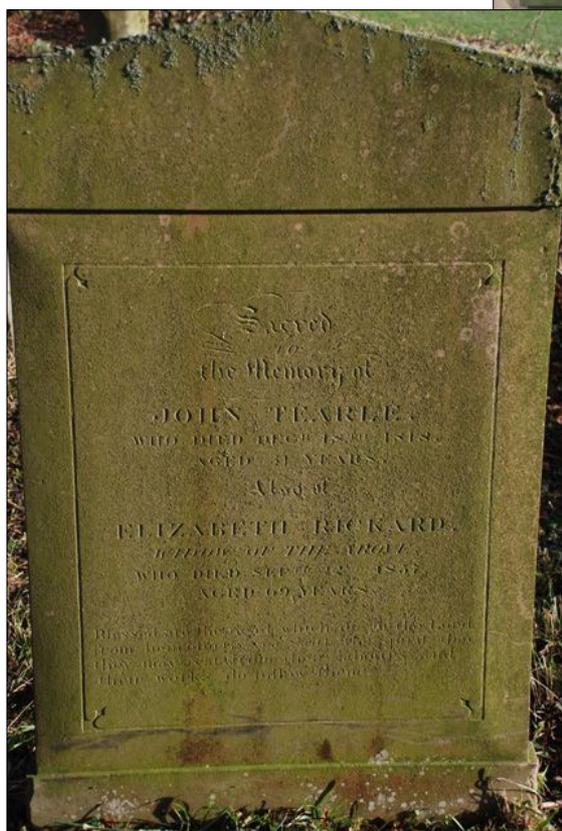
This is the memorial to Phoebe Tearle 1877 Stanbridge. She married George Horne, also of Stanbridge, and they left to seek their fortune in Leeds.

Phoebe is one of the daughters of John 1840, the sexton, and Maria. Note how close her grave is to that of her sisters, Eliza and Kate.

On the right is the memorial to James Tearle 1827 Toddington and Mary nee Andrews, 1830 Eggington. They were married in Stanbridge on 26 July 1846. James and John the sexton are brothers. James is my gg-grandfather. While his son Levi went on to become a skilled blacksmith, running a successful business in Wing, James always described himself simply as an agricultural labourer. After his father died, Levi travelled from Wing to see his mother in Stanbridge almost every weekend, at the same time picking up supplies in Leighton Buzzard. James, too, is on the branch of John 1741.



The memorials to John and James are close together.



The memorial on the left is to John Tearle who died in 1818 and Elizabeth, his wife. John 1787 Stanbridge, married Elizabeth Flint of Stanbridge on 4 May 1813. They had three children before he died in 1818, and they certainly made their mark. Elizabeth remarried, to William Rickard, originally from Slapton, Buckinghamshire, but you will notice his headstone nearby (above) has his name only on it, whilst Elizabeth is written on John's headstone, but as Elizabeth Rickard. You will see John on the branch of Joseph 1737, because he is a son of Joseph 1737 and Phoebe nee Capp. This is one of the Methodist graves.

John and Deborah Olney – notice the wonderful age they lived to. He owned and worked a 154 acre farm near Stanbridge, employing 6 labourers. They probably did not live on the farm since their house was in the village near the church. Deborah 1814 was a daughter of John 1787 and Elizabeth nee Flint, above. Also on this headstone is their son, James Olney 1837 Stanbridge.



Deborah gave three of her children the name Tearle as a middle name, one of whom is Hannah Tearle Olney – who has possibly died of cancer. She is named after Deborah’s younger sister, who died in Africa. See p7.

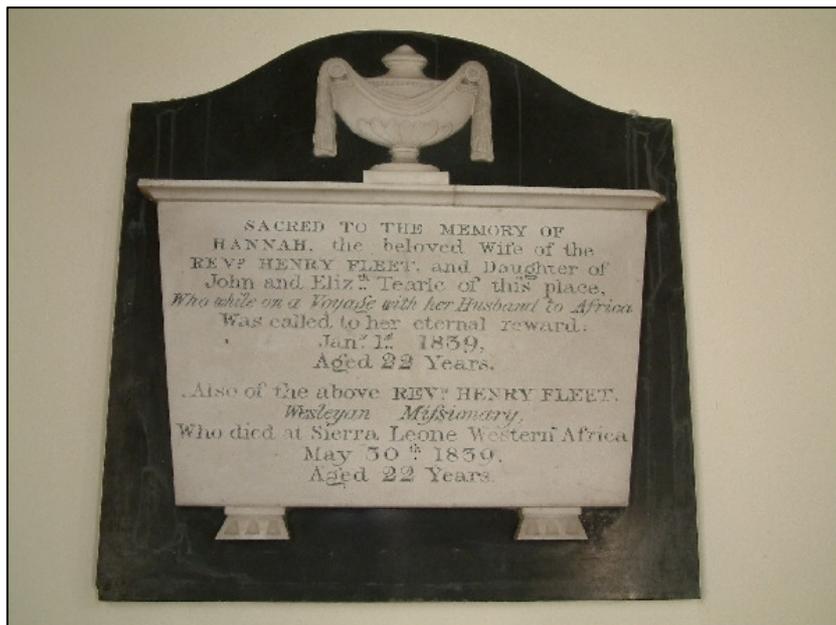


This small headstone is to their four children who died – Thomas and William can be seen written there, but the other two cannot.

The memorial, right, is for Hannah Tearle 1816 and Henry Fleet 1817. They were married in St Johns Stanbridge in 1838.

Their memorial inside the church tells the story of their sad and early deaths. Hannah is the second daughter of John 1787 and Elizabeth nee Flint, above, and was Deborah's younger sister.

The graves under the trees and this memorial to Hannah are of Methodists. The Methodist chapel was next door to the school on Tilsforth Rd, and this memorial was almost certainly moved from there to its present location when the chapel was demolished.



The Methodist graves

Tearle memorials



Gladys Rose married Ernest Higgs in 1920. Her mother was Annie nee Tearle 1868, who married Charles Rose. American Sam Chancellor, grandson of Arthur 1881, said Gladys corresponded with his mother, and his Aunt Phoebe Tearle 1921 visited Gladys in Leighton Buzzard in the late 1960s.

Annie Rose and Charles Rose, of the headstone on the right, were the parents of Gladys Higgs, above. Annie Tearle 1868 married Charles Rose in Stanbridge, 1892. Her parents were John 1840, the sexton, and Maria nee Bliss.



If we step back a little on the footpath near Kate and Eliza's grave, left, we can see that the sisters Phoebe Horne, Annie Rose, Kate & Eliza Tearle and Annie's daughter Gladys Higgs are all clustered together.



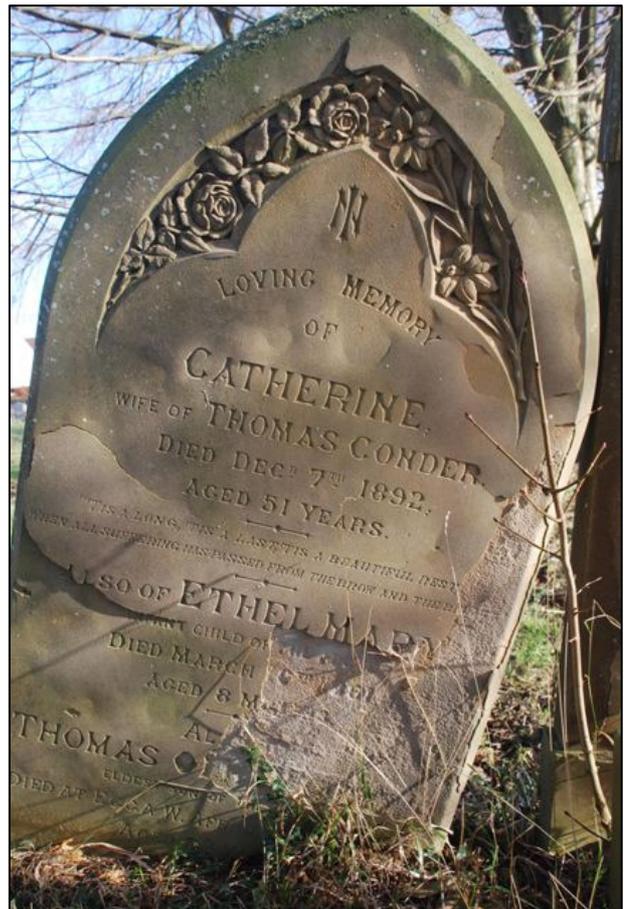
Interestingly enough, this, too, qualifies as a Tearle memorial. It is the headstone of Charles and Caroline Shillingford.

In 1887 my gg-grandfather James Tearle 1827 died in Stanbridge. My gg-grandmother, Mary nee Andrews married the widower Charles Shillingford in 1888. Charles died in 1891 (as this headstone tells you) and Mary Shillingford nee Tearle nee Andrews married the brother of James 1827 and John 1840, the sexton. His name was William Tearle 1832 and he was the widower of Catherine nee Fountain. The marriage of Mary and William took place in Watford, and my g-grandfather (Mary's son) Levi Tearle signed as a witness.

Mary Tearle nee Shillingford nee Tearle nee Andrews died in Stanbridge in 1914 and is buried with James Tearle near the headstone closest to the church, of the twin headstones, John and James, on page 5. Thelma Shepherd of Wing called her "Much Married Mary."

The headstone on the right tells the story of Catherine Olney 1840 who married William Conder in Stanbridge in 1868. Their baby girl Ethel Mary Conder 1880 died in 1881, aged just 7 months. Catherine's only son, Thomas Olney Conder died in Egga, West Africa, on 7 Feb 1897, I assume as a Methodist missionary. Catherine was the daughter of Deborah Olney nee Tearle 1814, who married John Olney, the Stanbridge farmer. Thomas was the grand-nephew of John and Hannah Fleet nee Tearle, the Methodist missionaries who died in Sierra Leone and are the subject of the memorial on page 7.

This family descends from Joseph 1737 and Phoebe nee Capp, and Thomas is the fourth generation to be inspired by their powerful Methodist message.





Mary Annie Olney, on the memorial to the left, was the daughter of Deborah nee Tearle 1814 and John Olney, the Stanbridge farmer. She was born in Stanbridge in 1853 and died in Clapham in 1878. She married Richard Grose in 1877, and given her date of death, she may well have succumbed during childbirth. I am not sure she is actually buried here.

The very sad headstone on the right is for William Thomas (Willie) Olney 1885-1885, Elizabeth Olney (Lizzie) 1839-1888, Tabitha Olney (Tibbie) 1850-1897 and Sarah Ann Uff nee Olney 1847-1912. All were the children of Deborah Olney nee Tearle 1814 and John Olney. Sarah Ann married James Uff in Richmond, Surrey, in 1890 (where she was living in the 1891 census) and died on 30 June 1912 in Great Ormond St Hospital. She was living, a widow, in Leighton Buzzard at the time.



If you are aware of Tearle connections to any memorials not mentioned in this pamphlet, I would be delighted to know, and to add your story to future publications.