

Thomas Perry

Thomas Perry, coachman to the St John Mildmay family

Following my article on the history of Drakestone House, I was contacted by David Rolfe whose great grandfather Thomas Perry was the coachman for the Mildmay family.

Thomas was married to Eva Warren and their daughter Dorothy later married Harold John Temlett (Jack) and they lived firstly at Bannutry and then in a bungalow just the other side of the crossroads from the Black Horse in North Nibley.



Photo of Thomas Perry and his wife Eva (ne Warren)
They had 2 children, David's mother Jean (who moved to Reading when she married his father) and her younger brother Tony Temlett who lived in Nibley village all his life. Tony died in

2017 and his widow Iris passed away recently.

Dorothy and her sister Ruth used to play with the Mildmay children whilst they lived in one of the thatched cottages on the estate.



Dorothy and Ruth at Drakestone
David was recently clearing his late mother's house, and came

across the coat and shirt of his late great-grandfather Thomas Perry. It is part of his livery as coachman to the St John Mildmay's at Drakestone House – and has the Mildmay family crest on the buttons.



The two items of uniform worn by Thomas Perry have been generously donated to the History Society in Stinchcombe.



Symonds & Co

39, High St. PORTSMOUTH



Thomas Perry in his Mildmay coachman uniform and the surviving items today



Thomas with his horse and cart

The photograph below was taken at Dulverton, where the Mildmays resided before they came to Stinchcombe, showing Thomas Perry on the far right.



Another photograph that David found is of children outside Stinchcombe School. It is thought that this photograph was taken around 1910 and the children are dressed up ready for a school play?



The Death of Walter Mildmay

David also discovered valuable information regarding Walter Mildmay.

“In our family, one of the great mysteries is where Thomas Perry got all his money from (and where it all went!). He started out a humble coachman and died a relatively rich man. I remember asking my grandmother about this back in the 1970s, and she said that the man he worked for (Walter Mildmay) died falling from his horse and left a lot of money to Thomas Perry.

About 10 years ago I met Hugh Mildmay and told him this story and he said “that’s not true”. He said it so assertively that I thought I had touched a nerve. Then I noticed that in your (John Pinch) article you say that “Walter died in 1913 from a heavy bout of influenza”. I assume that this is what Hugh told

you.

So I decided to try and solve the mystery, I would obtain the death certificate and will of Walter Mildmay. I attach the death certificate, which shows he did indeed die in a fall from a horse.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH



GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 13608492-1

REGISTRATION DISTRICT		DURSLEY							
1913	DEATH in the Sub-district of Dursley				in the County of Gloucester				

Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
178	Twentieth January 1913 Church Lane, D.P.D.	Walter Paullet St John Mildmay	Male	46 years	Independent Means	Accidentally killed by a fall from his horse whilst hunting. Fracturing his Skull. Lived 18 hours	Certificate received from Paymaster Williams, Paymaster for the Lower Division of Gloucestershire. Subject held Eighteenth January 1913	Twentieth January 1913	George Adams Registrar.

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 2nd day of March 2023

DYE 625511

See note overleaf

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE ©CROWN COPYRIGHT

WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.



NBL

and below is an enlargement of the relevant cause of death

Occupation

Cause of death

Signature, description and
residence of informant

anxious and	Accidentally Killed by a fall from his horse while hunting fracturing his Skull lived 10 hours	Certificate received from Seymour Williams Coroner for the Lower Division of Gloucestershire Inquest held Eighteenth January 1913
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So my grandma's story is at least half true. The other half is not quite so true, however. Walter left his entire estate to his widow. But there was a clause in the will to the effect that if she pre-deceased him, some money was to go to the servants. Of course she was still alive to inherit, so this clause did not come into effect.

I am now working on two assumptions:

1. Perhaps his widow wanted to honour the spirit of the will and gave money to the servants
2. Perhaps she compensated Thomas Perry when she turned him and his family out of the cottage so she could live there.

Anyway, it is these little mysteries that make family history so interesting."

The tragic fatal accident of Walter St John Mildmay was reported in a local newspaper of the day where it was explained that he fell from his horse while jumping a style

near Cam Church during a hunt with Lord Fitzhardinge's hounds. Walter was taken to a nearby farm where he received medical attention but died that evening, witnessed by his 17 year old daughter.

David Rolfe and John Pinch