

THE MARSLANDS OF CHIPPING AND BEYOND

By Thomas Henry Marsland. Born 1917.

I am the only son of Thomas Henry Marsland. M.M. (World War 1.) of Alston, near Longridge, 1892 - 1966. He was the son of Thomas Marsland, born and buried Chipping, 1847 - 1908.

My Grandfather died some 9 years before I was born. My father had lost both his parents by the time he was sixteen years old.

From an early age as memory permits, stories about Chipping and district were told. Especially when relatives visited our home. Activities of highwaymen, body snatchers, excisemen searching for illicit stills, ghosts and boggarts, will-o-the-wisps, and adventures of my Grandfather, fuelled the imagination of myself and two sisters.

Three 'fortunes' were said to have been inherited by our Grandfather, and spent. It was said that he had built a mill at Chipping. He was a crack shot with a 12 bore gun, a heavy drinker, and had sold a terrace of four houses, which he had built, for half a crown. He was 'brought home' regularly after drinking sessions by 'friends'. His pockets were always empty.

When I started work in 1931, aged 14 years, at a cotton mill in Longridge, old men there would say to me, "Ay lad, if thi Grandfather had lucked after his muny tha would never hev hed to werk."

An indication of Grandfather's wealth was a heavy silver pocket watch, specially made for him with an inscription on the face:

'Thomas Marsland, Chipping'.

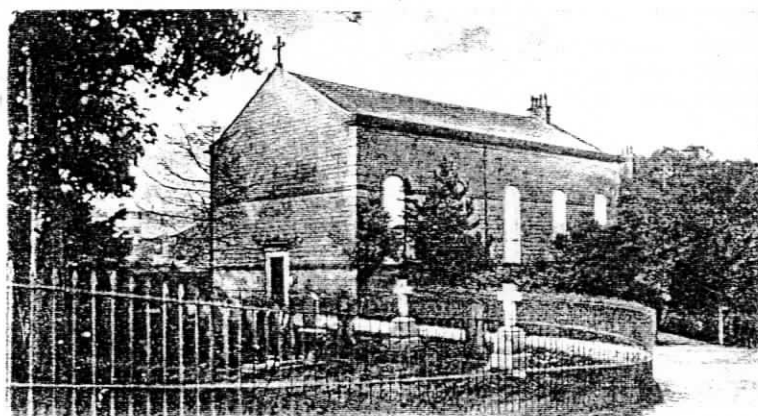


Thomas Marsland, my Grandfather.
1847-1908

The source of his wealth was unknown to any of our relatives. On his death in 1908 he left an estate of about £2000. A tidy sum in those days, probably worth about £300,000 in 1991. So the question was ever present. How much money did he inherit? From whom? etc.

Our family regarded Chipping as a magical and mysterious place that held many answers. We felt that we ought to live there, alas family finances, in the 1920's and 1930's did not permit. Grandfather's estate of £2,000 had been shared between eight children.

Visits to the old graveyard at St Mary's R.C. Church, Chipping, by cycle, were often made in summertime. The headstone of the grave of my Grandfather and Grandmother, also bore the name of William Marsland and Ann Marsland, Great Grandparents. Other gravestones bore Marsland names. We knew only that they were in some way related. We knew of the existence of a Jim Marsland of Whitewell, a Water Bailiff, as his name appeared occasionally in the Lancashire Daily Post.



St. Mary's Catholic Church Chipping



Our Marsland family gravestone
in the old burial ground
at St Mary's, Chipping.