

WILLIAM PUTT (9/10)

John and Sarah Putt produced two children called William. The first "William" was baptised on 4th December 1808, and was buried 9 days later on 15th December 1808 in Cassington. Their next child was also a boy, and he was baptised William on 29th October 1809 in Cassington. Like his brothers, he learned a trade and became a Shoemaker. We know little of his early life, but we certainly know a great deal about his later life!

He met Mary Ann Moore from Oxford and married her at Great Milton on 9th December 1832. It is probable he fathered a daughter with Mary Ann before their marriage, as Sarah Putt Moore was baptised on 5th January 1831 in St. Giles, Oxford. She appears on the 1841 census living in Wheatley, aged 10, living with William Putt, 30, a Shoemaker, his wife Mary, 33, and two other children, Harriet aged 8, and Hannah aged 5, who is believed to die during the summer of 1844.



Great Milton parish church

Life seems to be eventful for William. On 8th July 1837 he was taken before the Bullingdon Petty Sessions at Oxford on a charge of wilful damage. Together with two others, William Brandon and Samuel Slatter, he was charged that on 4th July at Wheatley they did damage certain wearing apparel, the property of Thomas Hunt, then being in his Beer Shop and then and there injured to the amount of 3s. All three were convicted by Mr. Matthews and were fined 3s. to be paid to the injured party, plus 22s.6d. in costs, and in default of immediate payment, to be imprisoned in the House of Correction for one month. Sadly the case does not appear to have been reported in the local press, so we are left without knowing the type of damage he caused!

We also know that William Putt became part of the Wheatley Morris Men for a time, together with his brother Nathaniel, and son George. He was recorded as being born in 1809 and was a Shoemaker. The Wheatley Morris were a very well-regarded side and were recorded as dancing at Whitsuntide.

William Putt was also involved in the formation of a Non-Conformist Meeting House in Wheatley, constructed c. 1842 and later additions, formed from a Barn. A membership list indicates William joined on 14th March 1843, His

wife was admitted on 1st December 1844. Their daughter, Hannah, was one of the first to be baptised at the new Meeting House on 26th April 1846, aged 1 month.



A list of property in Wheatley in 1845 states that William Putt lived in house 171, with 2V4 perch of land, value £1.8s.4d, owned by Peter Barham. William Putt was appointed Messenger from Wheatley to Garsington in the period 26th July to 5th August 1846. Around this time, there were some happy occasions for the family as their first child, Sarah Moore, married Isaac Munt in 1848.

On the 1851 census William, now aged 41, is working as a Shoemaker and a Messenger, employing two men. The census states incorrectly that he was born in Garsington. His wife, Mary A. is now aged 44, and says she was born in Horspath. Their family has grown to include William 9, George 7, Hannah 5, Thomas 3 and Stephen aged 1 week, all born in Wheatley. The two employees, George Smith, 21, and John Smith, 18, are both Journeyman Shoemakers.

William appears in the 1852 Oxford Directory listed as William Putt, Shoemaker, Wheatley.

Sadly, Mary Ann Putt becomes ill and William Munt, the Relieving Officer of Wheatley, takes her case to the Justices, the Rt. Hon. Joseph Warner Henley, M.P. and John Henry Ashhurst Esq, who call upon William Rusher, Surgeon of Oxford, to examine her. She is seen by him on 22nd March 1856 at his premises at 48 High Street, Oxford. The certificate confirms that Mary Ann is married and is a Shoebinder, living at Wheatley. She is a religious dissenter. This was her first attack and had lasted for 7 weeks. She was aged 49 and had been treated at Wheatley by Mr. Cogan. The cause was described as "the critical period of her life". She was not subject to epilepsy, but was suicidal and a danger to others. She had not been previously confined in a mental Institution. She was not chargeable to the Headington Union. Her next of kin was her husband, William Putt. The attention of the Relieving Officer was directed to this case by notice from the Magistrates of her being improperly taken care of by her friends. Mr. Rusher described having personally examined Mary Ann he found her in a desponding and melancholy state of mind, answering his questions unwillingly and irrationally. Her daughter, Sarah Munt, told him that she is restless and sleepless, dangerous and mischievous. The daughter said that her mother had been living in comfortable circumstances and sufficiency of food. She had a slow fever 7 weeks ago and was attended by Mr. Cogan. In the first week of fever she was taken with delirium, using abusive language to her husband. The shivering took place before insanity. She had a cough and expectoration as at present. Has had her head shaved and blistered and the husband tried occasionally for violence. She has seized knives and behaved manically. On the recommendation of the Rector of the Parish, the daughter went to the Magistrates to say that her mother was insufficiently taken care of. Mr. Cogan certificated on 19th March 1856 that she was not under proper care or control and from the circumstances of the family, she is neglected but not treated cruelly. Has not attempted to injure herself (?) but has behaved with dangerous violence to her husband and children with a knife and also towards a man employed by him in his business. Accordingly, she was declared a person of unsound mind and the Justices ordered that having been described as a lunatic and not under proper care and control and neglected by the persons having charge of her, she was a proper person to be taken charge of and detained under care and treatment as a patient at the Littlemore Asylum. On admission, on 22nd March 1856, Mary Ann became patient number 1200.

The Board of Guardians of the Headington Union record in their minutes of 20th March 1856 that it was "ordered that William Putt of Wheatley be summoned before the Magistrates to contribute towards the cost of maintaining his wife in the Lunatic Asylum and it was the unanimous feeling of the Board that the Bench should be asked to make an order for payment of at least 6s. per week." The matter was obviously taken very serious as William Putt of Wheatley was charged at the Bullingdon Petty Sessions on 30th November 1856 with refusing and neglecting to maintain his wife, Mary Ann Putt, whereby she became chargeable to the Headington Union. The Oxford Chronicle of 6th December 1856 described the defendant's wife as an inmate of the Littlemore Lunatic Asylum, where she had been maintained since 22nd March last at great expense to the Headington Union, which had paid £7.11s.0d. on 30th June and a further sum of £4.18s.0d. for the Michaelmas Quarter. The Relieving Officer for the parish of Wheatley was called before the Court

to prove that the defendant was well able to contribute towards his wife's support. The Relieving Officer said that Putt was employed by the Post Office at Wheatley to carry letters from that place to Cuddesdon and Garsington, for which he received 12s. a week. In addition to that income, he was a shoemaker by trade at which he worked himself and kept his two sons, one 12 and the other 14 years of age, generally employed and sometimes also a Journeyman. He likewise kept some pigs and several cows, which latter were valued at £60. He disposed of one 6 or 7 weeks ago for £7.1 Os.Od. The milk from the cows was sold retail in the village, and in addition to these multifarious occupations, the defendant added a piece of allotment land, which was also a source of income. That he was doing a considerable trade in shoemaking was clear from the fact that he owed upwards of £50 for leather to traders in Oxford and Abingdon and there is every reason to believe that his credit was good. In defence, William Putt denied that he was able to contribute anything towards his wife's support. He said he had 5 children and was obliged to engage a woman to attend to his household affairs. He also said that he was in debt and unable to pay his way. The Magistrates, however, thought he was in a position to pay and ordered him to contribute 4s. a week, subject to formal proof of the chargeability being given next week. At the following Court hearing on 6th December, the Magistrates confirmed the order for William to pay 4s. per week.

On admission, it was noted that during the last month Mary Ann Putt has not been confined to her bed but has been at the daughter's house in the day time tied to the table or chair, and conducted to and from home by neighbours. Is much bruised. Has been knocked down by the fists of the man whom she attacked. On admission she is very much bruised all down the right leg, on the upper arm and both eyes are bruised. Is thin. Looks about her room as if frightened; expression wild. Rather dark complexion. High cheek bones. Breathing short and difficult. Says she has no pain. Was unwilling to be touched and more so to be moved. Examination of the chest impossible. Would not cover herself up. Appetite fairly good. During the night she was restless and would not remain in bed, being out of bed naked, standing near the door nearly the whole night. On 23rd March 1856 it was reported that this morning she comes out of the room naked and catches hold of the first person she meets in a determined and maniacal manner. The grasp being almost convulsive. The expression more wild and eyes staring. She does not speak or move her lips. Took her breakfast. To be dressed in ticking. To be in seclusion for a time. Took her medicine. Was in seclusion from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m. when she was put into bed, being at the time standing against the door. She remained in bed. The door was shut but not Locked. She was quiet the rest of the day. Took her medicine and food. Fair sleep during the night. 24th March 1856. Is quiet. Lying down in bed. Has ticking dress on. Appetite good. Takes her medicine after a great deal of persuasion. Bowels open. Has passed her urine. Pulse 60 somewhat irregular not intermittent. Has emphysema of both lungs. Would not allow me to use the stethoscope. She shrinks from and appears afraid of it as if she fancied it was a knife. 27th March 1856. Has ticking dress on. Is more quiet. Is wet and dirty. Is crying a little about going home. Some cough, scanty frothy sputa. 8th April 1856. Restless night. Morphia. 12th April 1856. No sleep the last 2 nights. Appetite fair. Still has her dress tied up behind. Does not like to be touched. Fights and quarrels with other patients. Gets close to the door and prevents people passing either way. Says she is better. 23rd April 1856. Morphia 30 drops in the morning and 60 at night. Pulls her teeth about until they come out. 25th July 1856. Is on Indian rubber bed on account of (slough?) on hip. Continue morphia drops 30. 26th November 1856. Diarrhoea. 28th November 1856. Appetite good. Never takes meat. No purging. 18th March 1857. Diarrhoea. 19th March 1857. Still purged through the night. Loss of appetite. 23rd March 1857. Purging continues but not so bad. 25th March 1857. The same. 27th March 1857. Enema. 28th March 1857. Some pain in the abdomen which is not blown. Less purging. Is weaker. Has taken milk and beef tea. 29th March 1857. Died at 7 p.m. 30th March 1857. Examined at 12 a.m. Heart rather large. Lungs emphysematous, right the worst. Left collapsed more than ordinarily the case in this Asylum.

Whether William paid the costs of his wife's care in the Asylum is not recorded, but the records show that Mary Ann Putt died, aged 50, in Littlemore Asylum on 29th March 1857 of diarrhoea and general paralysis. She never returned to her home after admission. She was buried in Wheatley churchyard.

After the death of Mary Ann, the 1861 census finds William Putt, now aged 51, described as a Rural Post Messenger and Master Shoemaker, living in Wheatley with William 19, Hannah 15, Thomas 13 and Stephen 10. Two of the children are listed as Journeymen (presumably William and Thomas) but the wording actually is against Hannah's name! They also have a visitor in the home, Ann Brooks, 22, single, and a general servant.

On 21st September 1863 at Cowley parish church, William Putt marries for the second time to Ellen Elizabeth Collins from Oxford. Both parties signed the register.

The Garsington Benefits Society was established to help members who were sick, lame, blind and with a sum payable on death. Meetings were held at the Red Lion Inn, Garsington. The rules were quite strict and members would not be admitted below the age of 16 or above the age of 40 (perhaps he lied about his age!). No-one on the sick list should be absent from his home between sunset and sunrise or go more than 3 miles from his home during the day, without leave from the Society. A medical attendant should be sent in a certificate to support a claim and members could receive 10s.6d. per week if he paid 1s.6d. per week for 24 weeks, then 5s.3d. as long as the illness continued. Burial money was paid, £2 on a death, unless the death was by sentence of the law or by his own hands. All members residing within 3 miles should attend the funeral or forfeit 1 s. to be paid to the Society. William Putt joined during the period April to June 1852 and paid the 3s.3d. joining fee. A record of his payments continues through 1852 to 1858, in which year he is on the Committee of the Society. This was the year his son, William Putt Junior, also paid his 3s.3d. to join. There are continuing notes of monies paid and several entries of 3s.3d. "Freedom Money". As William aged, it becomes apparent that he benefitted from the support of the Society, with records of 19s. paid in 1867, and 1s.6d. paid to him during the period October to December 1873. The final entry in his name is money paid by the Stewards to



William Putt from 4th December 1876 until May 20th 1877, totalling £4.9s.2d. which seems to cover a period of ill health and then money for his funeral.



The household does not seem to be a happy one as the first of several cases of assault was reported in the Oxford Journal of 23rd January 1864. This case was heard at the Bullingdon Petty Sessions held at County Hall on 16th January 1864, when William Putt junior of Wheatley, Shoemaker, was charged with assaulting Ellen Putt, his step-mother on 12th January. The defendant spat in her face but it appeared that an angry feeling had subsisted between them since his father's second marriage. The case was dismissed with a caution.

The list of worshipers at the Congregational Church was updated c.1864, and William's name was excluded by non-attendance. His first wife's entry on the updated list states "dead".

Both William Putt senior and his second wife, Ellen, were involved in another Court case the following year. The Oxford Times of 19th August 1865, reports that William Dover, Labourer, was charged with stealing a shirt value 4s. at Shotover, belonging to Thomas Shephard. Rosanna, the wife, proved missing the shirt on 1st February. It was removed from a clothes line in the garden. The accused became "scarce" to evade apprehension. William Putt purchased a shirt off Dover and he believed this to be the same. Ellen Putt, wife of William Putt, said she knew the garment by a particular rent in the back and she was positive Dover brought it there in February. Police Constable Thomas Lawton gave information as to gaining possession of the shirt. Dover pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 2 months' hard labour.

More marital discord was reported in the Oxford Chronicle in March 1866. William Putt, Shoemaker, was charged at the Bullingdon Petty Sessions with assaulting Ellen Putt at Wheatley on 27th February 1866. The case was dismissed. Then on 9th November 1867, the Oxford times reports that both William Putt senior and William Putt junior of Wheatley were charged on remand at the Bullingdon Sessions with assaulting Ellen Putt at Wheatley on 24th October 1867. The complainant said that when William Putt senior came home on the day in question, he struck her on the head and face. The son, William Putt junior, threw a bucket of water over her. They had for some time past been in the habit of ill-using her. The father embraced every opportunity of making his son annoy her. She had also been kept without food and money. Subsequent evidence that was given proved that the complainant came home in a state of intoxication and on seeing her husband, she made use of abusive and disgusting epithets. The son coming in at the time she first tried to throw the water over him, but he succeeded in throwing it over her, the ablution having done her good. The Magistrates desired the defendants not to repeat the offence, as whatever provocation was given, did not

justify them in striking her. The case was dismissed.

A further case was heard at County Hall, Oxford, before the Magistrates on 5th November 1870, was recorded in the Oxford Chronicle, when William Putt junior of Wheatley, Shoemaker, was examined for assaulting Ellen Putt on 26th October 1870. The complainant said that the young man's father, her husband, pushed her out of doors. As she wore a thin dress. She became saturated with rain. She broke some of the panes

of the shop window in order to gain admission. When in the shop, the defendant struck her twice on the chest and twice on the shoulder. The father and sons were all against her. She had three little children and left home fearing that murder would be committed. In reply to the Chairman, the complainant said she had not struck her son-in-law first. The quarrel arose from jealousy because the father had married her and she now appealed to the Bench for protection, considering that her life was in danger. The defence was that Mrs. Putt came home intoxicated and broke 10 panes of glass. The defendant pushed her out of the shop. The complainant said that she did not break the window before she was assaulted. Thomas Putt said they were at work in the shop when the defendant came in in the state described by his brother William, who pushed her with his open hand. The husband was not called and the summons was dismissed.

The couple appear on the 1871 census living in Wheatley. William Putt is now aged 61, and his wife Ellen is aged 42, born Oxford. They have produced four further children, Alice aged 6, Ellen 4, Harriet 2, and Maud aged 2 months, all born in Wheatley.

Not long after the census, Ellen Putt becomes a patient at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford. A further report lists her as patient number 454 and describes a tracheotomy performed by Mr. Symonds. The record states: Ellen Putt, aged 42 years, married and residing at Wheatley, was re-admitted on 24th June 1871. She had previously been in the Infirmary about a month since, but after a few days, declined to stay longer. She complained then of pain about the thyroid cartilage; difficulty in breathing and a general hoarseness of voice. Examination with the laryngoscope gave her so much distress that nothing satisfactory could be seen. Since leaving the Infirmary, her symptoms have rapidly increased in severity with intense laryngeal distress. She has not been able to swallow food for some time and has been fed by enema. The symptoms became more urgent and a tracheotomy was performed at 9.30 p.m. without apparently affording her much relief. There was less than the usual trouble in reaching and dividing the trachea and no haemorrhage at the time of operation. The tube came out about an hour after the operation, but was immediately replaced and she lingered on until 7 the following morning. A post mortem was carried out. She died on 25th June 1871 in the Radcliffe Infirmary, the cause given as a malignant tumour in larynx and oesophagus. Little Maud herself died shortly after her mother.

William was restored to the Congregational Church on 1st April 1877 and it is noted he "Died, Trusting in Jesus, on 13th December 1879 aged 70." He died at Wheatley and was buried in the churchyard on 17th December. No will has been traced.