

V BRIDGE - BIFRONS

The Brook Taylors

The Taylor family lived at Bifrons after the Bargraves and before the Conynghams took possession in 1820 and two of the family are recorded on plaques on the walls on the right at the entrance to Patricbourne Church, Herbert and his brothers who were the sons of the Reverend Edward Taylor, vicar of Patricbourne from 1734 - 1739. His grandfather John had bought the estate in 1720, and the family can be traced back a generation before when Nathaniel Taylor represented Bedfordshire at Westminster under Cromwell's Government. John's son Brook was a considerable mathematician of his generation and worked with Kepler on the laws of

The Brook Taylors (Cont'd.)

planetary motion and invented Taylor's Theory which is a calculus theory on finite differences still used today in higher mathematics; he travelled extensively in France and having been made a Fellow of the Royal Society visited Paris and worked with d'Alembert on the theory of refraction; he succeeded to his father's estate in 1720 but he is buried at St. Anne's Church, Soho; he has been described as one of the great mathematicians after Newton of his period. His son was in the Diplomatic Service and acted as British Minister to the Court of Hesse Cassel, Wurtemberg and Munich and was Ambassador at Berlin from 1828 - 1831; ironically his portrait was destroyed in an English air raid on Berlin in the last war; however the brother Herbert rose to even greater heights and after a long career in the Army - he was at the battle of Tournai in 1795, the siege of Antwerp. A year later he became private secretary to Queen Charlotte and represented Windsor in parliament and became Secretary to the Duke of Wellington; he ended his career under Lord Palmerston as under secretary of State for war and he was given a State pension of £1,000 per year; he retired to Cannes in the South of France and died at Rome in 1840 and his embalmed body was brought back to the Chapel of St. Katherine's Hospital, Regents's Park where he had been Master.

None of the family live in the district now. A branch of the family made a considerable fortune in railways in the Argentine and one of them was not an inconsiderable actor in the 1920's with Claude Hulbert and those who are avid watchers of BBC 2, will know Nigel Brook Taylor's late night review.

Sources: United Services Journal,
Edinburgh Review, October, 1838,
Foreign Office.

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