

Thomas Andros Journals - An Overview

Written by Geoffrey Andrews, the four times grandson of Thomas Andros

2020

1817
Jan 4th Written to William. I don't know if the original letter was not dated the 6th
7th Subscribed at the Rooms for Mr. Andros & myself & for Kate & p^r. £2.6.6
in presence of Mr. J. Tucker & of Mr. Swann, to Mr. Swan who had my family
were good customers. I had before subscribed for £4, he put his name down, & I paid.
14th Paid Dimant the Chatham Baker £2.6.6 the Thursday
ie the last loaf ^{paid for} ~~had~~ ^{the} day, 9th Jan^y 1817
Chatham Baker
15th Had 6 Gals & 2 Pints of Rum from M^r Hallett of Ham-mote.
this day for which his bill is as follows, Jan 15. 1817 - 6 Gal. 2 p. Jam. Ham-mote // £ 5.6.3
filled 30 bottles. Cask 0.8. -
£ 5.14.3

20th Monday. Last night it has blown a most ^{violent} ~~tremendous~~ Gale of wind, and with a
Cobb. tremendous Sea, has struck down about 100 yards of the Cobb Wall
or Pier, that part west, and facing the mouth or entrance into the Cobb or
Harbour, the damage was done chiefly at about 8 o'clock this morning,
at the highest of one of the highest Tides here, being three days after the new-moon.
The sea has also nearly finished the destruction of the wall built a few years
ago to support a walk from Lyme to the Cobb. ~~Nearly~~ destroyed most of
the wall supporting the walk called the Square, and wholly
destroyed the end of this ^{walk} ~~walk~~ ^{below the} ~~below the~~ ^{South-east} ~~end of the Rooms,~~
to the brink of the foundation walls of the long Room ^{& Corner of the Card Room}
^{on the east of the long Room} ~~increased the damage~~ ^{before} sustained by the wall or break water, & left
~~the~~ ~~end of the~~ ~~walk~~ ~~leaving~~ ~~an~~ ~~opening~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~walk~~ ~~leading~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~Beach~~ ~~there~~ ~~had~~
to the Beach, a huge cavity extending the whole length of the long Room, ^{about}
^{by reaching} ~~about~~ ~~45,~~ ~~or~~ ~~50,~~ yards of the Davies Wall supporting
the walk leading ^{from} to the bottom of butter Market Street, to the Baths.
^{carrying away about fifty feet of the wall} ~~the~~ ~~walk~~ ~~leading~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~Baths~~.
The wind blew chiefly from the S.S.W. It came from the S.E. to the S.W.

26th Friday. Pufford to trim & tie the Trees.
30th Thursday Pufford
31st Friday Pufford. ^{p. him} Sent a parcel containing a pair of sheets to Mr. Andros under
the care of George Tucker who went by the mail coach.
Feb 4th
Sunday 5th Pufford

Thomas Andros was born 13th August 1755 in Guernsey and died 5th November 1831 at Lyme Regis. For most of this time he recorded in three journals, each of different sizes, commencing in 1788. He particularly recorded the daily events of his life for the 33 years he lived with his family at Lyme Regis. In total the journals cover a period of 43 years.

He writes with varying degrees of neatness. Sometimes neatly, if something is particularly of importance, using a newly sharpened quill pen dipped into his home made ink, (for which he gives the recipe). Sometimes the pen was clearly in need of repair. It is easy to imagine him sitting at his desk or dining table writing by the light of a candle recording particular events of the day. These are just that - journals of events, he does not record his feelings or his views on life. This is nineteenth century life as it happened.

The Andros family were eminent in Guernsey and had been for centuries. A number of members had been Bailiff (the top political office) and many had been Jurats of the Royal Court. They were staunchly royalist and prominent in the English Stuart Court. Sir Edmund Andros (1637 -1714) had been separately Governor of New York, The Dominion of New England and also Virginia under three monarchs. He had earlier served against the French in the West Indies. Andros Island in the Bahamas is named after him.⁴ Prior to this, his father had been Marshall of Ceremonies to Charles 1st and had been besieged for nine years in Castle Cornet during the Civil War. This was the last stronghold to surrender to the Parliamentarians, the terms offered allowed the besieged to leave the castle and island fully armed. The Andros family had then gone into exile in Holland until the restoration.

The Channel Islands are divided into Fiefs (Manors) and the lord of each is a Seigneur. Thomas was Seigneur de Anneville the oldest fief and also of some minor fiefs. He lived at the estate of Normanville, inherited from his father, and kept this property throughout his life. He was Colonel of the Blue Regiment of militia, as was his father and grandfather before him. There was a duality in the relationship with France, just a few miles away, where there was travel and trading but also for centuries the possibility of invasion. This made the militias a central part of island life for everyone. One third of the population were in the militia. During English wars with France importing French wine was illegal into England. The trading proximity to France made Guernsey the source of much of the contraband wine and brandy for the smugglers of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset.

In 1780, at the age of 25 whilst walking in St Peter Port with two young ladies, he had been insulted by the actions of a garrison soldier, Kenneth Beauvais. To resolve this affront Thomas challenged Beauvais to a duel. By that date the practice of duelling had already been made illegal, regardless of which, the duel took place with pistols the following day, September 23rd. Beauvais was wounded in the right arm and thorax, injuries from which he died the next day. Thomas was arrested, tried and sentenced to prison in Castle Cornet. For what in other circumstances would be considered murder or at least manslaughter, his sentence was just one month in prison for disobeying the law. The fact that someone had been killed in the pursuit of honour seems to have been of little consequence.¹

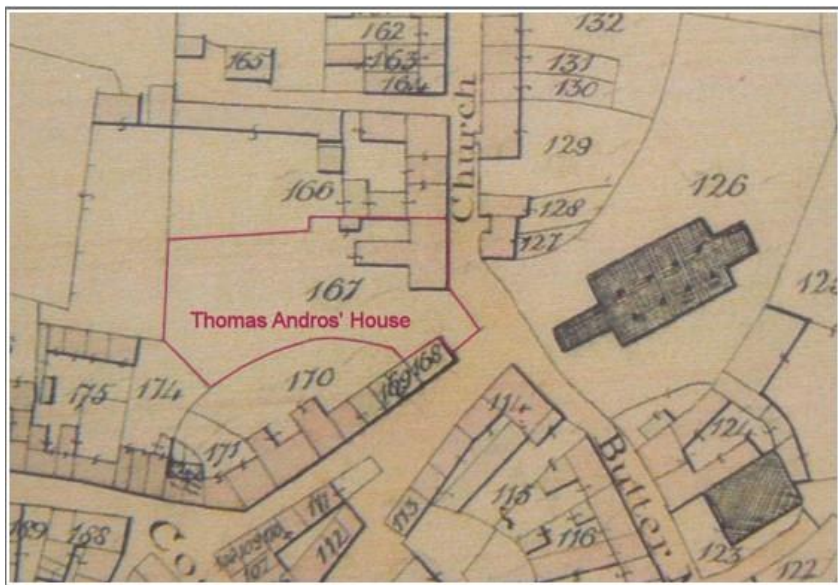
Thomas had trained as a lawyer and became an advocate presenting cases to the Royal Court. His strong sense of injustice came forward as an independent minded attorney. He undertook a number of cases of complaint, on behalf of clients, against the then autocratic Bailiff, William Le Marchant. One of these cases went as far as the Privy Council in London. However, this was not the way to further a career in the law. Subsequently the Bailiff made his life as an advocate impossible and suspended him. Thomas appealed to the King in Council in 1779 where the suspension was ruled to be illegal. Thomas could have resumed, however, in practice as he could probably have had difficulty obtaining fair verdicts for his clients, he left the legal profession.²

When his father had died at Normanville in 1788, Thomas inherited the estate. The first journal, starting that year, is written almost entirely in French. It was originally an account book in which are recorded the production and sales of cider (Cidre) from the orchards and cider press at Normanville. The production of cider was well established by that date. However, within a few years cider production seems to have ceased.

Then, without any preamble whatsoever, in 1798 the journals suddenly change to being entirely written in English and remain so thereafter. On July 6th that year having rented out the Normanville house and estate, meticulously recording the contents of his wine cellar for the safe keeping by a friend, at age 43 he boarded Captain Urquart's cutter for Lyme Regis. With him were his wife, Elizabeth (38), his sons Thomas (9), John (7), Charles (5) William (2), daughter Catherine (just 3 months old), a servant Elizabeth Gallienne, some of his household goods....and his horse Bess. He records that after a passage of fourteen hours at a cost of £7.9s 6d, including tips to the officers, crew and cabin boy, they arrive to start their new lives at what is now No 14 Church Street, Lyme Regis.

Clearly, he must have made earlier visits to arrange a new home in Lyme but there are no mentions of this in his journals. He seems quite familiar with the area as on 16th he goes to Charmouth to order new boots at 25 shillings. On 18th Bess is shod. On 30th the boys, Thomas and John, are settled into Mr Blackmore's school in Lyme. Later, as the children grow, they are sent to various boarding schools within Dorset, each noted in detail with the curriculum they offered.

The house, which was initially rented from his new neighbour Mr Poole, substantially still stands opposite to the church. A century later it was converted into the masters' house for the National School and still bears that name on the front gable. However, the garden as seen today is very considerably smaller than in 1798. It then included all of the land to the junction of Church Street and Monmouth Street. It bordered all of the Monmouth Street properties and included the two detached properties now next to the house and the land upon which the school was built.⁶



The house was possibly thatched at the time, as some re-thatching is later recorded. It may originally have had rooms in the attic, as in total he was required to pay Window Tax on fifteen windows. We know from the journals that at least some of the housemaids lived in the house.

Although initially rented for seven years from Mr Poole, Thomas Andros purchased the house from him in March 1805 and later purchased an additional piece of land. The total cost being £700. The following year, he bought a smaller house opposite to his own in Church Street from Mr Tribbett for £200.

The smaller house in Church Street was rented out. Eventually it was rented to Henry Bennett, the church organist, who we read in 1822 made an unusual request. He asked permission to cut a hole in the dining room ceiling. The reason being that the pipes of a new organ he had just bought were too tall to fit into the room. Thomas agreed.

There were always two servants at the house, a cook and a housemaid. Over the years there are dozens of, presumably local, women and girls all of whom are named. Their date of arrival, departure and pay is all meticulously recorded. Some on trial and not suitable, some stay for some time, others leave of their own accord. Always there is a meticulous note of wages due and paid. A cook 6 guineas per year, tea included, a maid £5 per year.

Although referred to as Thomas Andros' Journal, it was his wife Elizabeth who ran the house. All the entries for the arrival, wages and departing of servants are in her hand as is a list of their duties and some deliveries. She also notes a few recipes. Additionally, she takes over entries in the journals when Thomas is away from home.

In February 1820 Thomas' handwriting is especially neat and precise, the lawyer has resurfaced. Mrs Andros has been given some gossip by Mr Poole which strikes directly at home. Thomas and his wife interview an unfortunate young housemaid, whom it is found, has become pregnant. Thomas records the conversation with her precisely. How long has she been pregnant? Who was the father? Will he marry her? The girl is reluctant to say but eventually his name is revealed. He is a local boy who has been 'after her for four years' but it is not known if they later married. The decision is made that she must leave the house that day. That evening, when she leaves, she is given a little more money than the wages which she is owed.

Then there was Robert Bridle. Year after year we read of Bridle regularly working in the garden or about other work. 'Bridle put in potatoes'. 'Bridle cut asparagus' 'Bridle working on path'. His wages were 2 shillings and six pence per day. Robert Bridle was a very useful fellow to know. He died in 1828 after both he and his wife had been unwell for a few days. His son, James Bridle took the place as gardener, but the son was not as reliable as his father, so he was replaced with William Martin at 2 shillings per day and remained. There is also an extensive list of plants bought and how much some cost. The house itself was not neglected as over the years there are numerous entries for 'plaistering', painting or other repairs. 2300 bricks delivered for new chimneys.

Not only people come and go. Deliveries of coal, sea weed, manure and it has to be said, large deliveries of wine, brandy and beer are also recorded.

We read of many local events. The hurricane of 1827. The fire which destroyed 42 houses. What may have been an undersea subsidence which causes the water to recede much further than usual, return, recede and return again. There are Balls, events and newspapers to be read at the Assembly Rooms. The building of the new Cob. He also notes some major national events, the price of corn. Wm. Pitt proposes in parliament a 10% tax on income. The battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Also in that year he pays £15 guineas for pew No.24 near the south door of the church (three times the maids annual salary). Postage is 3d for up to 30 miles from the Post Office. 10d up to 300 miles.....

He also kept a chart recording his children's height each year, we can see how tall they were at any age up to being fully grown. When they eventually leave home for their own lives, he and his wife record the many occasions when they return to visit and when they leave. Sometimes the name of the coach by which they travelled. We can read their every coming and going. They were essentially a close caring family.

Transport was not easy in those days. We read of his son, Charles, carrying his bags to Charmouth along the dark, now disappeared, coast road to catch the 1 a.m. coach to Portsmouth as it passed through. On at least one occasion it was full. He had to return home and try again the following night. Thomas made a visit to Guernsey, via Weymouth, a passage which took 30 hours, the return was a little faster at 28 hours.

Thomas Andros remained in generally good health and active until complaining for a few days of breathlessness. He died in bed on the morning of 15th November 1831. He is buried in a small coffin shaped tomb, positioned on the opposite side of the south door of the Church where he had his pew. The now illegible writing on the top of his tomb is recorded in the last journal to once have read:

“Sacred to the memory of Thomas Andros Esq. of the island of Guernsey and many years resident in this Town. Born 13th August 1755 Died 15th November 1831”

Only Thomas Andros remains in Lyme Regis.

What became of them all? As the family grew older the course of the children's adult lives became typical of many families of their day.

The Law: Young Thomas trained to be a lawyer as his father had been. He had his own practice in London before eventually moving to Guernsey, there marrying the daughter of Sir Peter de Havilland who had been a Bailiff of Guernsey. He entered public life and continued to occasionally practice law in the island. This caused some consternation, as all legal proceedings were then still conducted in French, which he did not speak. The Royal Court reluctantly had to conduct itself in English in cases where he was involved. He lived at the family home of Normanville where he died in 1853 aged 64.

The Church: John was a Fellow at Pembroke College Oxford where he gained a Master's degree and entered the church. He did not marry but remained as a priest at Malmesbury Abbey. There is one, of just a few plaques, at the rear of the nave testifying to his good caring nature. He died at Malmesbury in 1842 age 51 and is buried there.

The Navy: We read that in August 1806 Thomas takes his little son Charles to Plymouth to join the Navy. He is left on board HMS Canopus a 120 gun ship. Thomas writes “I reached the ship about three o'clock spoken with Captain Shortland, staid about half an hour on board and I have left my Dear Boy on board her”. Charles was just 13 years old. Within six months the Canopus was part of a squadron in an engagement with the Turks in the Dardanelles. Thomas lists all those killed and wounded as had been reported in the newspaper. ‘43 killed, 235 wounded’. 13 year old Charles is not one of them. Charles served in many ships, including HMS Victory, and battles eventually retiring from the navy as a Commander. He lived again at home in Lyme, taking part in the local life and being in the cast of at least two plays at the Assembly Rooms. His Lieutenants uniform on display at Guernsey Maritime Museum shows his short height and slight stature. He was 5'4" tall according to the journal, probably not a disadvantage between decks on Royal Navy ships. Eventually he also returned to Guernsey where he married and had three sons, living a comfortable life at Colborne Place. He died in 1879 aged 85.

The Army: William became a soldier in the British Army serving initially in India, where he fought in numerous conflicts. In 1819 he returned home due to illness aboard a West India Company ship. He, like his father had a strong sense of injustice and intervened on behalf of a fellow passenger whom the captain, Anstice, had been 'misusing'. This resulted in William being confined to his eight foot square cabin, in the tropical heat for the remainder of the voyage with only a few hours respite on the deck. As his father had previously done so many years earlier William challenged Captain Anstice to a duel which took place on the island of St Helena on 26th March 1819. (At a time when Napoleon was a prisoner there). Three shots were exchanged without effect. Again being confined to his cabin, when the ship reached London William sued Captain Anstice and was awarded £500 damages.⁵ A substantial sum in those days, sufficient to purchase a good size house. He retired with the rank of Lt Colonel living with his mother and sister in Guernsey. He records being at many parties where numerous fathers attended with their daughters, but no match made. Later, aged 47 he married his widowed cousin moving to her home at Elysian Fields, Sidmouth. He died in 1882 age 86 where until a few days before his death he swam daily in the sea.

The Dutiful Daughter: Catherine, always referred to as Kitty, stayed at home with her parents, and of whom we hear little other than she returned to Guernsey with her mother. After her mother died, she moved to London near to other family members where she died in 1881 aged 83. She never married.



Thomas Andros 1789 - 1853 and his wife
Mary de Haviland 1789 - 1854
From a portrait by William Poole 1854

There is no portrait of Thomas and Elizabeth but there is one of his eldest son and his wife.¹ In as much as an eldest son may, or may not look like his father it may be the nearest we can get to what Thomas may have looked like. His son was 5'8" tall.

After Thomas Andros died in November 1831, his wife Elizabeth, prepared to return to Guernsey to join her sons and her own family members. She left via Weymouth on 28th March 1832.

The houses in Church Street remained in the family and were rented out. In 1836 the main house was rented to 'Mrs Godrington for 5 years at £35 per annum'. The small house was rented to 'Jn Knight for 7 years at £14 per annum'. The houses passed to Thomas' eldest son, and after his death in 1853 to Charles who eventually sold them.

The journals, are today kept at the Priaulx Library in Guernsey to whom they were donated in 1949. Some years ago the library kindly copied the over six hundred pages for me, which have been bound as a family copy once again. I am grateful to the Priaulx for permission for me to photograph and format each page of the Lyme years, which, I have been pleased to give for information and research at the Lyme Regis Museum. The Priaulx and the Lyme Museum, while being modern institutions, each retain much of their own original Victorian character and charm.

The journals were continued by Thomas' wife, Elizabeth, and then until 1841 by his son William, but are finally completed in 1882 by Amias Andros, Thomas Andros' grandson. Amias was a civil engineer and also the architect who converted the Priaulx Library into what it remains today. He writes of his grandfather's journals:

"His journals contain such a complete, minute and evidently faithful narrative of every domestic incident and event in his wedded life that reading them one may almost translate oneself into the past and live over the life as he recorded it in these now deeply interesting books."

That is still so very true today, as reading the daily events of their lives they each become real people once again. Thomas Andros was my four times great grandfather.

1. Priaulx Library archives and website.
2. Peter de Havilland: Bailiff of Guernsey - Richard Hocart.
3. Lyme Regis Museum Archives. 1841 site map.
4. Bahama Islands Archive Service.
5. Trial transcript 1819. in my possession.
6. I am grateful to Graham Davies of the Lyme Museum for this information.