



## **Sue Prowse's INDISPENSABLE GUIDE TO ANCESTRAL PLACES TO VISIT IN DEVON & SOMERSET!**

Refer to the following books written by Susan Prowse Tako for further in depth details:

#1. In Search of Our Ancestors	(2013)
#2. Prowse/Prouse Deaths, Burials, Testaments & Wills	(2017)
#3. A Romp Through Eleven Centuries of Prouse/Prowse Ancestry	(2011)
#4. Gidleigh Castle Origins and Myths	(2017)
#5. Prowse Family History, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition	(1991)

**AXBRIDGE,** Somerset: **The Church of St. John the Baptist**, with its wealth of incredible Prowse Monuments & the Altar Frontal embroidered by Abigail Hooper Prowse in 1710-1717.  
(see Book #2) **The Town Hall Committee Room**, with its portrait of Thomas Prowse M.P., (1707-1767) reputedly by Gainsborough. Contact: Mrs. Vicky Brice, Axbridge Town Hall, The Square, Axbridge, BS26 2WJ, UK. Tel: 07884264033 or info@axbridge-tc.gov.uk  
See Compton House\* entry below, just on the outskirts of Axbridge, for accommodation.

**BERKLEY**, near Frome, Somerset. **St. Mary's Church** has several fine Prowse & Newborough Monuments & (see Book #2) was designed by Thomas Prowse (1707-1767), with its exquisite stucco decoration on the dome of the church. Contact address: St. Mary's Church, Berkley, Somerset, UK. BA11 5JH.

**Berkley House**, home of the Prowse family from 1670 until 1783, when it passed by marriage into the Methven family. In 1670 Thomas P's grandfather married Anne Newborough who brought this estate at Berkley to her husband. The Georgian addition to the house was designed by Abigail Hooper, Thomas's mother. Contains wonderful portraits of Thomas Prowse (almost identical to the one hanging in Axbridge Town Hall & also reputedly by Gainsborough), as well as portraits of Bishop George Hooper, Abigail's father, & of Abigail herself. In 1992, the owner of the house was a Mr. Michael Philips & his wife, a doctor. We arrived unannounced &, since this is a private home, we were lucky Mr. Philips was at home & willing to admit us! It would be wise to call or write ahead of your visit. Try the Philips at: Berkley House, Frome, Somerset, BA11 JH, UK.

**CHAGFORD**, Devon. Home of the Prowses from 1345 to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

(Books #1,2,3,4,5) **Chagford Parish Church** – **St. Michael the Archangel**. Dedicated in 1261. Present building is mainly 15<sup>th</sup> C with some 13<sup>th</sup> C work remaining. Contains the Prouz Monument of John Prowse (who died in 1664) with the multi-family Coat of Arms with its 22 quarterings displayed above it, as well as the Prouz Funereal Helmet, carried in the funeral processions of all our medieval ancestors. Contact for Chagford, Gidleigh & Throwleigh Churches is Rev. Paul Seaton-Burns, The Rectory, Chagford, Devon TQ13 8BN, UK. Email: paulsburn@btinternet.com Tel: 01647 432 880 (2013)  
Some of the churches are kept locked, so better to request admittance prior to arrival.

**Waye Barton:** built in the 1400's by John Prowse, gt-gt-gt grandson of William Le Prouz & Elena de Ponte. John died in 1636. The original home is now used as a barn but the medieval section still stands today alongside a Victorian addition. Eleven generations of the Prouz family lived here until the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Has beautiful wood paneling & a plaster inscription in the principal bedroom of the Tudor wing celebrating the marriage of the last John Prowse & his wife, Judith Southcote, in 1636. Former owner, Philip Davies also owns the Two Bridges Hotel on Dartmoor.

Contact: Sarah Howard, Waye Barton, Chagford, Newton Abbot TQ13 8DT. Tel: 44(0)7879 856778.

**COMPTON BISHOP**, Somerset: Located just outside Axbridge, the manor was in the possession of the PROWSE (see Book #2) family for over 130 years, from about 1640. The 13<sup>th</sup> century **St. Andrew's Church** is dominated by a huge marble monument to John Prowse, who died in 1688, & to his wife, Ann Newborough & to 6 of his 7 children. His son, John, who died of smallpox at the age of 34 at Westminster, London, in 1710, "in the diligent and faithful attendance at Parliament in Westminster" is buried in Axbridge.

\***Compton House** – Prowse family home from early 17<sup>th</sup> century to late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Now a bed and breakfast inn. Contact: Patricia Tallack, Compton House, Townsend, Axbridge, Somerset BS26 2AJ, UK. Tel: 44(0) 1934 733944 or Fax: 44(0) 8700 118307 or info@comptonhse.com

**CREDITON**, Devon: The Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross can be traced back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, although the (see Book #1,#2) current church dates mostly from AD1410. There are at least 4 Prouze memorials in the church, but the only one I found was to Honor Prouze, who died in 1773. Also contains an impressive monument to General Sir Redvers Buller, VC, the hero of the Relief of Ladysmith during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Boer War, the Zulu War & the Kaffir War. Charles Bertie Prowse (who died on the First Day of the Somme) had been Adjutant of Buller's battalion in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Boer War. There is also a poignant memorial to Commander Alex Spearman, RN, of the Collingwood Battalion, Royal Naval Division, who fell in action at Gallipoli in 1915 with the loss of almost his whole battalion. George Prowse was also at Gallipoli in the RNVR at this time & went on to heroic service in France before he, too, was killed just 45 days before the end of the war. See my book Prowse/Prouse Deaths, Burials, Testaments & Wills for details. Contact: Rev. Nigel Guthrie – Holy Cross Church, Church Lane, Crediton, Devon, EX17 2AH, UK. Tel. 01363 773 226.

**CROYDON HALL**, Old Cleeve, Somerset, although the mailing address today (2018) is Croydon Hall, Felons Oak, Minehead, Somerset TA24 6QT. Tel: 01984 642 200; [info@croydonhall.co.uk](mailto:info@croydonhall.co.uk) & [www.croydonhall.co.uk/welcome.html](http://www.croydonhall.co.uk/welcome.html) This house was held by 6 generations of PROWSES from the reign of Charles I (1625-1649) through successive reigns to the time of George III (1760-1820). Four previous generations lived in Ouldcliffe (Old Cleeve), Somerset, from the time of Henry V111's reign (1509-1547) when John Prouz, 3<sup>rd</sup> son of John Prouz & Jone Orchard of West Challacombe Farm, moved here. Look up the fascinating history of this large, beautiful house, which has been used as a school until recently.

**EXETER**, Devon: **Cathedral**; (Book #2) On the Nave Floor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bay (center) are two completely indecipherable stone slabs bearing the inscriptions of John Prouse, 1624, and Richard Prowse, 1657. John was an Alderman and Mayor (twice) of the City of Exeter. They were descended from the Gidleigh Castle & Waye Barton branch of the family, Richard being the gt-gt-grandson of the John Prowse who had built the lovely Tudor wing of Waye & both his father & grandfather had been mayors of Exeter in the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Head to the Cathedral Ecclesiastical Library to verify the inscription "Nf B2(c)" found on John's memorial.

Also in the cathedral above the GILBERT Tomb is the CAREW Memorial surrounded by the crests of the REDVERS and DINHAM families, both of which are found on our ancient PROUZ Arms.

Note the delightful Medieval Cathedral Cat (yes!) door – perhaps the only one of its kind in existence! Dine at The Ship Inn, just off the Cathedral Close, & favorite tavern of Sir Francis Drake!

**GIDLEIGH**, Devon: **Gidleigh Castle Ruins**: the original castle was built by Baldwin de Meules, Sheriff of Devon, (Books #2,3,4,5) and probably the great uncle of the Osbert de Cailly, who married Heudeberge de Preaux & took her name. He built it on the site of an Anglo-Saxon Manor belonging to Gytha, mother of King Harold, shortly after the 1066 Conquest of England & I conjecture that this could be how the castle came into the Prouz hands – not by marriage, but inherited from a family member. Six generations of the Probus/le Prouz family lived here from c. 1160 to the 14<sup>th</sup> century – approx.150 years. The current ruins date from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century & were built by Sir William le Prouz, who died in 1315 without a male heir to inherit & the castle went to his daughter, Alice & thus to her husband, Sir Roger de Moeles & in turn to the Damarels, & later to the Coodes, Battishalls and Gidleys.

Current owners are Michael & Swana Hardy (see below)

**Gidleigh Manor or Castle House**, Victorian in origin. Current owners, Michael & Swana Hardy can be reached at: Castle House, Gidleigh, Chagford, Devon, TQ13 8HR, UK.

Email: [hardyatgidleigh@gmail.com](mailto:hardyatgidleigh@gmail.com) or [hardy42@gmail.com](mailto:hardy42@gmail.com) They travel quite a lot so be sure to write well in advance of visiting, as the Castle is within their private property & the gate is kept locked.

**Gidleigh Church – the Church of the Holy Trinity**: Built in the early 16<sup>th</sup> C. on the site of a previous Saxon chapel & recorded in Domesday. Oldest part of present building is 13<sup>th</sup> C. Beautiful interior with Wagon ceiling & a glorious chancel screen. No tombs or memorials to the Prouz family

**GIDLEIGH:** (but at least one to the Gidley family), however there is a List of Rectors of the Church which goes back to 1259 & contains several 'Pruz' & 'Prowse' Lords of the Castle as 'Patrons' of the church. The bells in this church, which are no longer rung (as the renewal of the bell frame is beyond the financial capacity of the parish) are among the oldest in England.

Contact: see the **Chagford** listing for the name of the vicar of Gidleigh. This church is normally kept locked I am told, so be advised to contact the vicar before visiting.

**Scorhill Stone Circle**, Dartmoor: (pronounced "Scorill) & formerly known as the Gidleigh Stone Circle, one of Devon's biggest & most intact stone circles, dating back to the Bronze Age & situated on Gidleigh Common, just a short walk with a steep climb from the village of Gidleigh apparently. In misty weather, a compass is advisable! Wild Dartmoor ponies may be glimpsed here, if you are lucky! . Plenty of info on the Internet with walking maps & directions. For some background into the history of Gidleigh, read Michael Jecks' "The Mad Monk of Gidleigh" (even though the Prouz Lord of the Manor is not depicted in a flattering way!)

En route from Chagford/Moretonhamstead to Loddiswell, across wild Dartmoor, on B3212, you may want to stop off for a bite of lunch or a cream tea at the **Two Bridges Hotel**, a haven for hikers, in the center of Dartmoor, which is owned by Philip Davies, who was the former occupant of Waye Barton in Chagford, our ancient Prouz family home, when I visited in 1992.

**HONITON**, Somerset If you drive from Exeter to Yeovil, you will pass through the town of Honiton on the A30.

Although there is nothing specific about the Prowse family there, on one of the houses in the High Street is a plaque commemorating the Trafalgar Way – one of the stops made by the courier on the way from Falmouth to London bringing the news of the victory at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 & of Admiral Lord Nelson's death. The journey took 37 hours to cover 271 miles with 21 changes of horse for Captain Lepenotier of HMS Pickle, the courier. Honiton was his 8<sup>th</sup> such change. The Plaque honors the men of Honiton who fought at Trafalgar. HMS Pickle was a schooner under Captain Blackwood's command at the battle, which also included the frigate, HMS Sirius, whose captain was our William Prowse, which performed so gallantly at Trafalgar. They would have known each other well.

**LODDISWELL**, Devon: Close to Aveton Giffard & southeast of Plymouth, Loddiswell is an "untidy"village, as (Book #2) described by W. G. Hoskins, the author of 'A New Survey: Devon'! It certainly took us quite some time to locate the Church of St. Michael which is hidden in a valley and not discernible from the main road through the village. There are supposed to be up to 17 Prowse gravestones in this rather unkempt churchyard, according to Ken Rolston, a Prowse descendant, whose ancestors emigrated to New Zealand in 1884, & who was born in New Zealand, but who now lives in Hampshire, UK. We, however, were only able to locate 6 Prowse gravestones after much searching through the long grass. The church itself is a 14<sup>th</sup> C cruciform building & the Font is Norman. Contact: Rev.Neil Anthony Barker, St.Michael & All Angels, Church Lane, Modbury, Devon PL21 0QN, UK.  
Email: revbarker@btinternet.com

**LONDON:** (Bk. #1) **Battle of Britain Monument**, on the Embankment. From the Underground station you can walk beside the River Thames passing the RAF Memorial to see the BoB Monument just beyond. where you will find Pilot Officer (P/O) H.A.R. Prowse's name engraved on one of the plaques. Harry Prowse was just 18 y.o. when he joined the RAF in 1939 just in time to take part in the following year's Battle of Britain. He survived that epic battle but was shot down over France the following year & spent the remainder of WW11 in a German POW camp. After leaving the BoB Monument, walk towards Westminster and the Houses of Parliament, where several Prowses served their time as Members of Parliament, including Thomas Prowse of Axbridge.

**Westminster Abbey:** Entrance fee is 15 pounds sterling (2013), & although there was a long waiting line, it moved very quickly indeed so that we gained entrance within 15 minutes. Not to be missed is the **Battle of Britain Stained Glass Window** & look for the windows pertaining to Harry Prowse's squadrons - #266 and #603 - (you will find details in my 'In Search of Our Ancestors' book.)

**LONDON:** Photography is forbidden in the Abbey, but we asked permission of a docent who, given that Harry was a 'distant cousin', allowed us to "shoot away"!

(Bk#5, pp 183-185) Another docent also allowed us to take photos of the **Granville Sharp Memorial** in the Poets' Corner of the Abbey. Granville Sharp is known as the 'Grandfather of the British Anti-Slavery Movement', & he was the brother of Elizabeth Sharp Prowse (1733-1810) who had married George Prowse (1737-1767) of Berkley, Somerset, & Wicken Park in Northamptonshire in 1762. Granville himself has conflicting dates but most likely was born in 1735 & died in London in 1813, age 78.

(Bk#1,3,5) **Imperial War Museum:** Celebrating the Centenary of the First World War (1914-1918). Contains Lord Ashcroft's Collection of **Victoria Crosses**, including among them, our **George Prowse's VC and DCM** medals, with a computerized history about him & what he had done to be awarded this most prestigious of medals – the highest military award for gallantry. Photography is not allowed but I do have the text of the seven screens depicting his military career. Outside the entrance to the Museum are two massive Naval guns from WW1 – similar to ones that sank **Capt. Cecil Irby Prowse's** ship, HMS Queen Mary, at the Battle of Jutland in 1916. Museum is open every day from 10-6 except for the 3 days over Christmas. Nearest tube stations are at Lambeth North & Elephant & Castle. **Address:** IWM London, Lambeth Rd., London SE1 6H2, UK. **Website:** [iwm.org.uk](http://iwm.org.uk) **tel:** +44 20 7416 5000

(Bk#1) **St. Pancras New Church:** Situated on the Euston Road. Burial place of **Rear-Admiral William Prowse** of HMS Sirius, (1752-1826). He is buried in a mass grave inside the church's crypt, a choice made by wealthy folk of that parish at that time to prevent grave-robbers from stealing their bodies to sell to the local hospitals. In 2013, an American by the name of Thomas Guenther from New Orleans designed a Memorial Plaque to William Prowse which hangs inside the crypt near the mass burial site. It is a rather grim &, at the time we visited, trash-laden crypt but if you wish to see William's plaque, contact Claire Pinney at the church, who is a most gracious & charming lady. She can be reached at St. Pancras New Church, Euston Rd., London NW1 2BA, UK. Tel. 020 7388 146. Email: [office@stpancraschurch.org](mailto:office@stpancraschurch.org)

(Bk#3) **Prowse Place**, Camden Town: This tiny street in the London Borough of Camden in NW London is named for Rear Admiral of the Blue William Prowse, who commanded HMS Sirius at the Battle of Trafalgar. This is a 'quaint cobbled mews' in the hub of Camden Town, a rather risqué place and a bit out of the way. When I visited it several years ago, there was no plaque other than the Street Name on a building at the beginning of the street. A lady we talked to there was not aware of why the street was named for William (he lived there at one time), nor of which house had been his.

(Bk#1) **Tower Hill Memorial:** There are four Prowse names inscribed on this Commonwealth War Graves Commission Memorial – all served in the Merchant Navy: three from WW2 (Ivor James Prowse, Robert Cecil Prowse, who both died in 1942 & William Frederick Prowse in 1940) & one from the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915 (Thomas Edward Upton Prowse). Listing is in my book #1. This Memorial is located on the South side of the gardens of Trinity Square, close to the Tower of London. It commemorates more than 35,800 men of the Merchant Navy & the Fishing Fleet "who have no grave but the sea".

There are also numerous **Prowse burials throughout London churches:** for a listing see my book #2.

**LUSTLEIGH**, Devon: A must-see place on the itineraries of all Prowses/Prouses. A charming & picturesque village (Bks #1,2,3,4,5) with somewhat of a parking problem(!) & about 8 ¾ miles SE from Chagford just off the A382. **The Church of St. John the Baptist** built in the 13th-16<sup>th</sup> centuries contains the effigy of Sir William le Prouz, the last Lord of Gidleigh Castle, who died in 1315, in the N. aisle wall, & was erroneously buried in Holberton until his daughter, the Lady Alice le Prouz discovered the mistake & had him re-interred in his chosen location of Lustleigh. The church also contains 2 other effigies, probably also Prouzes but erroneously called 'Dinham's'. **Contact:** Rev. Simon Franklin, Church of St. John the Baptist, Lustleigh, Devon, UK. Tel: 01647 441 413

**PLYMOUTH.** Devon: The National Armada Monument, on Plymouth Hoe, with its magnificent bronze Prowse Shield of Three Lions at the base of the Monument. My grandfather instigated this legacy for our family & for future generations, & he represented our family at the Unveiling Ceremony in 1890. The Shield is there because a Captain Prowse (whom I believe to be William Prowse the Younger, grandson of John Prouse & Jone Orchard, through their 3<sup>rd</sup> son, John) was one of the captains of the Fireships which scattered the mighty Spanish Armada in 1588. Of interest to American visitors: Plymouth, is where the Pilgrims set sail from in The Mayflower for the New World in 1620.

(Bk#1, last page) **Plymouth Naval Memorial:** there are 5 Prowse names inscribed on this Memorial, two from WW1 who died at the Battle of Jutland in 1916 – Thomas Edgar Prowse, & Ernest Edwin Prouse; and three from WW11 – Arthur Joseph Prowse, 1942, Frederick John Charles Prowse, 1939, & John Ernest Soper Prowse, 1942.. Located on Plymouth Hoe, not far from the National Armada Monument.

**PROWSE FARM**, Prowse, north of Crediton & between Stockleigh English & Sanford, Devon: This 14<sup>th</sup> C thatched Book #5, p.79 house is now privately owned in 1990 by the Stoyle family. **Contact** was Mr & Mrs. P.H.Stoyle, Prowse, E.Village, Crediton, Devon. Tel. Cheriton Fitzpaine 204. The Stoyles have owned the house for 3 generations (150 years+). Prowse was formerly known as East Village & before that as Higher Dodderidge. & the Manor was home to a branch of the Prowse family for several generations from at least 1356 through the 17<sup>th</sup> C. They were descended from Sir Hugh le Prouz, 2<sup>nd</sup> son of Sir William Probus (d.1269) & Alice Ferrers. The medieval oakwood-carved ceiling of the entrance hall has the Southcott '3 Coots & a Chevron' Coat of Arms carved into it. The Southcott Arms come from the marriage of Margaret Southcott (d.1601), dau. of John Southcott, to John Prouz of Chagford(b.1520), gt-grandson of John & Jone (Orchard) Prouz through their oldest son, Lawrence.

**SOUTH BRENT**, Devon: The Church of St. Petrock lies in this village on the southern edge of Dartmoor. It is 5 miles NE of Ivybridge & next to the Devon Expressway which connects Exeter and Plymouth. In 1436, the vicar was dragged out of the church while officiating at divine service & murdered! As far as I can see, the many inscriptions belonging to the Prowse family in this church date from later times(1606-1767)!!! I have not personally visited this church but my grandfather noted around 11 inscriptions when he visited in 1900. **Contact:** Rev. David Winnington-Ingram, Tel:01364 649 070

**SOUTH PETHERTON**, Somerset: west of Yeovil on the A303 trunk road. Samuel Prowse, son of Robert Prowse & Bridget Harbin of Kingston Manor in Yeovil, & descended from Robert Prowse of Tiverton, 6<sup>th</sup> son of John Prouse & Jone Orchard, married the daughter of Nicholas Saunders, merchant, who was sent as a messenger to the Parliamentarian forces by the Royalist Commander during the English Civil War in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent a conflict. The first battle of the Civil War followed with the result that “several Prowses were transported to the plantations”.

**The Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul** in South Petherton was heavily damaged by both sides in 1644 during the English Civil War. The Memorial of Elizabeth Prowse, granddaughter of the Samuel Prowse & Catherine Saunders mentioned above, who died in 1720, age 14 y.o., lies in a side-chapel, whose door was firmly locked when I visited some years ago. There used to be a memorial to Philadelphia Way, wife of Amos Prowse, who were parents of the above Elizabeth, but her remains, according to my grandfather, were “cast forth by a barbarous vicar in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in order to make room for the foundation of a new organ”! **Contact:** Rev. Tom Handy, Church of St. Peter & St. Paul, South Petherton, Somerset, UK. Tel: 07831 982 470 or 01460 240 377.

**THROWLEIGH**, Devon: **The Church of St. Mary the Virgin**, located on the NE fringes of Dartmoor, approx. 3 miles from Chagford, dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, although the first recorded rector was in 1248. **There are no Prowse memorials in this church.** Throwleigh itself is a very charming village & was home to the Ferrers family & of Sir Fulk Ferrers, whose daughter, Alice, married **Sir William Probus** & brought the land into the Prouz holdings. Their son, **Sir William le Prouz**, was the last Lord of Gidleigh Castle, & granted Throwleigh to his younger brother, William Prouz – my direct ancestor. Church is usually kept locked. **Contact** Rev. Paul Seaton-Burns, The Rectory, Chagford, Devon TQ13 8BW, UK before visiting. Tel. 01647 432 880. Email: paulsburn@btinternet.com

**TIVERTON**, Devon: on the A377-A396 roads, 15 miles North of Exeter. Our family's most intriguing link to this ancient town is through Richarda Prowse Walrond, daughter of John Prowse of Tiverton, clothier (1516-1585), who married secondly, the Lord of Tiverton Castle, Roger Giffard, & gave him his heir, George Giffard. Although there seems to have been a thriving community of Prowses in Tiverton, apparently very little remains of their Memorials in **St. Peter's Church**, although written records exist. **Tiverton Castle**, founded in the early 12<sup>th</sup> C. by Richard de Redvers (our 3<sup>rd</sup> Crusader, Peter de Preux, married Mary de Vernon de Redvers & it is through this marriage that we can claim the same ancestry as Grover Cleveland, 22<sup>nd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> President of the USA), was enlarged & enclosed by a curtain wall in the 14<sup>th</sup> C. by none other than one of the Courneys! The castle was much destroyed during the English Civil War in the mid-1600's. The current owners, Angus & Alison Gordon, now rent out self-catering apartments within the castle walls. Contact: Tel. 01884 258-200 or <http://www.tivertoncastle.com/index.html> Incidentally, did you know that The Statue of Liberty, a gift from the people of France to America, was dedicated in New York Harbor on Oct. 28, 1886, by none other than President Grover Cleveland?!

**WICKEN**, South Northamptonshire: In the Midlands of England, far from Devon and Somerset, but worth a visit is (Bk#2,5) you are in the vicinity! It is about 1 mile north of the A22 road between Milton Keynes and Buckingham. Home of Elizabeth Sharp Prowse, wife of George Prowse, His father rebuilt the lovely little church here. This is the Thomas Prowse of Axbridge and Berkely whose portraits,reputedly by Gainsborough, hang in Axbridge Town Hall & at Berkely House & who was an amateur architect of quite some ability. Elizabeth was the sister of Granville Sharp, the abolitionist. **The Church of St. John the Evangelist** contains many memorials to the Sharp & Hosier families. Elizabeth's grandfather was Charles Hosier, a wealthy 'gould-throster' from London, who bought **Wicken Park** from the Spencer family, ancestors of Princess Diana. The Spencers sold Wicken Park in 1716 to Charles Hosier who much improved & enlarged the building, now Akeley Wood Junior School, an independent private co-ed day school for ages 12 months through 11 years. American visitors should know that **Wicken** has a link to the first American President, George Washington. Lawrence Washington 11 assigned all his rights to **Sulgrave Manor** (revered ancestral home of America's first President) in 1610 to his cousin & with the money he acquired Wicken Manor, where he died in 1616. One of his grandchildren, John, emigrated to Virginia in 1656. His great-grandson, George, became first President of the United States in 1789. Contact: Rev. Diane Whittaker, Church of St. John the Evangelist, Wicken, Northants MK19 6BZ, UK. Website: [www.wickennorthants.co.uk](http://www.wickennorthants.co.uk) or contact the Wicken Parish Council Clerk, Sally Willis, at [wickenclerk@outlook.com](mailto:wickenclerk@outlook.com). **Contact** for Akeley Wood School (formerly Wicken Park) : Headteacher – Clare Page, Tel: 01908 571231 Website: [www.akeleywoodschool.co.uk/contact-us/](http://www.akeleywoodschool.co.uk/contact-us/)

**WEST CHALLACOMBE FARM, Combe Martin**, on the NW coast of Devon: Came into the Prowse family (Bks 3,5) through the marriage of John Prouz of Chagford & Withecomb (d.1526), and Jone Orchard, daughter & heiress of John Orchard of West Challacombe in 1477. Their 11 children, including, 8 sons, spread the family throughout the SW counties and as far as London. Their grandsons & gt-grandsons became mayors of Exeter, Barnstaple & Southampton & one became Chamberlain of Exeter. The house, built in the 15<sup>th</sup> C., & now owned by the National Trust, & which you can rent out for short stays (<https://www.nationaltrust.org/holidays/west-challacombe-manor-devon>) remained in the Prouz family until at least the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> C. There is a magnificent Great Hall, 40 feet long & spanned with superb Gothic arches carved by hand. Over the front door is a faint, carved coat of arms, identified as those of the Prouz, Crwys & Norton families, John Prouz's mother being a Norton & her mother being a Crwys. For more info, read my Prowse F.H. book #5, pp. 71-76

**WIDWORTHY**, East Devon: **The Church of St. Cuthbert**. This 14<sup>th</sup> C. small cruciform church contains a (Bk #2) recumbent effigy believed to be that of **Sir Hugh Prouz**. Sir Hugh was a younger brother of the last Lord of Gidleigh Castle, Sir William le Prouz & his wife, Alice de Widworthy, & Sir Hugh inherited Widworthy, Gatcombe, Widecombe & Whitleigh from his brother. He was also an M.P. For Devon. Note splendid oaken doors inside with Ferrers & various Prouz Coats of Arms **Contact**: Rev. Susan Houghton. St. Cuthbert's Church, New Road, Widworthy, Devon EX14 9JS. Tel: 01404-831-887

**YEOVIL, Somerset:** **The Church of St. John's** has a wealth of Prowse Monuments and a superb stained glass window dedicated to the Memory of Cecil Irby Prowse & his younger brother, Charles Bertie Prowse, who died within a month of each other during the First World War. There are also several magnificent brass floor memorials as well as mounted memorials to the Prowse family in the Chancel and a Curate's Chair whose seat is embroidered with the Prowse Coat of Arms. The Prowse Family Vault lies in the crypt of the church but is unfortunately now sealed off.

When I visited this church in 2013, the verger, Mr. Henry Cargill, personally escorted us around. His **contact** information is: St. John's Church Office, St. John's Schoolrooms, Church Path, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 1HE, UK. Tel: 019935 27745. The **vicar** at St. John's is: Rev. James Dudley-Smith, St. John the Baptist & St. Andrews, 41 The Park, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 1DG, UK. Tel: 01935 475 352.

The site of **Kingston Manor**, home to several generations of this branch of the family lies behind the city's hospital by the Ambulance Bay. Only the garden wall, many times rebuilt in the last 500 years, remains standing, apparently.

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**SUMMARY:** This listing only begins to cover some our family's homes and places of interest in Devon, Somerset mainly but also in London and Northamptonshire. Many contact names date from my visits to those places in the 1990's through 2013. I have updated these, but it may be wise to check info online before you make contact! Be sure to read further details in the 5 books of mine mentioned at the very beginning of the text, & at each place name. Some are now out of print but I am considering getting CD's made of them before the 2018 Reunion in Tiverton, Devon.

Wishing you good hunting in the pursuit of your ancestors!

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