Anne Elizabeth Warner (née Horne)
1845 -1929

The last teacher at the Pales School

A Pales Love Story

by
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Why this story needs to be told

As a warden of the Pales from 1993 to 2015, I have been intrigued by this woman and her story. I have lived in the same house, dug the same garden, taught in the same school room and worshipped in the same Meeting room. We are separated by a hundred years or so, yet are both part of the history of the Pales – this special place high on a hillside in mid Wales where:

“the heights, the sunshine, the clouds, the mists lifted by the wind and sweeping over the hilltops, the greenness, the vastness, are all shedding glory around me.”

“The Pales” 10th month. 22. 1876 1pm Yardley Warner

This is a quote from one of the many letters sent to Anne from her husband-to-be Yardley Warner (1815 -1885). It is his words that speak to us of those days and times not hers. Much has been written by Yardley Warner and much has been written by others about him. He was the devoted American Quaker who set up schools and teacher training colleges for the freed slaves in America. He did so much to empower and support the Freedmen and it was when he came to Britain to raise money for this cause that he took on the mission school at the Pales in 1876. He was a charismatic, powerful personality with a passionate faith who was tireless in his service.

Yet there is so little written about Anne (hence my minimal bibliography). The longer I have lived at the Pales and the more I have learnt about Anne, the more convinced I have felt that her voice should be heard; that her story needs to be told. So I decided I must tell the story.

In an endeavour to paint a fuller picture of this truly inspiring, dedicated and selfless woman, I travelled to North Carolina contacting descendents; appealed in The Friend and received letters and information from her old contacts; picked over letters and newspaper articles and have here done my best to present her story. My admiration continues to grow.

It was the bare bones of that story that so intrigued me when I arrived at The Pales twenty years ago. Here was a young woman who was a devout Quaker and a matron in a hospital in London and, who, in 1877, and against her family’s wishes, married an American when she was 32 and he was 62. She moved to a remote hillside in Wales at a time of great poverty and deprivation there and ran a mission school with Yardley, living in damp, primitive conditions where she had her first child. These were the days when the water had to be collected from a spring and travel on the muddy paths was by walking or horseback. She tended to the needs of the valley – physically, she gave of her nursing skills; mentally, of her teaching skills and spiritually through the worshipping community of the Friends Meeting House.

Anne has left in the Pales a wonderful artefact – an etching, on a small circular piece of white marble, of the new house which was built by the Monthly Meeting (the regional body for Quaker business) for the Warners which was finally ready in 1880. But by then the little family was moving over to America…
It’s a privilege to have this artefact which she made so lovingly – it makes up for the lack of her words. It exudes her love of the place which I myself have felt so strongly too. The pull of the Pales was such that she returned five years later after her husband’s death to run the Pales for a few more years. This time she worked on her own, with her three little children…before the damp and the cold climate finally got to her (I can identify with that too!) and she left to set up another Quaker school in Long Sutton, Somerset.

And so to the unfolding of her story….

**Life before The Pales**

Anne Elizabeth Horne was the first of four daughters born into a Quaker family in London in 1845 to Jane and Robert Horne. She was educated at home initially and then attended a boarding school near Brighton. Here she met Mary Anne Southall of Leominster who became a lifelong friend.

By 1870 Anne was governess of Henry Southall’s children (not Mary Southall’s father) at the Graig in Ross on Wye. It must have been quite a different life to the one she had known in London. However, she wrote to her old school friend, Mary Anne Southall:
“I am completely settled in and very much enjoy my occupations… I have nothing at all I could wish to be different, except what I knew before I came, viz – the state of the Meeting.”

Ross Quaker Meeting at this time was clearly at a low ebb and she goes on to say that there are rarely more than four at Meeting and she has to sit by Charlie Southall “whom I have to tap continually to remind him he must keep quiet, and I see him trying interesting experiments with his breath or watching the shadow going round the wall or observing how soon the stove gets cool after being red hot. I feel that I am trying a kind of experiment myself, in making up my mind whether or no I can become a member of this meeting, after being used to Holloway. But I must be more earnest in wrestling for the blessing, for well I know that is not in numbers. We may have quite as precious times when only 2 or 3 are gathered if we are all sufficiently in earnest, as in large assemblies.” Anne E, Horne Feb 1. 1870

Anne however decided to return to London and trained at St Thomas’s Hospital. In 1871 she was appointed Matron at the newly opened North Eastern Hospital for children, now The Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It was a cottage hospital with 20 beds and this was a position of some responsibility for a young woman at that time. She had been recommended by Mary Elizabeth Phillips, a Friend [“Friend “ is used interchangeably with “Quaker”]. The establishment of the hospital had been closely associated with members of the Society of Friends, especially the influential Quaker families of the Barclays and the Godlees.

It was in 1873 at this hospital, that Anne first met Yardley Warner. He had been visiting Friends in London and was taken to the hospital by Helen Balkwill who was a travelling Friend from Plymouth. He writes four years later in a letter to Anne:

“I recall it was Helen Balkwill who introduced me to thee at the hospital in 10th mo.25th 1873. I thank the Good Lord and Father of us all.”

Yardley Warner 11mo, 18.1877

For the next four years there are many letters passing between Anne and Yardley. Extracts of Yardley’s letters have been reproduced in Stafford Allen Yardley’s book The Freedman’s Friend. At this time, Yardley was travelling around the Southern States of America in the cause of the education of Freedmen as well as travelling in Britain to raise money. He also knew Henry Southall and family and so their connections continued to develop and their paths to cross. He visits Anne on a number of occasions and writes regularly.

The Pales Mission and Day School

Ten years earlier, in 1867, the Pales Mission and Day School had been set up under concern:

“Many persons having expressed the conviction that there is a great want of further accommodation for the good education of children in the
neighbourhood of Llandegley and Penybont, we have thought it right to commence a Day School at The Pales Meeting House. Arrangements have been made for William Knowles to come and reside among you as schoolmaster. We believe him to be an upright and conscientious man who will carefully watch over and instruct the children entrusted to his care. The branches of education to be taught in the school are Reading and Writing, Arithmetic, History (Bible and General), Geography, Grammar and Spelling. The permanence of the school will depend a good deal on the amount of support he receives and we therefore hope that he will obtain a hearty welcome among you.”

We are your sincere Friends
Edward P. Southall  John T Southall
Samuel Alexander    Henry S Newman
Josiah Newman
Leominster 1867

By 1872 there were up to forty children attending the school coming from all over the valley. There were annual examinations and the school was supported financially and educationally by a committee of Friends from the Monthly Meeting and beyond.

In 1874, William Knowles left. In the Pales School Minute book of that time, it says that a Government school was expected to be established in the valley in 1875 and so it was agreed by the Committee to discontinue the school unless “some suitable person should offer to take the post of Master at that time”. It was noted that the school had been very successful and indeed some of the pupils become prominent people in the life of the neighbourhood in later life, such as John Owen Jenkins. He became a well known evangelist and clerk of Pales Meeting.

At this time, Yardley Warner was visiting the Newmans and Southalls in Leominster and he considered taking up the post of school master. For him, this would provide a base for his continued collections for the Freedmen as well as a source of income for himself and a response to a sense of religious calling:

“I design to do teaching at Pales and expect to contract to do so for a time, for as things look now I may be in England a year yet. The situation at Pales seems to offer me what I need, a restful occupation, in religious sympathy with others engaged in religious work.”
Yardley Warner 1876

Of Yardley, the Pales minutes say “Yardley Warner is a minister of the Gospel and a member of the Society of Friends from Philadelphia in America...who proposed to reopen the School at The Pales – believing that in making this offer, he was following Divine guidance.”
7th day 30th 9 mo 1876 Pales Mission Committee Minutes

Yardley moved in and began teaching on 2 October 1876. It is from his letters to Anne and others that we are given a colourful insight into life at the Pales in Radnorshire at that time. He stays initially with Robert Watkins who lives at Rhonllwyn, the farm down the lane from the Pales. The lane, with steep sides, becomes a watercourse in rainy weather and is almost always muddy. In fact, dealing with dampness and muddiness is a constant theme in his letters. He
describes visiting local families, who live in damp hovels, to encourage them to send their children to the school:

“I have just come through a dreary walk over heath, moor, slough and tangled paths like Tennessee for dreariness and blindness – I could not have thought such places were to be found in this country...I did not tell thee that my business this week is to go over these hills and hunt up the lambs (i.e. the scholars). The weather has been wet, but I have so far been wonderfully successful. I am sitting by the kitchen fire with my coat off and back to the fire drying myself full of comfort. I was at Penybont this morning and most of the day. Expect to be there tomorrow and to my school in the evening. Work is piling up on me.”

Yardley Warner 10 mo.4.1876

And of trying to light turf fires in Rhonllwyn which he described as “fearfully damp”. “He (Robert Watkins) tried to get up a fire with green brush wet turf and coal. I helped as best I could... We finally after ¾ hour with bellows and paper we got a start...”

Nevertheless his soul is uplifted with the beauty of the surroundings and the success of the mission work: “Bright and beautiful is the opening of this day. I am in my schoolroom, children flocking in for school. Blazing fire before me – all comfort within and without.”

10 mo 22 1876

Later that day at 5pm he wrote “After Meeting closed at 4 ½ [meaning 4.30pm] - a large one and showers of blessing. Clean warm house – clean earnest people. As it was cold, we used the school room which was filled with men, women and children from 60 – 80. I did not count them. The First Day School was proposed with the understanding it was only for consideration in future – Meetings in future are to be at 11 and 2 ½ . The religious work looks promising. I feel it is to be the main thing – the gathering of souls. All this natural and spiritual fullness here fires my soul and thrills me with enthusiastic fervency. The birds flit close to my window as I write in the schoolroom which opens to a magnificent outspread of vale and mountain scenery. The dear little confiding creatures almost salute me as they hang on the underside of the eave of the thatch close to the window.”

10 mo 22 1876

He has a great love of flowers and there are a number of references to his collection of them and attempts at identification and of including them in his teaching:

“The children have captured some of my zeal for plants and we are busy pressing some beautiful wild orchids and campanulas, and many others which will be in our school herbarium.”

5th mo 18 1877
The marriage of Anne Horne and Yardley Warner

“Allen Warner’s parents were not married after the manner of Friends.”
William Frederick Wells, Friends House 1914

Stafford Allen Warner (Anne and Yardley’s son) was shocked to hear these words in 1914 at the Recording Clerk’s Office (Isaac Sharp at that time). He had gone to see the record of his parents’ marriage, assuming that they had had a Quaker marriage, as he needed to establish his nationality being that he was of military age and the First World War had broken out.

Monthly Meeting authorises requests from local Meetings for the solemnisation of marriage “after the manner of Friends”. As a marriage is “within the care of the local Meeting” then there must be unity within the Meeting before the Monthly Meeting will authorise the marriage. Anne Horne’s father was not willing to give his consent. We do not know categorically why this was the case, but Yardley’s son, Stafford Allen, speculates that there were at least three reasons why he, Robert Horne, was unhappy about his daughter’s choice of husband. Firstly, Yardley was 30 years older than Anne; secondly, he was American, had no family here and might return there at any time; thirdly, his prospects were uncertain, as he was employed on a temporary contract for one year in a small school on a Welsh hillside with no home of his own to house his bride to be. It must have seemed all too impulsive and wild to Anne’s father. Perhaps he thought that by refusing his consent and therefore, making it unlikely that the Monthly Meeting would authorise the marriage, then this would slow down the couple’s arrangements and give them time for reflection.

But love is rarely able to listen to wise temporal counsel especially when the parties concerned are both passionate and courageous people living under the guidance of the Spirit. Yardley lived in the present following the direct guidance of God:

“I have had many tokens today of my Heavenly Father’s guiding love, answering our prayers and H. Stanley Newman’s “Land him in a plain path”. I am “living by the day”
and trying hard to live a day completely and as if it were to be my last. My engagement is for 6 months at the least."

10 mo. 5. 1876 4 ½ pm Rhonllwyn

Two months after this letter, on 8 December 1877, Anne Horne married Yardley Warner in a London registry office. In a letter to Mary Anne Southall, Anne describes the day:

“We had a very comfortable, satisfactory time...and were able comfortingly to believe that the Lord himself was present to bless us on the occasion. The ceremony before the Registrar was as quiet and solemn as that in a Friends’ Meeting and we had a nice party of our friends with us...I went to Stafford Allen’s to sleep...S. Allen drove me, with his niece Ada Ransome to the Registrar’s Office – there we met Yardley who had lodged in Charles Square and who came with Richard Allen...After the legal part of the business was over, Stafford Allen’s carriage took us to Charles Square where we had a solemn little meeting. Barnabas C. Hobbs, Sarah J.J. Fox and Richard Allen all sweetly engaged in vocal prayer, and a portion of scripture was read. Yardley and I then went through exactly the usual form of words used at Friends’ Marriages and Stafford Allen read the certificate embodying the whole, to which was annexed the legal document; the only difference in the wording of the certificate to what would have been used in a regular meeting was that the sentence as per “Act of Parliament” etc. and the address and name of the Registrar’s Office were substituted for the names of the Monthly Meetings etc. Then the document was signed by all present as witnesses."

She goes on to say “a good many came to see us married “ and she details the dinner and extra sweetmeats provided by some friends, before commenting that “Richard Allen was a most generous and hospitable father to Y. W. and Stafford Allen to me – or rather they both were to us both.”

It is no wonder that Anne and Yardley should have called their first born child Stafford Allen given the staunch support of this Friend.

However, it is not difficult to read through the lines here. How difficult it must have been to marry at a Registry Office and without either close family present. How painful it must have been for their families. And yet, what wonderful support they had from close Friends who clearly made every effort possible to make this feel as similar to a Friends’ marriage as possible. As a Quaker Registering Officer myself, I am intrigued by this marriage. They clearly felt that this was God’s work and that they were right to go ahead and marry despite the non recognition of it by the Monthly Meeting and family and therefore by the Society of Friends They, and the Friends that attended, also clearly saw it as a true Quaker marriage - true in form; true in content, in that only God can recognise a true marriage.

The Quaker founder George Fox says on marriage:

“For the right joining in marriage is the work of the Lord only, and not the priests’ or magistrates’; for it is God’s ordinance and not man’s, and therefore Friends cannot consent that they should join them together for we marry none; it is the Lord’s work, and we are but witnesses.”

George Fox 1669
It seems likely that the Warners would have known this quote which is to be found in the current Quaker Book of Discipline *Quaker Faith and Practice*, section 16.01.

Once the wedding and meal were over, Anne and Yardley went shopping for things they would not be able to obtain in mid Wales “sundry things, a pair of blankets, some celery, prunes, a double saucepan porcelain lined etc. etc."

They then caught the train from Paddington to Shrewsbury where they lodged overnight in Mrs. Thomas’s temperance boarding house, before travelling on the next day to Penybont station and to their lodgings. These were probably in Penybont or Llandegley initially, as Anne goes on to describe the first time she walked over to the Pales:

“First Day morning [at that time Quakers enumerated the days of the week and months, so as not to use words derived from heathen gods] we started early for the Pales and had an extremely wet muddy but very nice walk across the moor to get there… We had two very nice meetings and the people all gave me a very warm welcome, and all wanted to shake hands with “Mrs Warner” and I received numerous invitations to go and see them… in the evening went to tea by invitation with a poor farmer’s family who entertained us most hospitably and sent two of their daughters afterwards to lead us by the cleanest (or rather by the least mirey) way, in the dark, into Llandegley, where we called upon two or three other families, before returning to our own home for supper. We are *most comfortably* accommodated here, and have everything we want, except that the house is excessively damp.”

10 mo. 5. 1876 4 ½ pm Rhonllwyn

What a picture this pair must have cut in this remote Welsh community. He the passionate and charismatic American and her, the young educated London hospital matron! And what a welcome they were given into this community.

They were living their lives under divine guidance as exhorted by *Quaker Faith and Practice*:

“Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak.”

Advice 27 QF&P

For the next three years their lives would indeed speak as they worked hard together to serve God and the community around the Pales.

**Life and work at The Pales**

Between them, Anne and Yardley brought a wealth of skills and experience to the work at Pales. A couple of months after arriving, Anne wrote to Mary Anne Southall of Yardley’s two missions:

“his two missions – the one being the freedmen’s good, the other the school and the evangelization of Llandegley and neighbourhood; - and he certainly is working hard; - in fact I am sometimes afraid he will wear himself right out.”

7.2.1877 letter from Anne Warner to Mary Anne Southall
The mission for the Freedmen carried on alongside the Pales work throughout Yardley’s time at the Pales. But our concern here is with the Pales mission and in particular with Anne’s role within it. So what exactly was the work? It is described in somewhat vague terms in the annual report of that first year:

“A great opportunity lies before us for carrying good from the school and the Pales meetings, into these homes, and for bringing good thence back to the school and the Pales.”

extract from Annual Report of Pales School 1877

Further on in Anne’s letter to Mary, she describes a day in the life of Yardley: “He walked on 2nd day up the hill opposite the Pales to a height as great as the Pales, to call on a poor sick friend in the early morning, then down again to the valley and up the other hill to Pales in time for school at 9am.- after school was done in afternoon same day, he went off with only a hasty tea, up the hill once more to call on the same friend a 2nd time, then back and across to Penybont to speak at a temperance meeting, then home again to his Llandegley dwelling. He is most indefatigable.”

7.2.1877 letter from Anne Warner to Mary Anne Southall

From these extracts it is clear that the work involved the school and visiting the sick, but now we hear that temperance work was also one of the concerns and of course there was the outreach /evangelical work. We will look at these four strands of the work.

(i) The school
In his first year Yardley had re-opened the school and by the time of the 1877 annual report there were, on average, 24 children attending the school, rising to between forty and fifty by the time they left three years later.

The Warners clearly responded to the children’s needs, teaching them about hygiene, health matters and social skills as well as the expected 3 R’s of the Victorian school. Anne’s work as a governess and as a matron gave her a wealth of experience to bring to bear. Complementing her gifts, Yardley clearly taught in his own idiosyncratic way and the children would no doubt have been in awe and enthralled by his stories of American Indians, black American slaves and wild sea voyages.

When Barnabas C Hobbs, a well known American Friend travelling under religious concern in Britain visited Pales, he wrote “Yardley Warner mingles a great variety of subjects with the usual routine of common school instruction. Birds, quadrupeds, insects, fishes, good manners, health, cleanliness etc. etc. on all fitting opportunities, are illustrated in a practical way. The young learner is thus led to desire more knowledge, and healthy desires and aspirations are induced for useful learning…He began with a small number which has increased to 40 or more, some of whom came three miles on foot. He draws them beyond more inferior schools. Some come for Latin and Greek… The parents feel the force of this influence and like to come here to worship. They are fed when they come and desire more.”

Letter to The Friend 10 mo 1878 Barnabas C Hobbs

It all sounds like a really exciting curriculum – practical, functional and yet imaginative and inspiring. Given that by 1879 there are forty six children on the register, the schoolroom must have felt very cramped and it must have been
extremely difficult to manage with the wide age range too. This was all delivered without the use of corporal punishment prevalent in most schools at that time. Yardley acknowledges how demanding the situation was:

“Along came little Welsh feet with much clatter and I find myself saying “no rest till after 4 o’clock!” or mostly so. They are elastic and buoyant beyond all children I ever had to do with; and my resources are taxed to keep them supplied with work; that is the only way I can keep order and to manage them without “the cane” – to which they have been used, but which I never use, nor can use.”  
9th mo 1877 letter from Yardley to Ann

The burgeoning school required plenty of practical help too – new desks needed to be purchased, toilets to be built, coal to be provided. The Committee were kept busy raising subscriptions to keep up with the increasing expenses.

The school was clearly the way into the heart of the local community and for the Warners this led into their true mission of opening the hearts of those in the community to the Spirit.

(ii) Outreach / Evangelism
The heart of the Mission was the Meeting for Worship at the Pales. On Yardley’s arrival there were by all counts only two or three attending. Yardley set to and set up “Meeting for Scriptural Instruction” preceded by Bible Classes on First – day afternoons to educate local adults. Within a year the committee reports show that 60 – 70 are attending these meetings after encouragement from Yardley’s home visitations.

In a letter to The Friend Barnabas C Hobbs writes “No missionary work can go on well in any place without a woman’s help and the Good Master has prepared a kindred heart to join him (Yardley) in his mission and these two are now doing a laborious, patient, devoted and self sacrificing work.”  
10 mo 1878 Barnabas C Hobbs (an American Friend)

How glad Yardley must have been to have Anne now supporting all this new work….and how this work burgeoned!

In 1879, there was a report in The Friend which told of “The beginning of a revival”:

“these three – Yardley and Annie Warner and an old man who lived near the top of the Pearl Rock, Llandegley …to say nothing of the dog…felt there was a great opening among the numerous descendants of Quaker families and serious thinking people living in cottages and farmhouses scattered all over the neighbouring hills…united in sending a minute to the Monthly Meeting…The minute was very cordially received…The Tent Meetings on the common at Penybont were held that summer with wonderful results in the ingathering of men, women, and children to the Kingdom of God. People came to the meetings on foot, on horseback over hills from many miles away. One outcome was the reception of thirty four applications for membership at the next two Monthly meetings, nearly all of them being accepted. “Who hath despised the day of small things? “ “Not by my might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts”  
The Friend 13th Sept 1907
This must have been an astonishing event and the resultant influx of new members a great joy as well as a great demand upon the Warners. They write in their report to the committee in 1879:

“The uppermost feeling is gratitude to commemorate the help so wonderfully received from Heaven; and in large measure administered through the sympathy of our friends in various ways and from different localities”

Y&A Warner 1879

(iii) Tending the sick
Anne’s training as a nurse in London must have seemed like manna from heaven to the sick of the valley. She became in great demand. The unsanitary “hovels” often had leaking roofs and earthen floors and she set to, bringing her expertise and her bedside comforting manner to help wherever she could. It must have been singularly costly to her own health as she tramped through the wet countryside to be with the sick, dying and those giving birth.

She wrote “Those of us who are well and willing to work, are kept more than doubly busy running about waiting on the sick, besides doing all our own regular work. The scarcity of people able to nurse the sick properly or do any extra work, is very striking and it makes it come very heavy on those who can. There are very few houses in this neighbourhood just now where there is not one or more patients who require day and night watching. I have sat up 4 nights in these last 10 days, sent for yesterday twice in a hurry to help in case of death – in the morning went to see the youngest child of the Lower Cwm who had just died. His mother is lying in the same room dangerously ill with rheumatic fever and his sister has quinsy. After washing and settling the little corpse I ran as quickly as possible back to the Pales, changed my clothes in the air, washed and used disinfectants before going out again for more visiting….and onto old John Davies (at Little Cwm) who had been just then found dead, lying alone on his kitchen floor….I had to…prepare his body for burial. By the time I reached the Pales after the melancholy job it was 1.30 am this morning. The people live so far apart I can’t visit many in one day.”

4 mo 7 1880 Anne Warner to Mary Anne Southall

(iv) Temperance work
“I visited a farmer this eve. Oh these cottagers and farmers! They draw out one’s sympathies. Life is very low among some. Some have to fight sheer poverty, some poverty and liquor, some liquor alone”

10 mo 29 1876 Yardley Warner

Yardley talks about addressing the Temperance Meetings in Penybont on a number of occasions. It is clearly a huge concern as he sees drink as ripping families apart: “oh it is fearful this liquor pest.”

Both Anne and Yardley support the temperance meetings. They were particularly vexed over the excessive drinking that occurred at the local fairs. These were and still are the biggest event in the social calendar and involved much excessive drinking. The Warners took it upon
themselves to attend, set up a stall and tried to convince others to give up the drink. Temperance leaflets and tracts were distributed widely.

“Temperance work and Tract distribution also claim a large share of attention. A number of Temperance meetings have been addressed and more than 5,200 tracts have been distributed during the last year.”
Pales Day School and Mission Committee’s report 1877

**Victims of success?**

The Warners were living in the schoolroom at Pales, having found that to be easier than walking to and from the village lodgings. In 1878 there is mention in the committee minutes of the building of a new house for them:

> “the committee felt pressed onwards towards providing a dwelling for the master and his wife on the spot seeing that the walk from the village to the school is impracticable, in addition to their daily duties...Henry Newman is encouraged to visit Pales and measure the ground etc. and make a suggestion for a dwelling house of two rooms on the ground floor, an ante room and two chambers above, he is encouraged to make enquiries in the locality as to the probable cost of such a building, the best material etc.
> PS There is at the present time a balance in hand of £76.0.3.”

Committee minutes 5.1mo. 1878

The house was probably ready early in 1879 as we read in Barnabas C. Hobbs letter:

> “A new residence will soon be in readiness to make them a comfortable home. They have endured much privation in the anticipation of this promised comfort.”

10” mo. 1878 BC Hobbs

However by Oct 1878 Anne was pregnant with her first child. How could anyone continue at this pace with the work exploding on all fronts? …more children in the school; more people attending First day school classes; more temperance meetings; a continued need for health visiting and then, in the June 1879 the tent revival meetings and an explosion of Quaker meeting membership at Pales. Their first baby, Stafford Allen Warner, was born in July 1979, it seems that their cups were truly running over!

> “Alas for Welsh life – and the hardships of women”

5” mo. 1877 Yardley Warner

How prophetic was this comment, written by Yardley a couple of years earlier. He was in fact commenting on the excessive burdens of local women looking after children, poultry, inebriated husbands and suffering grinding poverty. Anne may not have had the common share of those problems but I cannot help but think that the load she was carrying must have become unbearable once she was pregnant and then after having given birth.

Within a year the following minute appears in the school committee notes: “The committee has had under its consideration the present condition of the Day School at the Pales, as brought before it by the report of the recent examination. It is evident that the education of the children is suffering from the want of more systematic
instruction on the part of Y. and A.E. Warner and the Committee request that their undivided attention be given to the school children during school hours, that a nurse be provided for their own child.”

signed 25th 6. 1880 Committee minutes ( mention is made that the subcommittee had not recorded this minute at the time of the meeting and it was minuted at this later date!)

Given all the circumstances, it would seem that these poor exam results were inevitable, but perhaps it was in fact their salvation in enabling them to decide to move on. The next minute of the committee records:

“Y and A.E. Warner having resigned their situation at the Pales- we have carefully considered the applications of…James Abbott is therefore appointed resident superintendent of Pales school and mission …J.A. is requested to occupy the post, with as little delay as possible, the Warners being anxious to leave for America.”

24th June 1880

So why the sudden departure? Maybe the Warners were upset by the school inspection, poor results and the suggestion that the children’s education was suffering; maybe Anne didn’t want to have a nurse for her own child; maybe she did want the nurse, but that offer of help came too late. I can only speculate …maybe it was all just too much! In any case they made that decision to move on to America.

By the time they left with their small child on 25 October 1880 the mission work had mushroomed. It seems to me that they were victims of their own success. It is interesting to note that it was after the birth of their child that everything fell apart. I imagine they were both so strong and worked intensively together but something had to give once they had a child and it appears that the school was that thing.

There are three issues here which all have a very contemporary ring to them: school inspections; employment rights for pregnant women; committee support for employees.

Off to America

Early in 1881 the Warners sailed for America and moved to Jonesboro, Tennessee. Anne later told her son Stafford Allen that the passage was “terrifying”. It had taken nineteen days - almost twice the normal length of the passage due to severe storms.

From 1881 – 1885, the Warners continued to work on Yardley’s “other mission” i.e. working to provide access to literacy for the Southern black freed slaves. They continued to raise funds to establish teacher training colleges for the freedmen. They also bought a tract of land in Greensboro, North Carolina, split it and sold it (at a very low cost) to freedmen so that they could own their own land and houses. This was later named after them – Warnersville, which continues to be a thriving residential area. When I visited Warnersville in 2002, I was told that the Warners were considered ‘too radical’, even by their own Quaker Meeting. It appears that selling property to blacks was clearly a step too far at the time.

In 1884 they had settled at Bush Hill, North Carolina where Yardley taught in a small school for black children.
Yardley Warner died after a short illness of typhoid fever on 7th January 1885. This must have been a devastating shock for Anne and her three boys - Stafford Allen, Joseph Yardley and Charles Horne. She suddenly found herself widowed with three children to raise alone and with no income.

**Back to the Pales**

“Pales school continued (after the Warner’s departure in 1880) with a succession of temporary teachers, but when in 1885 the Committee heard that Yardley had died, they begged Anne to return with her children. She carried on the formidable task of home-maker, sole teacher of 40 children, minister and volunteer nurse.”

Pales leaflet from 1980’s Trevor Macpherson

I am full of admiration for this amazing woman! She returned in October 1885, was now aged forty – the same age I was on arrival at the Pales - but what a huge task she undertook alone.

However, from the committee minutes, we find out that she probably did have company and help with her family in the house:

“we have no objection to Samuel D. residing with her or to her bringing over the Black Boy to act as a servant at the Pales.”

seventh month 13.1885 Committee minutes

How fascinating! – I found no further reference in Pales minutes or any other sources to the presence of either of these people.

Then recently, I came across an appeal written by Anne in September 1884 i.e. just four months before Yardley died. It was an open letter entitled “Can any Friends help?” In it she told the story of a young black man Charles Warren Brown who was an orphan who lived with a white man who fed and housed him in return for looking after his cows…”and treated him often with great cruelty and neglect”. One night the boy (aged 12 to 14yrs) was sent out to get the cows in, but he couldn’t find them. It was dark and there was deep snow. Three times the boy returned but the door was locked as he had not found the cows. He was barefoot and by morning his feet were frozen. A black man found him and took him back to the boy’s house where his master said he would shoot him if he didn’t go away. So the stranger took him to the poor house. Here the doctors, in order to save his life amputated both feet several inches above the ankles.

“He stayed there for a couple of years, walking on his knees and was taught to look after himself… Rufus P. King met him there and being much interested in his sad history and condition begged us to take him to educate and care for. We consented to take him into our family and try to teach him to read and write and to train him to domestic work. He spent last winter at our house and the spring of this year (1884) we sent him to Philadelphia …..he was fitted out with a handsome and complete pair of artificial legs…he returned walking erect and easily on his two feet. He is still living with us but we are wishing now to find him a new home as we think he should be either where he can earn wages to make himself a living or be taught some trade which will be a means of support to him in time to come. We cannot afford to keep him……Can any friend help?”

Bush Hill 9th mo, 1884 Anne E. Warner
What compassion and generosity this shows – the Warners barely had enough to live on for their own little family. It seems a strong possibility to me that this was the black boy that Anne brought with her to Pales. If no other friend had stepped forward to help and give Charles a home, then when Anne decided to come back to the Pales, it would have seemed sensible to bring him too so he could help around the house. He would have been an interesting and unusual character to settle into the little Welsh community around the Pales!

The Pales school itself must have been closed earlier in 1885 because in the Pales Mission Report of 1885 it says:

“A desire having been expressed by some parents in the neighbourhood that the Day School might be reopened at the Meeting House, we have thought it right to accede to their request.”

Presumably, with the support of her servant (Charles?) and Samuel, Anne was able to manage running the school. Her two older boys would, in any case, have attended the school for their own education.

As before, there is much mission work for her to attend to. In the annual report, we read that she supported the First Day schools at the Pales as well as Bible classes for young women, a branch of the Missionary helpers Union and the Young Women’s Christian Fellowship Union. It is striking and heartening to note the increase in work with women which ensued naturally from appointing a woman to the post. She also had support from old friends who visited the Pales:

“Our late Friend Richard Allen, of Dublin, and others have visited the Pales during the summer and expressed their interest and satisfaction with the work carried on. We are at all times glad of visits from Friends interested in Mission work. “

Pales Mission Report 1885

Anne clearly hit the ground running and impressed everyone immediately with the quality of her work:

“One of our committee members who has recently spent some days there, says “I am very pleased with what I saw in my recent visit. In some cases the Christian character of our Friends appeared to have much deepened since I last met them. Anne E. Warner strikes me as doing a specially good work, and in fact, to be exactly the right person for the work there at the present juncture.”

Ninth Annual report Pales Mission for 1885

However, the Day school did not last for very long under Anne’s sole guardianship, probably less than a year. In the Pales Mission Report for 1886 we read:

“During the long continued snow and severe cold of last winter, it was found that the children were quite unable to get to the Day school at the Pales, and in view of the development of the surrounding mission work, we concluded that it was best to discontinue the Day School, as there are now efficient Board schools in the neighbourhood.”
And so the days of the Pales school finally come to an end after 18 years. Descendants of those who attended the school continue to turn up at the Pales occasionally with stories of how much attending the school meant to their relatives and families. But clearly the need was now passed – the 1870 Education Act had been passed and schools had been built so all children now had a right to attend Government funded schools.

From now on Anne’s work focussed fully on community and mission work.

“Our Friend has worked to her full strength in visiting among the farms on the hills, and has a happy acquaintance with the needs of the people. Her life is spent for their welfare, and her previous hospital experience in London as well as her American experiences have tended to make her a most sympathising and efficient helper, so that she wins the confidence of the country population for miles around, and is often sought for and appealed to for personal help in times of sickness and family affliction... Some remarkable Open Air Meetings have been held under the management of The Friends themselves, and a series of very interesting Meetings were held in rotation at several farmhouses among the hills... The usual week of Gospel meetings last summer was a time of blessing, when hundreds attended the gatherings at the Iron Room... since that time there have been a number of conversions, and the work continues to deepen and spread... and we think we may say that the work in Radnorshire has never, within our memory, been in a more healthy condition.”

Tenth Annual report Pales Mission for 1886

This is praise indeed for Anne’s work, and no doubt the closing of the school prevented her falling into the trap of being overstretched as she and Yardley must have been before.

However, although the work might have been in a very healthy condition, within two more years, Anne’s health began to fail which she put down to the damp and cold conditions of the climate in the hills of mid Wales. The Pales stands at 1180ft. Unlike most Welsh homesteads which are built into the Cwm (sheltered valleys), the Pales is on the spur of a hillside and is thus extremely exposed to strong westerly winds all winter. The reason Pales was built in such a wildly open place, was that the graveyard was given to Friends as a hidden parcel of land in 1673 for the Quakers to be able to bury their dead. They were persecuted as heretics at that time and could not and would not bury in church consecrated grounds. In 1717, when the persecutions had temporarily eased, the Pales Meeting House was built next to the graveyard in this beautiful but highly exposed position.
Anne was clearly suffering and unable to carry on with her work and in 1888, we read in the committee minutes:

“The Committee greatly regret that, owing probably to her unwearyed exertions during the winter in attending meetings and visiting the sick, A.E. Warner’s health has so far failed as to make it more prudent to spend the winter in a less exposed situation. She has therefore accepted an invitation to Long Sutton for a few months. During her absence, B.J.Elsmere, of Swansea has already paid a short visit, and other friends are about to take part in the work.”

Pales Mission Report 1888

Even in her obituary nearly 40 years later, the cold of winters at the Pales featured …as indeed they will reside in the memory of this warden!

“cold of winter was taxing her health too much for one who had to earn a living for herself and her 3 children.”

Somerton Herald 1927

We don’t know exactly what her health problems were but she was clear that it was due to the damp and cold conditions. Monthly Meeting arranged for various people to visit and keep the mission going until Spring 1889 when she was expected to return. However, in the Committee notes that following Spring, we read:

“we have received another letter from A.E.Warner, in which she expresses her continued impression that, on account of the state of her health, she will be unable permanently to continue her work at the Pales, and she suggests that we should look out for a successor to maintain the work in Radnorshire…we warmly appreciate the valuable service A.E Warner has so long tendered.”

Committee held at Leominster 13th April 1889

Anne did, in fact, return in May 1889 for the summer, but finally left the Pales on 11th October 1889.

Given my admiration for the work of this woman I was struck by the following minute which shows how much of a man’s world it was and how for some at least, her gender had been an issue.

“We have received a letter from Penybont suggesting that in the event of A.E. Warner leaving us, it would be desirable that a man Friend should reside among them as a missionary worker.”

Committee held at Leominster 13th April 1889

She had served so long and well and must have been exceptional at that time to have been accepted in this mission role, but her successful tenure clearly was not enough to challenge the male oriented culture of the time. And so within a week of leaving, Benjamin Elsmere was appointed and moved into the Pales with his wife and three children.
Beyond The Pales

The Long Sutton Meeting House, like Pales had been built in 1717. Anne settled into the Friends’ Cottage belonging to the Meeting. She had been invited to live there as “nursing mother” to the recently re-established Meeting there. She began educating her own three children and before long she was teaching the children of other Friends too.

By 1891 a room had been built near Friends’ Cottage to act as a schoolroom and village hall and Anne’s new adventure had begun as she built up another little Friends’ school. The school was managed by a committee appointed by Mid Somerset Monthly Meeting. As one would expect, she excelled in this task and was soon teaching around 33 children. In fact this little school continued to thrive until 1939 when it closed with the onset of the Second World War.

As when she was at Pales, she was not only a school teacher but also held various other roles in the community. As a nurse, she was constantly in and out of the houses of the sick, as well as being the district midwife. Her concern with alcoholism led her to run the Band of Hope and Temperance Meetings in the village hall. She supported a series of mission meetings and before long many more people had joined the Friends Meeting.

She took on various civic duties and was the first woman to become Guardian of the Langport Rural District Council. It is recorded that this was in the face of much male opposition initially, but again her strength of character, wisdom and breadth of experience convinced all around her and she worked diligently, as always.

“at (her) first meeting much opposition from her very conservative men colleagues. But she soon won her way amongst them, and became both valued and beloved by them.” July 5th 1929 The Friend

Late in 1906 Anne asked to be relieved of her responsibilities in the school. She was by now 61 years old and her own children were well grown up. She did however continue to be extremely active within the local and Monthly Meeting.

In 1921, at the age of 76yrs, Anne went to Canada to visit and help her son Joseph Yardley whose wife was seriously ill. He had become a farmer and after five years or so moved to West Grove Pennsylvania and Anne went with him. Anne had certainly intended to return to England, but, in the event, she stayed there and died on 31 May 1929 aged 84 years.

She died “swiftly and painlessly as she was sitting chatting to her son about old days and of the time when first she had met his father.“ July 5th 1929 The Friend

Both at her funeral in West Grove Philadelphia and at her memorial meeting in Long Sutton, there was much “testimony to her unusual and outstanding qualities which had impressed the circle of Friends in West Grove who had only known her in her old age, almost as much as those who had known her through her vigorous middle life in Long Sutton…she always seemed one of the absolutely selfless people whose lives keep a community sweet.” July 5th 1929 The Friend
Given all her hard work, one might think that she would have been an over serious character, but not at all:

“She had a great gift of humour.” The Friend July 5th 1929

“She could enjoy a good joke - her eyes would sparkle when telling an amusing tale.”
Somerton Herald 1929

A Pales Love Story …..

How much easier it would have been for Anne to have lived a comfortable and settled life and career in London, but this was all given up as she joined Yardley – who was the love of her life for eight years – at the Pales. But what an extraordinary eight years and how it coloured the rest of her life.

Unlike Yardley, Anne was content not to be in the limelight but worked quietly and with humility:

“as poor yet making many rich
as having nothing and yet possessing all things
She was a great soul, content to be so in small places on a small stage…
Her life’s work has indeed borne fruit.”
Speaker at Long Sutton memorial meeting 1929

I, and all those who have been wardens at The Pales, owe much to this special woman. Had she not fallen in love with Yardley and accompanied him and borne his children, then the house would never have been built and many other stories could not have been told! It has been a privilege to have followed in the footsteps of Anne Warner. So many visitors speak of the Pales as a special place – a place where love is present and palpable; a place that gives of its peace and spirit to all; a place where love echoes down through the centuries.
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