

# Thomas Dunning Arnold

As many of you will know, I grew up at Ham Farm, and was well acquainted with the plaque you see in the photograph on the right. This is mounted high up on the south side of the house, and in all the quarter of a century I lived there, the general view was that this was simply the name of the person who built the “new” house. (There was an older cottage nearby). However, this



plaque has a tragic story attached that we knew nothing of at the time. There had been an existing cottage where the “new” house now stands, and indeed a part of it was incorporated as the scullery when the large new house was built sometime after the entire farm had undergone a major rebuilding project.

The Arnold family were major landowners in the area. Father, Thomas, was born at Buckland Farm in Dolton and mother, Sarah Ann, grew up at Fursdon Farm in Iddesleigh. They had 6 children in total, of whom Thomas Dunning was the youngest (Dunning was a family name from Sarah’s grandmother; indeed the Dunning’s had owned Ham Farm until the Arnold’s bought it). After living several years at Henacroft, Iddesleigh, where the first 4 of their children were born, they moved in 1873, back to the family farm at Buckland. Thomas Dunning Arnold was born here in 1874.

In 1880 when young Thomas was just 6 his father died leaving his mother and brothers to run the farm and the family’s other properties.

Tragedy struck on the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> October 1884. Around the time of his 10th birthday, Thomas Dunning Arnold was playing in the mill at Buckland Farm when he fell from the top of a corn bin and despite efforts to save him, he died.

The plaque at Ham Farm was added as a memorial to this young lad taken at such an early age, and is thought to have been incorporated into the very last part of the house still in construction at the time.

His older brother John Arnold continued farming at Buckland right up until his death in 1940.

Roger Dunn – Research Editor

Do you know of any other buildings with a date or name stone which might make an interesting article for a future edition of the Dolton & Dowland Diary? Please get in touch.