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Late Mr. and Mrs. Neville Grenville Memorial in Butleigh Church

A correspondent writes : — A memorial tablet designed by Captain W. F- Dickinson was recently dedicated in Butleigh Church to the memory of the late Mr. and Mrs. Neville Grenville of Butleigh Court.

Mr. Neville Grenville was a man of unusually diverse interests, and although he became a recognised authority on several quite unconnected subjects, his main bent was always for engineering, particularly as applied to farming and the improvement of the land.

As an undergraduate at Magdalene in the late sixties, he built himself a steamboat in which he puffed up, and down the river Cam to the horror of the University authorities. Later, at Butleigh he made a steam carriage in which he used to drive about the country with a man on a bicycle in front carrying the statutory red flag. This vehicle is now in the Bristol Museum.

As one would expect he was one of the earliest of motorists. His first internal combustion machine was a motor tricycle: to this he tied a tow rope, and reluctant relations staying at Butleigh were coaxed on to their bicycles, and taken for a tow, hanging terrified on to the end of the rope, enveloped in a haze of blue smoke. Oddly enough, there was never a serious accident.

Trout fishermen owe him more than they know. When Blagdon reservoir was built, he advocated raising revenue by stocking it with trout and selling fishing tickets. The medical authorities at first held up their hands in horror, but he was able to convince them that trout would purify rather than foul the water, and I believe that Blagdon was one of the first reservoirs to be stocked, while the first lot of trout put into it came from "the squire's" hatchery at Butleigh. Incidentally he first started rearing trout in his room at Eton, where, he requisitioned the lower boys' baths so as to get a flow of running water.

He will probably best be remembered in Somerset for his research into elder-making. It seemed to him that there was no reason why with trouble and research a good drinkable cider should not be made which might become a national beverage instead of the crude liquid produced on farms without knowledge or principle. By 1903 the experiments he had started at Butleigh had gone so far that the Board of Agriculture took them up, and the "National Fruit and Cider Institute" was founded. This Institute, now known as "Long Ashton Research Station." celebrated its 50th anniversary last year.

These are only a few of his activities; his brain was never idle; and it was characteristic that in his last illness when he was too weak to sit up in bed without help, he devised an ingenious system of pulleys so that he could pull himself up in bed "under my own steam."

Landowner, county councillor churchman, farmer, engineer; a pioneer in many directions; Somerset owes him much.