

NOTES & QUERIES

FOR
SOMERSET AND DORSET

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*"Attempt the end, and never stand to doubt;
Nothing's so hard, but search will find it out".*

HERRICK

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348. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE ANCESTRY AND CONNECTIONS OF THOMAS HARDY. There is plentiful evidence in his writings that Thomas Hardy took a considerable interest in genealogy. He was always a dedicated antiquarian, but there was a particular romance and mystery in genealogical study which appealed to him. This is clear from such poems as *Heredity*, *Family Portraits*, and *The Pedigree*, in which he describes himself examining his own "sire-sown tree" by moonlight at his study window, and likening it to a mirror, in which, he concluded,

every heavy and coil and move I made
Within my brain, and in my mood and speech,
Was in the glass portrayed
As long forestalled by their so making it.¹

Such reflections are also at the heart of his great novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, in which the whole tragedy is unleashed by the discovery of the drunken haggler, John Durbeyfield, that he is 'the lineal representative of the ancient and knightly family of the d'Urbervilles'. This he learns from 'Parson Tringham, the antiquary', who having carefully traced the d'Urberville line, was able to prove the matter beyond all doubt. All that remained to their debased offspring was an old silver spoon and a graven seal, and the unmistakable family profile. Tringham advised Durbeyfield that there was nothing to be gained by the discovery and that he should merely chasten himself with the thought of 'how are the mighty fallen', advice which for Tess's sake he would have done well to heed.²

It may seem surprising, therefore, that Hardy does not seem to have made any more systematic attempt to discover his own ancestors. A carefully written document in his own hand, dating from about 1917 and entitled 'The Hardy Pedigree', is mainly a record of family traditions, based on memory, tombstone inscriptions, and references from Hutchins's *History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset*. He takes his male-line no further than five tentative generations, but alludes to a putative descent from some distinguished immigrants from Jersey, the le Hardys, and kinship with his two celebrated Dorset namesakes, Thomas Hardy, the founder of the Dorchester Grammar School in 1569, and Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy, Nelson's Flag Captain.³

This document is most remarkable, indeed, for the assiduousness with which attention is drawn to any kinship, however tenuous, with men of distinction or education, and for what is left out. The reality was that Hardy's immediate family was humbly placed. His reasons for wishing to disguise the fact

were probably more than mere snobbery, but rather, as Dr Gittings puts it, 'a compulsion' to 'shut the door on a social past from which he had escaped'.⁴ In the pedigree, as in *The Life of Thomas Hardy* which was published posthumously in his wife's name but is in fact autobiographical, and which 'tends to raise the social status of his mother and father', Hardy 'omits almost totally his other close relatives, uncles, aunts and very numerous cousins. The touchstone throughout seems to have been social class. Labourers, cobblers, bricklayers, carpenters, farm servants, journeyman joiners, butlers have no place in Hardy's memoirs, though he was related to all of these'.⁵

But notwithstanding such determined efforts as the *Life* to 'set up a barrier against biography'⁶ the true facts of Hardy's background could not be concealed and are not well known — though it should quickly be said that there is absolutely nothing impious or, to our eyes, shameful, in it. He liked to think that, like the Durbeyfields, his family had been subject to a decline and fall, and perhaps it was a fear that the truth might prove too unpalatable that deterred him from delving too deeply into such matters. He was born in 1840, in one of seven houses which made up the hamlet of Higher Bockhampton in the parish of Stinsford. His father, grandfather and great grandfather, had all been masons. The great grandfather, John Hardy (who built the family home at Bockhampton), is said to have started from nothing, but made a success of himself and his son and grandson also achieved relative prosperity in their trade. The poet's mother, on the other hand, though a woman of spirit and intelligence, had been a maid-servant and one of seven children brought up on Poor Law relief. When Hardy began to move in educated circles, his brother and two sisters, who were broad country people, could not keep up with him.⁷

In Hardy's novels it is often difficult to distinguish fiction from reality. His Wessex characters are all recognisable types, and so many of them, like the places described, seem to have actual models. Thus it is piquant to find a real-life Parson Tringham (of Hardy's acquaintance) being the first to produce some more scholarly theories about the earlier Hardy generations. The Rev. Richard Grosvenor Bartelot was Vicar of Fordington, near Dorchester (whose parish included Hardy's home at Max Gate), Dorset editor of *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries*, and a prolific author on the genealogy and antiquities of his county.⁸ In 1928 he published an article in *SDNQ* headed 'Stinsford and the Hardy family'.⁹ A genealogist never knows what he may find, good or ill. But had Hardy been able to make use of this material he could have

composed a pedigree linking him, by blood, with many of the most prominent families of his locality, families who were well known to him and who, moreover, had no small influence on his life and work.

In his article Bartelot relates that he had had with the recently dead poet 'many talks ... about his own immediate ancestors. He told me he had no idea where John Hardy, his great grandfather, came from when he settled at Bockhampton: also that his family had a tradition that they were connected with the Hardys of Portesham and thus distantly were collateral kinsmen to Admiral Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy, Bart., Nelson's flag captain on the *Victory*.'

Now Bartelot's researches led him to believe that this tradition was probably founded upon fact. But though he presents a plausible case for this, many will disagree about the degree of probability his arguments sustain. Nevertheless one must acknowledge his achievement in tracing the baptism of John, the first Bockhampton Hardy: knowing the ages at death of John and his wife, Jane Knight, he had little difficulty in finding record of their marriage at Woodsford in 1777, and of John's baptism at Owermoigne on 25 April 1756. Thence it was possible to trace in the Owermoigne registers John's parents (another John, and Elizabeth Swyre) and an uncle and aunt, and his grandparents, Joseph Hardy and Jane James, who married at Owermoigne on 28 September 1712.

Bartelot proffers an explanation for John Hardy's migration to Fordington, where the Banns Book records him as a resident in 1777. He suggests that as 'the Swyre family belonged to Fordington', the six-year-old John had been taken in by his mother's people when she died in 1762; his subsequent career had taken him to Puddletown and then to Higher Bockhampton. As for the origins of the Joseph Hardy who is the earliest of the line we can trace in the Owermoigne registers, Bartelot had an even more ingenious explanation: he contended that he was indeed a scion of the Hardy family of Portesham, and none other than the younger son of John Hardy, a gentleman of that place, who was left his large chests and other furniture in John's will of 1704, but then disappeared without trace.¹⁰ The poet's ancestor Joseph of Owermoigne would thus have been the great grand uncle of the famous Admiral Hardy.

Bartelot was able to cite in support of his case a twenty-year familiarity with 'every single register within a radius of twenty miles around Stinsford' — a familiarity to which grateful users

of his numerous transcripts in the Society of Genealogists' Library will attest. But it is a somewhat selective use he makes of them. Speaking of Owermoigne, he says: 'the registers are perfect there, and do not record any baptism of a Joseph Hardy. In fact the name Joseph only occurs in the families of the Hardeys (*sic*) of Portesham and their kinsmen of Bridport and West Compton. Joseph was by no means a common name in Dorset in those days.'

The latter statement I find astonishing and insupportable; and as for the condition of the Owermoigne registers, they are certainly good, but how can one ever be sure they are perfect? My own knowledge of these registers tends to suggest that there are omissions; and moreover, Bartelot prefers to overlook the fact that there are Hardys recorded in them intermittently from as early as 1624. Thus Bartelot uses thoroughly tendentious arguments to support a theory that is interesting and plausible but which, however, is probably beyond proof.

It is high time that some more systematic research was done into the Hardys of Dorsetshire. My own feeling is that, whether or not the poet's ancestors came to Owermoigne in the early 18th or the early 17th century, they probably *were* an offshoot of the Portesham family. That line boasted a descent from the le Hardys by way of the armigerous Hardys of Toller Whelme (whose arms, incidentally, they were sporting by at least 1704);¹¹ but this traditional pedigree, which was recorded in the College of Arms in 1822, was discredited by F. J. Pope in 1907 — as Bartelot himself, who had reproduced it in a recent work about Admiral Hardy, acknowledged.¹² Pope pointed to the presence of Hardys at Portesham since at least 1524, and indeed had found a 'Henry Herde' at Abbotsbury, the neighbouring parish, on the Lay Subsidy Roll of 1332. The numerous Hardys in the church registers are not distinguished as gentlemen till quite late, and earlier are explicitly ranked in documents among the yeomen or husbandmen. The migration of a branch to Owermoigne, no great distance away, would not seem unlikely; in a similar way the prolific Samwayes family of Portesham, neighbours and kinsmen of the Hardys, had evidently spread themselves over many parishes in South Dorset (where, even in a single village, they often had representatives in all ranks from gentry to labourers).¹³

One may make more definite assertions about the family of Jane James, who married the poet's earliest Owermoigne ancestor in the town in 1712. I have had little difficulty in constructing a James pedigree using the registers and available

wills, and though I have had to conjecture Jane's precise place on it, I have done so with confidence.¹⁴ She was, I believe, the Jane James baptised at Fordington on 7 July 1687, and daughter of Joseph James of Owermoigne and of Hannah his wife, daughter of John and Elizabeth Bun of Fordington. (This Fordington connection provides an alternative explanation for John Hardy's presence there in 1777. For in spite of Bartelot's statement that 'the Swyre family belonged to Fordington', they could equally be said to belong to Owermoigne, and indeed there were two Elizabeth Swyres baptised there in 1729 and 1730, as opposed to one at Fordington in 1730.) The baptism of Jane's father, Joseph, I have not found because of a lacuna in the registers during the Commonwealth period: but on the evidence of those registers he can only have been a younger son of Edward James (c.1619-1686), who had two hearths in 1662; and this Edward's ancestors are known as far as his great grandfather, John, buried at Owermoigne in 1593¹⁵.

There is little more to be said about these early Jameses: their distinction lies in their later descendants, among them the Rev. John Angell James (1785-1859), the fiery baptist minister of Carr's Lane, Birmingham, who wrote in his autobiographical notes: 'I have nothing to boast of as regards the distinction of earthly heraldry, none of titled rank or fame can be found in the line of my ancestry; but what to a Christian is a far greater honour, some of God's nobility were among them'. He rightly assesses that his 'pious progenitors' were 'not men of wealth, but belonged to the yeomanry of the county, and lived principally in the neighbourhood of Dorchester'¹⁶. One notes with regret that Angell James had mislaid a pedigree he once had of his paternal line, going back 200 years, but he recalls one tradition (which Hardy would have enjoyed) of an ancestor who was a juror at the Bloody Assizes at the same time as he was concealing some of the fugitive rebels in his own house.¹⁷ This was perhaps Edward James, or his son Giles (Joseph's brother), from whom descend many of Thomas Hardy's most interesting connections.

Giles's son, Angel James the elder, Yeoman of Owermoigne (c.1686-1741), left money bequests ranging from £30 to one shilling to his sons and daughters (one of whom was married to a yeoman, another to a labourer). His land in Lower Litchett was left to his two sons Giles and Angel.¹⁸ Of his three daughters, the best-placed (as she had several hundred pounds to dispose of in her will)¹⁹ was probably Alice, who had married John Wood. Wood's origins as yet are quite unknown but he

may have belonged to a gentry family which is found at Abbotsbury in the 17th century.²⁰ In 1782 Alice was living at Poxwell in her native parish of Owermoigne — possibly in the picturesque Hall which appears as the 'Squireen' Benjamin Derriman's house in *The Trumpet-Major*.²¹ Like her James relatives at this time, Alice Wood's family was fiercely nonconformist. One of her daughters married the dissenting minister of Cerne Abbas.²² Her sons, who were evidently highly successful as farmers, were also in a position to further the cause of nonconformity. We find James Wood, Esq., the owner in 1799 of Westbrook House in Upwey, 'a large ancient stone house, which seems to have been built by Sir Thomas Freke, who resided here about 1620'. James Wood was unmarried and was succeeded by his brother George (1746-1826), who came from Dorchester to live at Upwey, though not in Westbrook House which was sold with eleven acres in 1806.²³ A year or two after this, George fitted up a room in one of his cottages at Upwey for the use of the Independents 'and a Thursday evening service was conducted by the Congregational ministers of Weymouth. The attendance increasing, and the room being incommodious, Mr Wood erected, on his own land, and at his sole expense, a chapel, which was opened Dec. 13th, 1810, the Rev. R. Keynes, of Blandford, preaching in the morning ... Service henceforward was held on the Sunday evening, and failing a preacher, Mr Wood read a sermon ... Mrs Wood, at an early period, with a few helpers, began a Sunday School, at that time very needful, for many of the children could not read.'²⁴

The renascence of nonconformity in Dorsetshire in the 19th century is traced by Densham and Ogle in their history of the Dorset Congregations: by 1911, Hardy himself could write of 'half the population (I should suppose) being Nonconformists — either avowedly or essentially'.²⁵ The influence of its great farming adherents, most of them yeomen in origin, has also been acknowledged. Gittings spoke of the 'very powerful Congregationalist colony in the Dorchester area' and 'this group of Congregationalist landowners, Manfields, Woods, Samsons and Homers'.²⁶ The last three, at least, were all intermarried: George Wood of Upwey had three daughters of whom two married Samsons and one a Homer; the Manfields were relatives by marriage of Admiral Hardy. They all continued throughout the 19th century to endow chapels and schools: and it was their activities in this connection which were repeatedly to affect the life of their distant kinsman Thomas Hardy. For it was William Manfield, a solicitor and landowner, who in 1853 set up that excellent private school in Dorchester

under Isaac Last at which Hardy was one of the first pupils. In Dr Gittings's view Manfield had been 'undoubtedly encouraged' in this by his neighbours, the Woods, Samsons and Homers, whilst this group of families had 'provided a body of backing for Last's further plans, and incidentally, a lucky addition to Hardy's further education'.²⁷

Most influential of them all was George Wood's only son, George James (1807-1867). He inherited the two family farms at Upwey but in 1836 took on a lease (with his brother-in-law Joseph Vaizey) of the large Athelhampton estate, near Puddletown, which included the impressive medieval Hall, from the Earl of Mornington's son Viscount Wellesley. Wood had made such a success of his farming business by 1848 that he was able to purchase the estate from Lord Wellesley (against the wishes of the latter's father who felt it was being sold 'at a most inadequate value'), and according to his own family, Wood's subsequent restoration of the Hall saved it from imminent ruin.²⁸

Now the nearest great house to Hardy's birthplace was at Kingston Maurward, where, as is well known, the child Hardy was a favourite of its owner's wife Julia Augusta Martin. But Athelhampton is only a couple of miles in the other direction, and its imperious squire through most of Hardy's early life was George James Wood, whom these researches now show to have been his own fourth cousin twice removed. Hardy knew the Hall and its owners well. His father is thought to have been employed by Wood on his work of restoration. He himself painted a watercolour of it when he was nineteen; and when in the early 1860s Wood built a nonconformist church on his land at Athelhampton, Hardy worked on it as assistant to the Dorchester architect John Hicks. As 'Athel Hall' the house, whose romantic appearance is liable to fire anyone's imagination, makes three appearances in his work.²⁹

Wood also followed Manfield's example by founding (in a building still to be seen next to his church at Athelhampton) a nonconformist school, and it was here that the first cousin to whom Hardy was so close, Tryphena Sparks, was educated. Yet another school had been endowed at Coryates, on his Portesham estate, by Wood's brother-in-law Thomas Samson of Kingston Russell House (1800-1844), and hither it would seem that Tryphena, who had done well at Athelhampton, came as a pupil-teacher in about 1868. She would naturally have secured the appointment through the influence of the Woods, and their niece, Miss Elizabeth Samson of Upwey, who

then ran the school, showed Tryphena especial favour. Gittings notes that she "stayed with Miss Samson at Upwey during a later school holiday, an extraordinary privilege for a girl of her class: 'don't you seem to see me with a servant behind my chair at meals?', she joked to her brother". Later he says of Elizabeth, 'she would judge Tryphena as she would a servant. Indeed, when Tryphena, as a head-teacher, stayed with her half a dozen years later, Miss Samson, taking her to Weymouth by train, paid for her fare second-class, while she herself travelled first, an arrangement most employers made with servants.'³⁰

This chain of circumstance is not pointed out merely for its irony — (though Tryphena was not a blood relative of the Samsons, Hardy certainly was) — but because it was through his meetings with Tryphena at Weymouth at this time that Hardy would have heard from her stories of Catherine Hawkins of Waddon, a relative as well as a neighbour of her employer, whose grandmother was a Hawkins. She was the resolute widow who, in her determination to take on the management of the family farm, gave Hardy the idea for Bathsheba Everdene of *Far From The Madding Crowd*, his first successful novel published in 1874, which Gittings has called 'the fruit of Hardy's attachment to Tryphena'.³¹ The Hawkins, one of the oldest yeoman families in the area, whose broad farmland stretched from the outskirts of Dorchester almost to Chesil Beach, were much intermarried with these Congregationalist families, Homers, Samsons etc., though they do not appear to have espoused nonconformity themselves.³²

Hardy's fruitful connections with these unexpected kinfolk were not, however, confined to his early life. When James Wood died without issue, he made his younger nephew, George Wood Homer (1838-1918), heir to his estates.³³ George Wood Homer and his wife were friends of the mature Hardy, who was often received at Athelhampton Hall and, after that house was sold (with fourteen acres) in 1891, at Bardolf Manor which they built on the estate. Regarding the latter, Hardy told Mrs Wood Homer years later of his mother's 'high approval of your fixing your residence on such a healthy spot', and that the recently dead lady had often admired Mr Homer's 'practical energy and capacity'. Other references in the *Letters* reveal the extent of the association. It was through the Homers that Hardy got to know Hermann Lea, who was learning farming from George Wood Homer, and whose friendship with Hardy was to result in that seminal work, *Thomas Hardy's Wessex*. And their daughter Christine Wood Homer was also to publish, in 1964, many

useful observations about Hardy and his two wives for J. Stevens Cox's series of *Monographs on the Life of Thomas Hardy*.³⁴

A practised student of English genealogy will cease to be surprised by the ramifications he is liable to uncover. Apart from the question of heredity, cousinships as remote as those described here can have no practical significance unless they are known to the people concerned, which was certainly not the case with Hardy and the Woods. They are of more interest, perhaps, to the social historian who takes a broad chronological view; and also as a demonstration of the vicissitudes of families, of which phenomena, one gathers from *Tess*, Thomas Hardy had some inkling.

Abbreviations

D.R.O. Dorset County Record Office, Dorchester

Gittings Robert Gittings, *Young Thomas Hardy* (Harmondsworth 1978)

Hutchins John Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset*, 3rd Edition (1860-71)

SDNQ *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries* (Volumes annually since 1888)

1. These poems are in *The Complete Poems* (1976), Nos. 363, 912 and 390 respectively. *The Pedigree* is dated 1916.
2. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), Chap. I. Cf. *The Trumpet-Major* (1880), Chap. II.
3. 'The Hardy Pedigree' (Dorset County Museum) is reproduced in Timothy O'Sullivan, *Thomas Hardy: An Illustrated Biography* (1975), p.9. I have dated it from internal evidence: 'John F. Childs of Looe (living 1917)'.
4. Gittings, 19.
5. *Ibid.*, 18.
6. *Ibid.*, 15.
7. See *ibid.* for the best treatment of Hardy's background, and G. D. Squibb, 'Thomas Hardy's Maternal Grandparents', *SDNQ*, XXXI, 315-17, for useful particulars of his mother's side. It is interesting that Hardy's great mentor and precursor, William Barnes, also claimed to come from a 'downstart' family, one which certainly had suffered a sharp decline in recent generations: see Alan Chedzoy, *William Barnes: A Life of the Dorset Poet* (Wimborne 1985), 13-15.
8. He was Vicar of Fordington from 1906-36, so came too late into Hardy's life to have been the actual model for Tringham.
9. *SDNQ*, XIX, 106-9.
10. Will of John Hardy senior of Portesham, Gent., dated 8 May 1704, proved in the Archdeaconry Court of Dorset 6 March 1705 (D.R.O.). For an abstract see A. M. Broadley and R. G. Bartelot, *The Three Dorset Captains at Trafalgar* (1905), 289.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, 7-11, and Appendix D, where a full Hardy pedigree incorporating all the traditional descents is reproduced: but in spite of its errors, this remains a useful and very readable work; F. J. Pope, 'The Hardys of Toller Whelme', *SDNQ*, X, 70-1; letter of 4 Nov 1906 to James Rose in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, III (1982), ed. Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 234-5. F. R. Southerington, *The Early Hardys (Monographs on the Life of Thomas Hardy No. 28, St Peter Port 1968)* is a thoroughly wasted opportunity: all the discredited family traditions are repeated there and little information is given about the Hardys that had not already been published. In his 'simplified pedigree' Southerington endorses Bartelot's theory without acknowledging him. Beyond a brief list of original sources used — church registers etc. — there are no references to support the statements made.
13. See my detailed pedigree of the Samwayses.

14. The Fordington registers specify that Jane was daughter to Joseph and Hanna James. The parents of a Sarah James, bapt. on 9 Sept 1685, and of Joseph, bapt. 7 Oct 1695, also at Fordington, are not given, but there can be no doubt that they were Jane's siblings. The same Joseph probably married Margery Tuffin at St Mary's, Blandford, on 8 Feb 1710/11.
15. Edward is the only recorded male James of his generation in Owermoigne. Joseph seems to be a family name among his descendants. See *Dorset Hearth Tax Assessments 1662-4* (1951), 78, where Widd' Hardy is down for one hearth.
16. *D.N.B.: The Life and Letters of John Angell James, including an Unfinished Autobiography*, ed. R. W. Dale, M.A., his colleague and successor, 3rd Edn. (London 1861); Hutchins, I, 235. James was celebrated both as a preacher and a prolific author on religious subjects. He was son of Joseph James of Blandford (1753-1812), a draper and maker of wire buttons, whose own father, at one time bailiff for a gentleman in Berkshire and known to George III as 'Farmer James', was a native of Swanage (see *Life and Letters*, 12). He was called 'Angell' in honour of his maternal great aunt but 'between the Angells and the Jameses there was an alliance of old standing. In the churchyard of the little village of Owermoigne, there are many tombstones on which the names blend together; and when not long ago an heir was wanted for large estates at Brixton and elsewhere, belonging to the Angells, the connexion between the two families excited a good deal of curiosity and interest' (*ibid.*, 16-17; cf. Hutchins, IV, 201). There is only one ref. to the Angell family in the Owermoigne registers — the baptism on 1 Dec 1582 of Thomas son of Thomas Angell of Watercombe. The fore-name Angel, which Hardy gave to Angel Clare in *Tess*, was also common in the Grey family formerly of Kingston Maurward, and it was at Angel Grey's monument in Stinsford church, surmounted by a gaping skull, that the young Hardy used to stare 'with relishing horror'. See Gittings, 27, and Hutchins, II, 564, for the Grey pedigree, where the name can be traced back to Angel Smith of Stratton, whose daughter Joan married George Grey of Kingston Maurward in 1601. The monument is illustrated in O'Sullivan, *op.cit.*, 55.
17. *Life and Letters*, *op.cit.*, 12-17.
18. Will dated 11 July 1741, proved in the Archdeaconry Court of Dorset 24 Feb 1741/2, in the D.R.O., ref. AD/DT/W/1741/54.
19. Will dated 31 Aug 1782, proved in the Court of the Bishop of Bristol 9 June 1784, D.R.O. ref. BC/W/W/146.
20. Baptism of James, the son of Mr John Wood, at Abbotsbury, 13 April 1669. There was an Angell Wood, Gent., of Abbotsbury, who died in 1682 (admon. deed in the D.R.O. ref. AD/DT/A/1682/1), and whose Christian name may indicate an earlier family link. He left a widow, Jane and a son Nicholas. See also Hutchins, II, 391, *The Sherborne Register 1823-1900*, 311, and the registers of Holy Trinity for a family of Wood in Dorchester.
21. I feel this is possible because of Alice's relative wealth, and the fact that Poxwell's Trenchard owners seem to have been seated elsewhere at the time. See *The Trumpet-Major*, especially Chap. VI. Festus Derriman is repeatedly called a Yeoman in the book, whilst Benjamin is the 'farmer-squire', 'whose guineas were reputed to touch five figures'. He had originally been only the tenant of the crumbling Oxwell Hall, 'once the seat of a family now extinct, and of late years used as a farmhouse'. A partition of the estate had given him 'the opportunity of acquiring the building and a small portion of land attached on exceptionally low terms'. The Hall was then in a sorry state, 'the quadrangle of the ancient pile was a bed of mud and manure, inhabited by calves, geese, ducks and sow pigs surprisingly large, with young ones surprisingly small'; a hurdle in the porch was necessary 'to keep the livestock from absolute community with the inmates'. As Hardy clearly implies in this chapter, he had read of houses with such histories in Hutchins' great work, and knew of many personally. One could almost be reading of Athelhampton Hall in the early 19th century. A remarkable number of the manor houses in south Dorset, including many of the finest, had been reduced to farmhouses because of the extinction of male lines or because the families who owned them had seats elsewhere: one may mention here Kingston Russell (leased from the Michels in the 18th and 19th centuries by the Mastermans and the Hardys — the family of Admiral Hardy who was born there —

and subsequently by the Samsons); Martinstown Manor House (leased from the Pitt and Lane-Fox family by the Mastermans and Hardys again, then by the Hawkins who bought it in 1817); and Waddon House (leased from the Chafin-Groves by the Wallises and then, from 1805 to 1927, by the Hawkins). Athelhampton Hall is the most striking example: when George James Wood acquired it, it had been used as a farmhouse for 50 years. A neighbour, Lady Dorothy Nevill, remembered its garden as 'a wilderness through which cattle roamed right up to the door' whilst its drawing room had served as a granary.

22. The Rev. William Harvey: see Alice's will, *loc.cit.*, and W. Densham and J. Ogle, *The Story of the Congregational Churches of Dorset from their Foundation to the Present Time* (1899), 73.
23. Hutchins, II, 844-5. George was of Holy Trinity, Dorchester, at his marriage to Dorothy Coward at Cerne Abbas on 25 Oct 1803.
24. Densham and Ogle, *op.cit.*, 322.
25. Letter of 19 Jan 1911 to R. G. Bartelot in *The Collected Letters*, IV (1984), 138.
26. Gittings, 46. For a more detailed discussion of these families, see my illustrated article "Bathsheba Everdene' and Her Yeoman Connections", *Dorset Life* (July 1988), 60-63. William Boldwood in *Far From The Madding Crowd*, and indeed Bathsheba herself, are very much in their mould.
27. Gittings, 46. William Manfield, of Dorchester, was nephew to Admiral Hardy.
28. See Clive Aslett, 'Athelhampton, Dorset — II', *Country Life* (17 May 1984), 1374-7, who writes: 'As well as being something of a botanist, Wood was also a skilful sheep farmer. He founded the Dorchester Farmers' Club, of which he was president'; he also quotes his widow who wrote that 'a degree of imperiousness became habitual to him'; Densham and Ogle, *op.cit.*, 221-4, where he is described as 'a kind, Christian gentleman, with large means and a large heart, steadfast in his principles, and a tower of strength to his denomination'; Gittings, 46, 159, 174; Hutchins, II, 481, 586 ff., 617, 844-6; Sidney Heath and W. de C. Prideaux, *Some Dorset Manor Houses* (1907), Chap. I, etc. etc. It is interesting that Wood and his wife elected to be buried among his James ancestors in Owermoigne churchyard: the late Sir Robert Cooke told me that there is no gravestone to be found there but see the memorial tablet in Athelhampton church and Densham and Ogle, *loc.cit.*, where we also learn of Wood's kinship with John Angell James. His wife was Mary de Horne Vaizey (died 28 March 1880), daughter of John Vaizey of Halstead, Essex, whose pedigree is in *Burke's Landed Gentry* (1952). His will is in Somerset House.
29. See Aslett, *loc.cit.* For Hardy's part in the building of the church, see his letter to Cart de Lafontaine dated 11 Jan 1917 in *The Collected Letters*, V, 198.
30. Gittings, 158-9, 171, 174.
31. *Ibid.*, 159-60, 247, 252.
32. The pedigree *in extenso* of the Hawkins of Abbotsbury, Portesham and Martinstown, by this writer, is to appear in a forthcoming edition of *SDNQ*.
33. He was the 2nd son, by Elizabeth Wood, of John Green Homer of Martinstown, who from 1841 to 1867 leased Westbrook Farm from George James Wood. See the latter's account book in the D.R.O. ref. D 755/3, which shows also that in the last year of his life Wood spent £133 Os 4d on Athelhampton School.
34. Christine Wood Homer, *Thomas Hardy and His Two Wives (Monographs on the Life of Thomas Hardy No. 18, Beaminster 1964)*; *The Collected Letters*, II, 27, III, 122-3, IV, 246-7, 307, 332, V, 1. Mr Hugo Wood Homer of Bardolf Manor still farms the Athelhampton estate.

RUPERT WILLOUGHBY

349. THE BURCY FAMILY AT TARRANT GUNVILLE. In *SDNQ* XVII, part CXXXII, p. 128, E. A. Fry brought to light some medieval Burcy family deeds without adding any information regarding the origins of this family and how they arrived in Tarrant Gunville. I have recently been compiling a list of references to the Burcy family in medieval England from the time of the conquest and can contribute some background information to this family.

The earliest deeds printed in volume 17 are from the early 14th century, 1326, 1334, etc. whereas in fact the Burcy family were settled in Tarrant Gunville as much as 150 years prior to these dates. In 1185 a Hugo de Burci held a virgate of the templars land in 'Tarrant' (B. A. Lees, *The Records of the Templars*, 1935), and in 1232 a Walter de Burcy held land in Stubhampton, which is next to Tarrant Gunville, from Isabella the widow of Hugh de Gundeville (HMSO, *Curia Regis Rolls* 1230-1232). Again in 1235 a Geffrey de Burcy is mentioned as holding land in Tarrant Gunville (*SDNQ*, XIV, Part CXI, p. 299). The question of how they arrived in Tarrant Gunville is, I believe, explained by a reference in *Honors and Knights' Fees* vol 3 by William Farrer (1925), when discussing the Honor of Arundel and in particular Hugh de Gundeville, the sheriff of Hampshire from 1170 to 1179. Farrer quotes a manuscript in the Cotton collection at the B.M. which mentions Hugh de Gundevill and Agnes de Falaise his wife. E. A. Fry was quite right when he says that the Burcy family could not have descended from Serlo de Burci of the conqueror's time as he only had two daughters. However the link certainly is found when, as Domesday Book states, Serlo's daughter Geva married as her second husband William of Falaise. Therefore it is the Falaise family who involve the Burcy family in Tarrant Gunville. Farrer also quotes the pipe roll for 27 Henry II (1181) which states that, 'in that year Robert de Gundevill proffered 40 marks for seisin of a knight's fee in Tarrant Gunville as he had it before the death of Hugh his uncle'.

The Burcy family which flourished in Dorset and Somerset during the 12th century were descendants of knights who either accompanied Serlo de Burci at the time of the conquest or who were brought over by him to hold land as tenants of Serlo (but also of land held by Serlo from Glastonbury Abbey). The only male relative of Serlo in England after the conquest was a Nigel de Burci in Cheshire and it was this Nigel who inherited the actual fee of Burcy in Normandy. The Burcy family had as their lord Serlo de Burci, then William de Falaise the second husband of Geva de Burci (who incidentally is the younger

William and not the same William de Falaise who fought with William the Conqueror in 1066), and eventually Robert fitz Martin the son of Geva de Burci by her first marriage. Henry II confirmed the lands of Serlo de Burci to Robert fitz Martin in 1154. By the mid 12th century the sons and grandsons of the original members of the Burcy family needed new avenues to open up their prospects and without doubt because of the Falaise link with the Gundevilles they arrived in the middle of the 12th century at Tarrant Gunville to work for Hugh or his nephew Robert.

PETER BURSEY

350. CHARTERHOUSE WARREN.

— 'The rabbits fed on this warren come in competition with those of Avebury Chace for fast but exceed them in Bigness. This warren is called Charterhouse Hydon.' (John Strachey, MS History of Somerset in SRO)

'Warren' place-names are fairly common on Mendip and nearly always denote the site of former rabbit-breeding and rearing enterprises, usually of post-medieval date. The warren at Dolebury hillfort,¹ that at Shute Shelf, Axbridge,² and that at Warrens Hill, Cheddar,³ have been surveyed and published, but little or no documentary evidence has been found for them, and only Dolebury has shown evidence of vermin traps, features common in the warrens of Dartmoor.⁴

Charterhouse Warren is unusual in that it has quite adequate documentary evidence, but very little surviving field evidence due to subsequent mining and arable farming activity. The warren was established by Johnathan Prickman, a member of a London merchant family, in the few years immediately preceeding 1667, as is evidenced by the petition preserved in the Jefferies MSS.⁵ The petition is addressed to '.. the Right Honoble Edward Lord Hyde, Lord Chauncellor of England ..' a post he held for the years 1660-1667.⁶ After reciting the spurious case of Lord Chief Justice Chock calling together the Commoners of Mendip in the time of Edward IV (the case quoted on some of the Mendip Mining Maps⁷), the petition continues;

'... within Fifty yeares now last past there have beene several Free warrens claymed and made on Mendipp aforesaid which yett continue fully stored with coneyes which Freewarrens proved somewhat prejudicall to the Comon of your petitioners and their predecessors there, But in respect of their damage thereby was not very greatt both they and their predecessors ceased to complain thereof.

But now soe it is may it please your Lo'pp that one Johnathan Prickman haveinge neither Mannors nor Lordshipp upon Mendipp hath of late yeares erected severall Free warrens on severall parts of the Comons of Mendipp aforesaid, viz: Temple Downe, Rowborow Meade and Hydon Slight, and fully stocked the same with conyes, And the better to support the same, hath lately obtained his now Majesties warrant for a graunt of one or more Freewarrens on Mendipp aforesaid, whereby your petitioners are att present very much prejudiced in their said Comon, and like to be more if not wholly deprived of the same which wilbee to the utter ruin of them and of theire poore families.

May it therefore please your Lo'pp to intercede for your petitioners to their most gracious Sovereigne Lord the King ...'

Unfortunately, the petitioners of this lugubrious document are not named, but many manors locally had traditional grazing rights in the area.⁸ 'Hydon Slight' was the area that later became known variously as 'Charterhouse Warren' or 'Charterhouse Ewe Sleight', while Rowborow Meade, a remarkable enclave of Rowberrow parish on the warren until well into the 19th cent., lay entirely within the larger warren.⁹

The other major document concerning the warren is a lease of 1729, which has somehow found its way into a group of Cheddar Fitzwater manor documents deposited in the Somerset Record Office.¹⁰ The salient points are as follows:

'Edward Gore ... to Robert Starr of Charterhouse Hydon .. (leases) .. all that antient freewarren of coneys and the Lodge there upon Charterhouse Hill and all that other warren called Rowborrough Mead, and also full and free liberty to continue and keep that part of ground called the Parke and Middlewood lying in Charterhouse aforesaid and now used and stored with coneys too and for a warren together with full and free ingress egress and regress to him Robert Starre to kill and take away to his own use any of the coneys there, also[other lands] .. he will keep the said warrens and all the burroughs in good repair, sweet, well-fitted and in good condition to receive hold and keep the coneys ... [and at the end of the 20 year lease] .. shall yield up the warrens stored with 2000 couple of coneys in good condition ... 1000 couples upon the ancient Freewarren, 500 couples in the ground called Parke and Middlewoods, 500 couple in Rowborough Mead. to be estimated by two well-known men that are well-seen in that profession, one to be appointed by each ... if less than 2000, the said Robert Starre shall pay 16 pence for every couple of coneys wanting ... if more, then Gore shall pay 16 pence per couple to Starre ... [he covenants] not to be made or left any smell, noisom matter or poison or any such like thing in or near the Burroughs of the said warren, or drive out or chase any of the coneys out of the said warren ...'

Gore also maintained the right to buy coneys at 12d per couple. The grounds mentioned in this lease that concern us at present are Rowberrow Mead and the 'ancient freewarren', which between them cover the area now known as 'The Warren'. Further documents in the Somerset Record Office add some details: the tenant of the warren in 1675 was Francis Luttrell, who paid £65 per annum (£60 in cash and 100 couple of rabbits, valued for the purposes of the lease at 12d each);¹¹ 'chimny

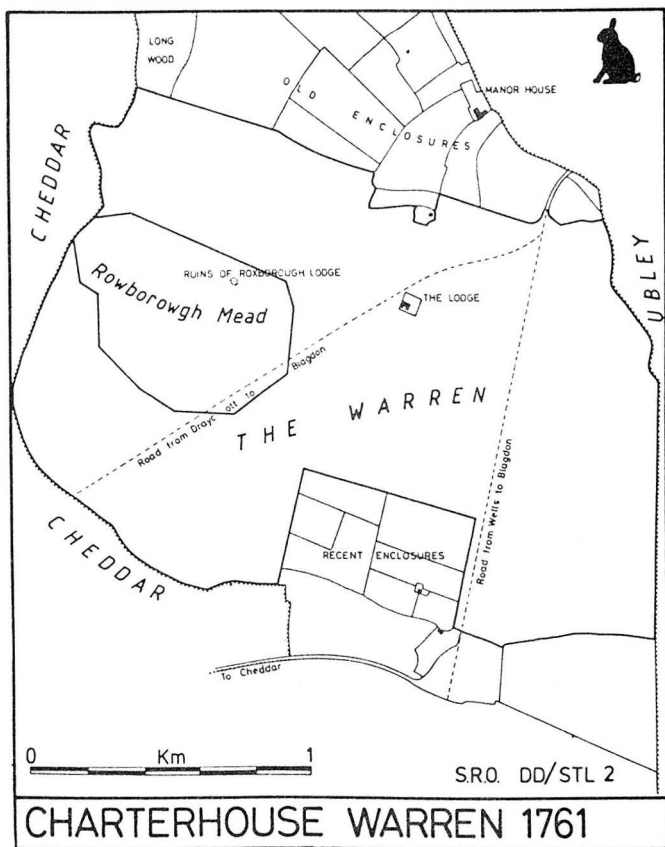


Fig. 1

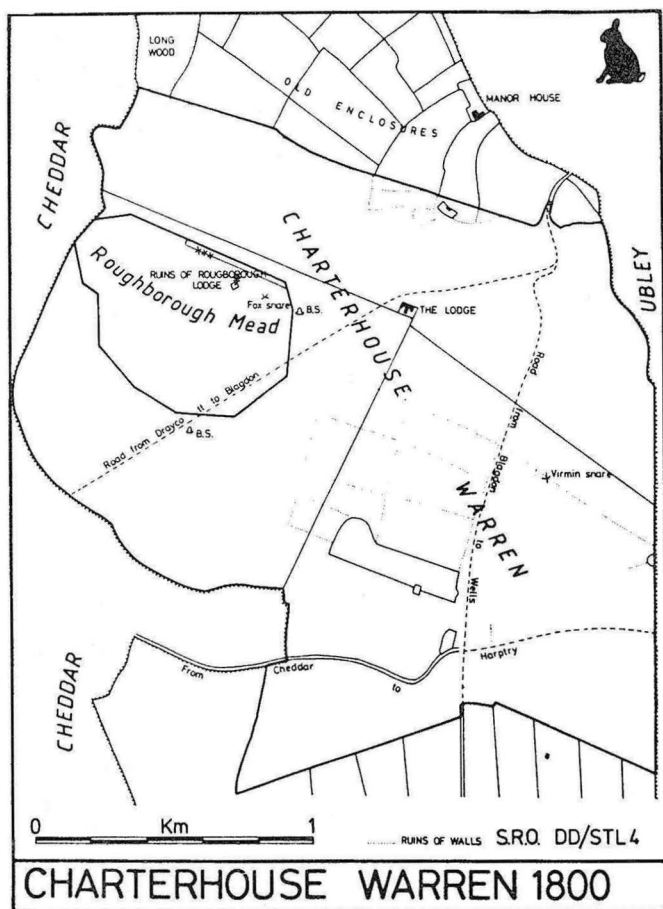


Fig. 2

money' is recorded as being paid on many occasions for the 'new lodge' — at 6/- per year;¹¹ repairs to both Charterhouse Lodge (e.g. in 1675) and Rowberrow Lodge (e.g. in 1678) are mentioned, while a particular of 1680-1700 details '... the warren (274 acres) being well stored with game, with a new lodge yt cost £300 building and lett for £65 ..';¹¹ a 'pore rate' for Rowberrow Mead was made each year to the parish of Rowberrow;¹¹ and by 1761 the tenant was James Osmond.¹² Whether the warren was still in use in 1761 is not clear; certainly structures in it were recognisable about 1800,¹³ although by this time Rowberrow Lodge was in ruins, only finally being cleared away in the 1970s.¹⁴

The above documents reveal much about the physical structure of the warren. There were two lodges, one newer than the other. There were certainly rabbit buries ('pillow mounds') of which only three certainly survive today, near the top of Velvet Bottom, and a direct link between the warren and Long Wood ('Pd Briggs the carpenter for making 2 pr. gates to keep the rabbits out of ye wood and grounds 16/-', 1676¹¹).

The Charterhouse map of 1761 is the most detailed early map (*Fig. 1*), showing the warrens occupying a substantial portion of the southern half of the manor.¹² Between the period of the late 17th cent. particular of the manor and 1761 the warren had grown from a quoted 274 acres to a vast 666 acre sprawl. This was partly due to the incorporation of the area known as Charterhouse Ewe Sleight (220 acres) and partly to the taking in of 'the Mindries' — the area today known as Velvet Bottom — the 17th cent. document actually stating that '... workmen being driven from the hill ... by the trouble of the times ...' presumably a reference to the Civil War. At the southern end of the warren, however, a short lived enclosure around what is now King Down Farm had removed about 67 acres from the warren (*Fig. 1*). It is noticeable that two public roads could cross the warrens, presumably with gates at the entrances, although these are not mentioned in the documents. The Draycott to Blagdon road crosses Rowberrow Mead at an angle, and other sources imply that the boundaries of this warren were marked by no more than a line of stones. It is marked thus on a map of part of the warren in 1775;¹⁵ nothing survives on the ground today.

The 1800 map (*Fig. 2*) shows enclosure and, presumably, the final years of the warren. Three long walls had been laid out, meeting near the Lodge (Charterhouse Warren Farm), and the earlier enclosures had largely disappeared, except for two small

surviving arable closes and the 'ruins of walls' then visible. Five vermin traps are shown, two of them labelled 'Fox snare' and 'virmin snare'. These were almost certainly very like those surviving at Dolebury Warren today,¹ cross-shaped arrangements of stones designed to funnel the predators into a trap in the centre.

By 1842, the field divisions within the area of the warren had reached more or less their present pattern.¹⁶ Although four fields still had 'warren' elements in their names, all were quoted as meadow or arable — both somewhat incompatible with rabbit farming. Subsequent arable farming has removed all trace of the roads, traps and buries on the warren itself, leaving only the name and structure of Charterhouse Warren Farm (and a rapidly recovering rabbit population) today.

1. C. & N. Hollinrake, 'Dolebury Warren', *Bristol & Avon Archaeology*, 5 (1987).
2. V. Russett, 'Three rabbit buries at Shute Shelf Hill, Somerset', *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, 130, p.107 (1988).
3. Do., 'Earthworks at Roundhouse Hill, Cheddar', *Newsletter of the Axbridge Arch. & Local Hist. Soc.*, 102 (1987).
4. R. G. Haynes, 'Vermin Traps and Rabbit Warrens on Dartmoor', *Post Medieval Archaeology*, 4, 147 (1970).
5. *Jefferies MSS*, 9, 11 in Bristol Central Reference Library.
6. *Chambers' Encyclopaedia* 7 (1959).
7. See, for example, the Mendip map in Wells Museum.
8. See, for example, the allotments for doles in the Cheddar Enclosure Award, Som. R.O. ref. Q/RDe 38.
9. Pers. comm. R. G. J. Williams, from OS merebooks.
10. Som. R.O., D/P/ched 24/9.
11. Do., DD/GB 114.
12. Do., DD/STL 2.
13. Do., DD/STL 4.
14. *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, 129, p.26 (1987).
15. Som. R.O., DD/STL 3.
16. Do., DD/STL 5.

VINCE RUSSETT

351. THE ILMINSTER CHURCH ORGAN. The writer was organist and choirmaster at the parish church of St. Mary in Ilminster between 1978 and 1985, during which time, under the guidance of Prebendary David Jones, a keen lover of organ music, the organ was rebuilt and tonally improved by Percy Daniel & Co. Ltd. of Clevedon. Legend had it that the organ, or part of it, came from St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, and the obvious beauty of tone of some of the older pipework, which seemed to be of late 17c. origin, was intriguing. It is mentioned in Prebendary James Street's *The Mynster of the Ile* (1904) and in the 1932 church guide with the same title.

The churchwardens' accounts show that major alterations were carried out to the interior of the church in 1825 and that six guineas was paid on 11 Oct. 1826 to a 'man from Exeter for examining the organ';¹ this was Mr Westlake of Exeter Cathedral. Newspapers reported that 'an organ had been erected in Ilminster church by Mr Smith of Bristol which had eighteen stops besides pedals and that the parishioners were highly gratified by hearing the first performance; the organ was opened by Mr William Turle of St. Mary Magdalene, Taunton, and who very liberally, with Mr Charles Harman of Taunton, bestowed their services at Ilminster on this occasion. The 'soft parts' of Mr Turle's voluntary was delivered with unequalled sweetness of effect. The united choirs of Taunton, Ilminster and Crewkerne sang various anthems.'² Was the same chimney flute, which the writer admired, used by Mr Turle in his voluntary?

Did Ilminster have an organ prior to 1826? Neighbouring Chard had had one in 1783 and 'that was reportedly not the first'.³ It was boarded up in 1747 for a few years and not used, which must have disappointed those who paid for it in 1744. The Ilminster churchwardens' accounts reveal that in 1633 'Hayward was paid his wages for keeping the organs 3 years £1';⁴ he was one of two organ makers of that name in Bath, probably father and son. He also had charge of the organ at Somerton in 1641. This organ, first referred to in 1636-7, was demolished and its case sold for £1 under the Commonwealth Demolition of Organs Act,⁵ and, although I have seen no reference to it, I assume the same fate befell Ilminster's organ.

There must have been some accompaniment for the church music before 1826 and some form of church band may have supplied it. David Bromwich, County Local History Librarian, drew my attention to a print of 1782, which shows a flight of steps leading to a doorway in the west wall of the north porch and, although the stone steps have gone, one can still see where they were situated.⁶ The Notes & Queries column of the *Somerset County Herald* referred to these steps and to an upper chamber, which had existed before the 1825 reconstruction.⁷ The faint outline of the inscription, which can still just be made out, was then given as 'This Porch and Gallery was built by clothier A.D.' Despite the loss of the name and date the word 'gallery' suggests the playing position of a church band. Unfortunately, there is no direct evidence for any such band: the churchwardens' accounts fail to reveal expected payments for strings, reeds and the repair of instruments. There

was a church band at nearby Donyatt, in which Thomas Willy of Ivy Cottage, Sea, Ilminster, played fiddle.⁸

Prebendary Street (*op. cit.*, p.318) reports 'two banks of seats, straight backed, high, narrowest of all stone coloured, for the youngest on either side of the organ, new come from St. Mary Redcliffe and blocking up the west window.' Elsewhere (p.278) he refers to 'Vicar Mules employing an architect, one Burge, and of borrowing £1,700 for the new organ, a new development in congregational worship.' John Smith, mentioned above, set up on his own account about 1815 in Bristol, having probably been an apprentice and later foreman to Richard Seede (1743-1823), a renowned organ builder, whose daughter Smith had married. The decade 1820-30 was a busy one for Smith, as he supplied or repaired organs in the churches of Bridgwater, 1823, Trinity, Bath, March 1825, St. Thomas, Bristol, August 1825, Ilminster, September 1826, West Monkton, July 1827, and St. Mary, Taunton, November 1828.⁹ All were erected in west galleries, arguably the best place for them to be heard. In addition, in 1825 Smith had fitted an invention of Edward Hodges, a Bristol organist, to some of the larger pipes of the St. Mary Redcliffe organ, which gave extra notes, and in October 1829 he carried out further repairs and improvements.¹⁰ Upon the completion of the 1829 work Dr Samuel Wesley gave a recital there, including a duet with his son, Samuel Sebastian, and approved of the improvements. Wesley knew the Redcliffe organ well and kept a close eye on it. It is most unlikely that Smith would have attempted, or been allowed, to dispose of an organ which he was repairing, particularly one so universally highly regarded as the Redcliffe one, which was larger than that in St. Paul's Cathedral. The clinching argument, however, must be that the Redcliffe organ was not rebuilt until 1829, three years after the Ilminster organ was erected. Douglas Carrington, editor of *The Organ*, confirms that a good many Harris and Byfield ranks and part ranks from 1726 still exist throughout the Redcliffe organ, a clear pointer to a continuous history since its first building then. Betty Matthews of Wimborne reports that there is a similar story about a Redcliffe organ going to the United Reform Church in Salisbury, but in fact that came from St. Mary, Bathwick.

Whether a temporary organ was installed in St. Mary Redcliffe while the main one was out of use or a special organ put in for a Festival, as was done at Chester, Norwich and the 19c. Three Choirs' Festival, is not known. Dr Michael Sayer of

the English Organ Archive suggests that most organ builders kept instruments for hiring out to churches and these were used in theatres and concert halls for short seasons of Oratorios (as in the Subscription Rooms in Exeter in the 1820s). Perhaps the Ilminster organ once stood in some building in Bristol and folklore transferred this to St. Mary Redcliffe. Smith's records have vanished: if they were ever in the care of his successor, Vowles, everything was lost in a fire of 1924.

To return to Ilminster and its organ, the diary of Henry Alford (1810-1871), an Ilminster boy who became Dean of Canterbury, noted on 11 Oct. 1826 that he missed his dinner by staying in Ilminster church to hear the new organist play. The musician who so enthralled the 16 year old Henry was Thomas Gardner from London, who was a youthful worshipper of Benjamin Jacob, organist at the Rev. Rowland Hill's Congregational Chapel in Blackfriars, known as the Surrey Chapel. Rowland Hill was instituted to Kingston St. Mary in 1773, where in a short ministry he established weekly evening services.

Another Ilminster boy, Thomas Baker, is a source of information about Gardner, for much later they became friends when both were living in London and the latter was organist at St. Michael, Highgate. Baker relates in his autobiography how Gardner came to go to Ilminster: 'An organ with three rows of keys and pedals having been picked up a bargain at Bristol for Ilminster church, candidates were invited to play before Westlake of Exeter Cathedral. Three rows of keys were not often to be met with half a century ago. Tempted by the instrument, Gardner went down, distanced his competitors completely and interested the umpire much by his original method of modulation'.¹¹ Gardner played at Ilminster until 1844, where four of his children were baptized between 1832 and 1840. From 1842 he rented a house in New Road from Joseph Chapman, the year in which the organ at Highgate was built which he was to play from 1844 to his death in 1871; he is buried in Highgate Cemetery, Square 8, Grave 4710.

Thomas Willy's diary records that the organ was taken down and repaired between Oct. 1864 and March 1865,⁸ and churchwardens' accounts show Mr Mead being paid for tuning it in 1866-68. In 1889 the *Somerset County Gazette* reported that special services 'were held at Ilminster parish church on the occasion of the re-opening of the sacred edifice after partial restoration and the dedication of a new organ of great power and sweetness built by Mr Minns of Taunton, the contract price

for the organ being £500'.¹² *Pulman's Weekly News* gave the added information that the best parts of the old organ were being used.¹³ Once again it would have been hand blown, for in 1933 Samuel Clapp was given a guinea in appreciation of his many years service as organ blower.

Various postcards have been published, of which cards posted in 1905 and 1921 clearly show the organ in its new position in the north transept. One posted in 1907 depicts a front view of the organ, built, one could say, by George Osmond, for he was foreman to J. E. Minns. 21 stops can be counted, some being hidden behind a gaselier; there were actually 27 speaking stops and 5 couplers and on paper it was an impressive instrument. Drawings for the 1902 alterations made by the architect, C. C. Ponting, show one choir stall in front of the organ and three more opposite in front of the south transept, but they shed no light on the upper room in the north porch.

In 1935 Percy Daniel rebuilt the organ as a two manual tubular pneumatic action with detached console, returning it to the west gallery. The Great organ was divided from the Swell and the two sections were placed each side of the west window with the console in the middle of the gallery. In 1980 the same firm rebuilt it with electro-pneumatic action, and tonal improvements were made. The organs were moved back towards the rear wall and the console was resited on the left in front of the Great organ, leaving the window clear. This was possible by discarding the old mass of compo piping which allowed the console to be reduced in size. It is still possible to see some painted front pipes of the 1889 rebuild; the late 17c. Swell pipework still sounds fine and some of the 19c. pipework has been bound with tape where the wood has split or cracked. The white German calf leather from the 1935 rebuild is still in pristine condition.

1. SRO D/P/ilm. 4/1/5.
2. *Western Flying Post* 9 Sept. and *Taunton Courier* 20 Sept. 1826.
3. Overseers' accounts, 18 Sept. 1783, SRO D/P/Chard 13/2/1 and *Pulman's Book of the Axe*. Crewkerne, too, had its organ in 1823, the gift of the Revd. Dr. Ashe, which replaced their wind and string band. This may have served to encourage Ilminster.
4. SRO D/P/ilm. 4/1/2.
5. Robert Dunning, *Christianity in Somerset* (1976).
6. *Perspective View of Ilminster Church, Somersetshire*, pub. Dec. 1782 by T. Fielding.
7. Issue of 29 June 1940.
8. Evidence of his diary, SRO T/PH/hit 1.
9. *Western Flying Post* 21 April 1823 for re-opening of Bridgwater organ; *Bath Journal* 14 March and 11 April for Trinity Church; *Do.* 29 Aug. 1825 for repair of organ at St. Thomas, Bristol; for Ilminster, see n.2; *Sherborne, Dorchester & Taunton Journal* 11 July 1827 for erection of West Monkton organ in a few weeks; *Do.* 13 & 27 Nov. 1828, organ under repair, St. Mary, Taunton.

10. *S.D. & T.J.* 1 Oct. 1829.

11. Thomas Baker, *A Battling Life in the Civil Service* (1885).

12. 7 Dec. 1889.

13. 5 March 1889. Other issues in the same year refer to: the use of Portland and Pennant stone in the middle aisles, 7 May; acceptance of Minns' tender, 30 July; services held in transepts and chancel, 24 Sept.; and re-opening of organ and church, 10 Dec.

ARTHUR BENDING

352. AN ACCIDENT-PRONE INCUMBENT. During the course of my search of local newspapers for information about organs and the Ilminster organ in particular (No. 351), I found references to two driving accidents involving the Rev. John Hawkes Mules, vicar at the time of the installation of the organ in 1826. In Sept. 1825 while he was driving his carriage over Weymouth Bridge in Sherborne, his horse took fright, the reins snapped and the horse galloped off at full speed, not being stopped until Gloucester Row. The carriage was upset and both Mr Mules and his mother were severely injured.¹

Again in April 1834 he was travelling in his phaeton through West St., Ilminster, towards the western turnpike gate when the horse ran away. In jumping out, Mr. Mules injured his ankle. The horse made for the wicket gate, the main gate being closed, and was eventually stopped two miles away by a servant.² It was not until June that Mr Mules was sufficiently recovered to resume his duties. This must have been a considerable inconvenience, for in addition to being vicar of Ilminster and master of the grammar school, he was also curate of Kingstone, Cricket Malherbie, Cudworth and Dowlish Wake — a galloper indeed.³

1. *Western Flying Post* 12 Sept. 1825.

2. *Sherborne, Dorchester & Taunton Journal* 17 April 1834.

3. Robert Dunning, *Christianity in Somerset* (1976).

ARTHUR BENDING

353. WEYMOUTH IN 1790. The Rev. Richard Paget, from whose diary this account is taken, was the son of Richard Paget of Cranmore Hall and Newbury House in Somerset. His life revolved round East Cranmore where he was born in 1766, was curate after attending Magdalen College, Oxford, and where he died in 1794. He never married. Paget was deeply interested in history and, had he lived, might have been a good antiquary of the old-fashioned sort. Unfortunately from our point of view much of his time was taken up by the study of genealogy and heraldry, the results of which can be seen among the Paget

papers in Bristol University Library (D.M. 106).

Paget's important account of Mells appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1794 and was reprinted in *Topographical History of Shropshire and Somersetshire*, Gentleman's Magazine Library, London, 1898, pp. 281-284. His description of Farleigh Hungerford in Somerset, originally published in 1790, appears in the same publication, pp. 251-254. Paget's notes on Chilcompton in the Paget collection have been quoted extensively in D. J. Strawbridge's *Meandering through Chilcompton* (1985).

His brief additions to Collinson's *History and Antiquities of ... Somerset* (D.M. 106/255) are intriguing and we could only wish that he had been more expansive.

Weymouth was visited by Richard Paget on account of his health which was always poor. The following accounts are in two small notebooks with marbled covers (D.M. 106/419), Nos. 1 and 2. On the inside back cover of no. 1 is a pencil sketch of the Rev. Richard Paget said to be a very good likeness.

Sept. 15th 1790 To Sherborne. The church is a very reverend fabric but the inside is vilely choak'd up with Pews; the groined stone roof particularly beautifull. The Porch & 4 huge pillars which support the tower are almost all the remains of the Saxon Church. The ruins of the castle just within Lord Digby's park wall are but inconsiderable, & the ground about them is made too spruce: the gateway almost cover'd with Ivy, which grows very fantastically. There is a fine old house here which was formerly an Inn, some remains of the Abbey & many scraps of antiquity scatter'd all over the town.

16th To Dorchester & Weymouth 'Where Portland's brows, embattled high With rocks, in rugged majesty Frown o'er the billows, & the storm restrain'. B.D.O. 1790. Met Crowe of New College trudging on foot a little beyond Sherborne. A pleasant, wild forest-like country round Revell's Inn, & a very extensive view from the top of the Hill. All the rest of the way over dreary chalk downs, power'd thick with barrows, encampments, & c. teeming with antiquities. Dorchester is a very neat clean town, & cuts a respectable figure at a distance. The first view of the sea is from Ridgeway Hill, about 4½ miles from Weymouth. The town full of people of distinction; Dutchess of Rutland. Dss. of Ancaster, D. of St. Albans & family, Lord Pembroke, &c & c & c.

18th To Upwey, a much frequented village about 4 miles off.
Sunday, 19th Went to church at Wyke Regis, the mother church of Weymouth, distant about a mile from the town.

21st. Mayor elected.

Sept. 22d Walked to view Sandsford or Weymouth Castle, a strong fortress built by Harry VIII, on a precipice close by the sea side opposite Portland, & reduced to a ruin in the grand

Rebellion. Buildings near the sea soon contract a venerable hoariness on their surface but neither Ivy nor any other plant will thrive on them.

Sept. 28

To Portland. A most fatiguing walk, part of the way over loose pebbles. Traversed the Island & took a peep at Rufus' or Bow - an - Arrow Castle, & the remains of the old church on the Southern Cliffs; not far from which some other Ecclesiastical looking ruins, the history of which I am yet to learn : The People said it belonged to the Parsonage. Did not visit either the new church, the light - houses, cave - hole, or Henry 8th's castle, for want of time : but the church appears to be an ugly pile, & the castle does not seem to be anything extraordinary.

29th

To Lulworth, which is certainly a very splendid house & makes ample amends for the dullness of the road to it ; tho' it contains few pictures of any consequence. Dined at Lulworth Cove, & return'd to Weymouth by a shorter road, near the sea side.

Weymouth is but a poor place, containing scarce anything worth notice besides the bay, which appears most to advantage at sun - set or later in the evening, when ' twilight grey has in her sober Livery all things clad ' or when ' the white moone shenes on high '. There is an Altar - piece in the church painted & given by Sir Jas. Thornhill, who was born & resided in the Corner house opposite the King's Head. The only amusements are balls, plays & exercising on the beach. There are at present several good players in the company.

Rev. Richard Paget returned to Weymouth in the Summer of 1794:

Augt. 11th.

Got into lodgings, the only ones disengaged on the Esplanade, at No. 8 Augusta Place. The town fills fast with company, & a very great season is expected on account of the Royal visit. The Bucks Militia is encamped on a common near Wyke. Subscribed to the Library & newspapers, bespoke hot bath, & c & c.

12th

Bathed the first time.

15th.

The King, Queen, Prince Ernest & 6 Princesses arrived at Gloucester house to dinner about 4 o' clock. They were only 12 hours coming from Windsor. In the Evening, the King & Prince walked on the Esplanade. The King appeared to be in high health & spirits: the Prince is a tall, well grown young man, with the family complexion & a pleasing countenance. At night the town was illuminated: on which occasion our little lodging made a more brilliant display than any of our neighbours in the same row.

17th. Sunday

At the rooms in the evening. The whole Royal party there, & very gracious ; but little state was observed. Prince Ernest conversed entirely with officers.

20th.

An uncommonly fine sunset. The clouds were of the most beautiful forms, & the whole sky, the bay, the shipping & the coasts all glowed with the most vivid hues imaginable ; purple, green, red, blue, yellow & c in endless gradations. Italy could not exceed it.

- 21st. Surprised by a visit from Cooke. He comes from Brighton, & is going into Devon & Cornwall, proposes to stay here a week or ten days.
- 23d Admiral M^r Bride's squadron appeared off the look-out, & was visited by the King & Royal family in full naval parade. The ships were drawn up in a line at the mouth of the bay, & received their august visitors with every compliment of lowering, saluting, & c. Altogether it was a very interesting spectacle. The Prince of Wales arrived in the afternoon.
- Sept. 1 Left Weymouth not at all improved in my health. A diarrhoea (epidemic, it seems) hinder'd me from bathing during the greatest part of my stay there & at last drove me from the place. My chief amusements were Delamotte's Library, & watching the motions of the Royal family; but I never could see them at the Theatre, being afraid to venture into so thick a crowd as they always brought thither whenever they attended. Slept at Sherborne, reached Cranmore next day to dinner.

Paget returned to Cranmore 'in a very bad state of health' and died on 9th December.

In this transcription some punctuation has been added and contracted words spelt out. Thanks are due to Mr. Maby, archivist at Bristol University Library for his kindness and courtesy.

MICHAEL MCGARVIE

354. WEDMORE TAN-HOUSES. The tanner, curing leather, must once have been as much a feature of any sizeable village as the shoemaker who used it; yet evidence for the local tanner and his malodorous workplace can prove elusive. In and around Wedmore, particularly with the gradual drainage and enclosure of the surrounding moors, cattle dominated local farming. There were two fairs a year for cattle and other livestock at Wedmore in the 19th century, while nearby Axbridge, in addition to having its own cattle fairs, was known as a centre for tanned hides.¹ A Wedmore tanner, therefore, would have had ample raw material. A tannery, like a watermill, needed a controlled watersupply, and required heavy equipment — troughs or vats — which could not be casually moved around. Tanning seems, like milling, to have run in families; and the two sites and trades were sometimes combined. The Tyley family, Wedmore millers, for example, had a tan-house associated with their watermill at Benpool, on the Lurbourne stream at the lower outskirts of the village; but this tan-house is first mentioned only in 1787, and is relatively shortlived.² No traces of it survive today.

The site of another tannery, older and more central, has now been identified, for which some documentation is available. In 1792 one John Gardiner had a tan-house, for which he paid 3s. 8¼d. land tax, while in the next entry of the same tax return Grace Tavier paid 11¾d. for part of a tan-house.³ In 1814 Richard Banwell held Gardiner's tan-house, still for 3s. 8¼d. land tax.⁴ In the 1815 highway rate, this Richard Banwell is listed as holding property no. 1748.⁵ According to the 1791 parish map (*illus.*), plot no. 1748 is situated in Glanville Road, on the north side of Wedmore Brook;⁶ and in the 1820 parish survey, based on this map, the occupant of one part of plot no. 1748 is none other than Grace Tavier, the other part-owner of the plot being Joseph Stickland, and the whole plot was, significantly, called 'Gardiner's Orchard'.⁷ This chain of references, and the survival of its name, establish the link between Gardiner's tan-house in 1792 and the Tavier-Stickland plot in 1820 and pinpoint its site in Glanville Road.

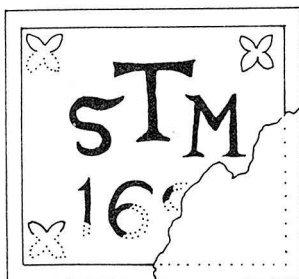
The essential water supply was provided by the main Wedmore Brook, which runs deep in an artificial channel adjoining the site at this point. A subsidiary branch or leat is shown on the 1791 map, running round the north side of Gardiner's Orchard, to rejoin the main stream below Glanville Road.⁸ This leat was later dammed, when Elmsett Hall was built in the early 1800s, to create an ornamental lake for the large house. Its outlet was subsequently culverted. The existence of this 18th century or earlier leat suggests deliberate management of the main stream flowing past the Gardiner's Orchard site, as would be necessary for the tanning process. The 1792 land tax references to John Gardiner and Grace Tavier both holding tan-houses suggest that several small tanneries may have combined to use this available water-power, and that this Glanville Road plot was a small 'industrial site' in the centre of the village.

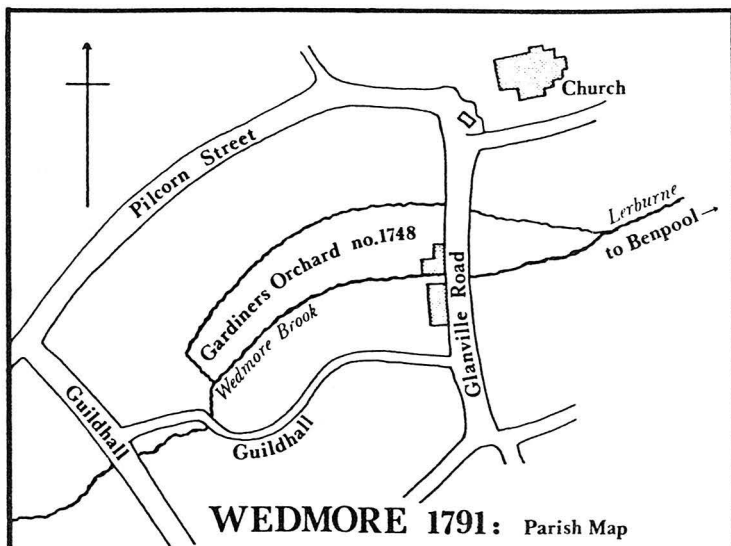
Links between tanning and milling (both by water and wind) appear in the families involved. John Gardiner the tanner married a Hannah Tyley, one of the Wedmore milling family previously mentioned, in 1775.⁹ Grace Tavier was born Grace Clapp, member of yet another Wedmore milling family;¹⁰ and a Robert Tyley held "Clapps, part [of] the windmill", one of the several Wedmore windmills, in 1787.¹¹ The leat system of the Wedmore Brook above Glanville Road may well have been designed to power a watermill at some period, although no physical or documentary evidence of one on this site has yet been found. Grace Tavier, from the late 1700s, was providing

soap and lye for the Wedmore poor house — perhaps using the fatty and alkaline by-products from the tan-houses.¹²

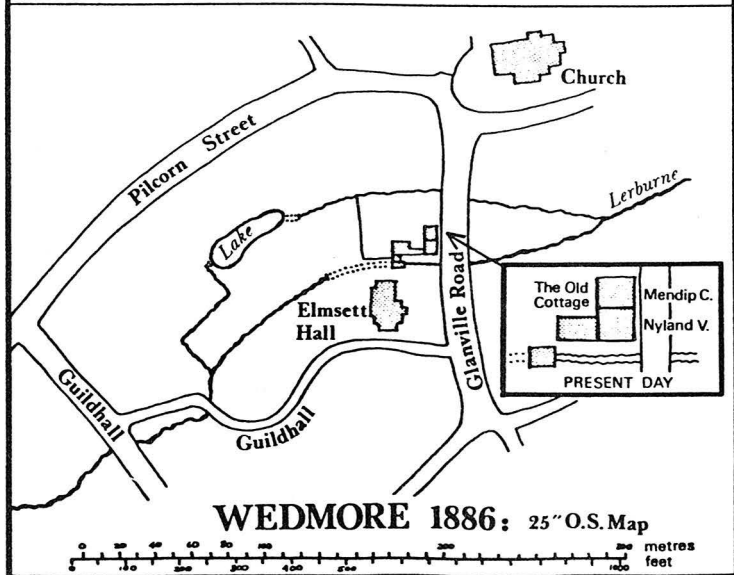
John Gardiner's 1792 tan-house can possibly be traced further back in time. In 1778 John Gardiner held a property called Thatchers, although there is no specific reference to a tan-house;¹³ but earlier still, in 1766, one John Thatcher paid 7s. 5½d. land tax — for a tan-house.¹⁴ At this point field archaeology provides a still earlier link. An L-shaped house is shown on the 1791 parish map, on the plot no. 1748 called Gardiner's Orchard. This house still stood in the 1880s, when it is clearly shown in a drawing made from a photograph as an L-shaped medieval thatched cottage with several outbuildings.¹⁵ The front part of the cottage was rebuilt in 1882 by Edward Stickland, grandson of Joseph, and it was turned into a pair of cottages, of superficially 19th century appearance: Mendip View (recently renamed Mendip Cottage) on the north, Nyland View on the south. A building straddling the stream is shown on the 1886 O.S. (see *illus.*) and survives as a curiously tall shed; it may be a timber store built by Edward Stickland, perhaps re-using older foundations from part of the tan-house. The rear wing is now known as The Old Cottage and was left largely untouched until 1986, when, following the death of Miss K. Stickland, daughter of Edward the builder, it underwent major renovation. No evidence of channels or workshop structures that might have been part of a tan-house was reported during this work. There is, however, a date stone on the chimney of this old wing.¹⁶ This stone had been preserved by Edward Stickland during his renovations, and came from the earlier chimney of the original cottage; although set into an unassuming 19th century chimneystack, its origins were well authenticated by Miss Stickland. Part of the stone, including the latter part of the date, has flaked away with weathering; but there survives a monogram in rather florid but well-cut lettering of the later 1600s:

No attempt has hitherto been made to identify these initials. There is no record of an S.T. marrying an M in the marriage registers of Wedmore in the 1600s. However, the father of John Thatcher who





from S.R.O.: D/P/Wed: 13/10/17



owned the tan-house on this site in 1766, was called Samuel Thatcher; and he married a Mary. Samuel died in 1705 and his widow Mary in 1707.¹⁷ There is no Wedmore record of their marriage (presumably Mary came from another parish and they were married there), but John was the eldest of their four children, baptised at Wedmore between 1692 and 1697.¹⁸ Thus, the S & M T 16-- datestone could well record their marriage and residence on this site. Unfortunately there is no mention of Samuel's trade in the Wedmore parish registers, so we have no means of knowing whether he was a tanner and whether this tan-house was in existence in the late 17th century. The Thatchers, like the later tan-house owners, seem to have had milling interests as well: Mary Thatcher held Benpool in 1698, and son John Thatcher, the tanner, held Benpool and the watermill there in 1765.¹⁹

Earliest of all is Richard Thomas, a tanner of Wedmore, who made his will on 16 Dec. 1640, and was buried, 'an old man', on 19 Dec.²⁰ His will was proved on 5 Jan. 1641. The belongings listed in the inventory taken of his estate totalled £57 3s. 4d., suggesting a prosperous inhabitant of the village.²¹ Amongst the usual household goods were 'rushes, 20s' and 'leather fates [vats] and other things belonging to the trade of a tanner, £10'. There is no mention of whether either of his sons, John and Richard, continued their father's trade. Mary outlived her husband by three years. The last mention of the family is in 1643, when she is buried, and then they disappear from the parish.²² Whether Richard Thomas's 1640 tannery was on the site of Samuel Thatcher's 1690 house and his son John's 1766 tan-house must remain unproven for the present for lack of documentary evidence. This early reference, however, together with the suggested identification of the datestone and the piecing together of site ownership, gives this particular village industry in 17th-19th century Wedmore a documented history which it has hitherto lacked.

1. *Kelly's Directory*, 1875; *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, LXXXII (1936), 109-110, 'Survey of Somerset Fairs', by N. F. Hulbert.
2. SRO ref. Q/RE1 4/8a (1787).
3. Q/RE1 4/8 (1792).
4. Q/RE1 4/8 (1814).
5. SRO ref. D/P/wed. 14/2/4.
6. D/P/wed. 13/10/17.
7. D/P/wed. 13/10/3.
8. D/P/wed. 13/10/17; and see *illus.*
9. *Wedmore Parish Registers* (hereafter *WPR*): *Marriages 1561-1839* (1888), p.77.
10. *Ibid.*, p.80.
11. Q/RE1 4/8 (1787).
12. D/P/wed. 13/2/7, 9.

13. Wedmore Moor, Churchland, Tadham, Yeel & Mudgley Enclosure Award, 1788 (SRO).
14. Q/RE1 4/8 (1766).
15. S.H.A. Hervey, *Wedmore Chronicles* vol. I (1887), plate facing p.277.
16. Wedmore W.I., *Architectural Heritage Book* (1975).
17. *WPR: Burials 1561-1860* (1890), pp. 168, 171.
18. *WPR: Baptisms 1561-1812* (1890), pp. 175, 176, 178, 180.
19. *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, CXXIX (1987), 27.
20. *WPR: Burials*, p. 90.
21. SRO ref. D/D/Ct (will and inventory).
22. *WPR: Burials*, p.94.

HAZEL HUDSON & FRANCES NEALE

355. THE R.A.F. STATION AT RINGSTEAD. The invention of radar and its influence upon the outcome of the Battle of Britain have been well chronicled. By the time of the outbreak of the Second World War there was a chain of 18 radar stations stretching along the east coast and around the south-east corner of England. These stations were of a type, known as *Chain Home*, the function of which was to detect the approach of high flying aircraft. During the next twelve months the radar chain was both augmented by new types of station, which were capable of detecting low flying aircraft, and extended by the building of more *Chain Home* stations, one of which was established at Ringstead, near Weymouth, in Dorset.

The operational histories of wartime radar stations may be found in the Public Record Office but as topics of local history radar stations have generally passed unrecorded. (There is, for instance, no mention of R.A.F. Ringstead in either the Dorset County Record Office or the Weymouth Reference Library). This is not surprising because radar stations were secret installations. They were subject to D-notices and not mentioned in the press. Fortunately, however, it is sometimes possible to discover the local history of a radar station from cartographical and oral evidence.

In the case of R.A.F. Ringstead there is an O.S. map (sheet SY78SW) 1963, which is particularly useful. This map does not specifically mention an R.A.F. camp but it shows a number of buildings, most of which no longer exist, on Upton Farm. Fortunately, the lady who now farms Upton Farm is the daughter of the farmer from whom the Air Ministry requisitioned the six acres of land upon which the domestic site of the camp was built in 1940. She assures me that the buildings marked on the map were the wooden huts of the camp; the

officers' quarters were situated to the west of the narrow lane running south through Upton hamlet, and the airmen's quarters to the east. Of the one or two huts which do still survive, the smallest housed the R.A.F. fire engine.

The operational site of the station occupied 207 acres of land close to Ringstead Bay. On this were erected two wooden receiver towers and two very tall, steel transmitter masts, the positions of which are clearly indicated on the map. Additionally, according to the occupier of Glebe Cottage (marked on the map) who was living there throughout the R.A.F.'s occupation, there were built in the woods which stretch east-westwards immediately to the north of her cottage a number of concrete huts, the most important of which housed the radar display unit; the remains of one of these huts is still visible. At the western end of these woods there was a compound in which the guard dogs were kennelled.

R.A.F. Ringstead ceased to be operational in 1953. The masts remained standing after 1957 when 140 acres of the operational site were re-requisitioned in order that an American radio station could be erected on the site. Construction began in December 1961 and the station became operational in November 1963. For the next nine years Ringstead formed part of a world-wide United States Air Force chain, concerned with the controlling of nuclear bomber aircraft. It ceased operations in October 1972 and was dismantled at the beginning of 1973.

GEORGE LANNING

QUERIES

Dr M. A. Taylor (Leicestershire Museums, 96 New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TD) is seeking information on Thomas Hawkins (1810-89), the eccentric collector of fossil reptiles, poet, and author of several books, including *My Life and Works* and the illus. folios *Memoirs of Ichthyosaurs and Plesiosaurs* and *The Great Sea Dragons*. Hawkins lived in and around Street and Lyme Regis at various times, but finally moved to the Isle of Wight. Dr Taylor is particularly anxious to obtain personal anecdotes and other information in published or unpublished reminiscences, diaries, pamphlets, court records and local newspapers, etc. Hawkins was an eccentric and

difficult man, of uncertain temper, highly litigious and a prolific writer to local newspapers.

If anyone is interested, Dr Taylor has kindly sent the Somerset Editor 7pp. typescript on Hawkins, which is to appear in *The Geological Curator*.

WITHAM CHARTER. The text of Henry II's foundation charter of 1182 or 1186 establishing the Carthusian Priory of Witham in Selwood was transcribed and published by the Very Revd. J. Armitage Robinson (*Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, LXIV, pp. 1-28). He says little about the provenance of the charter except that it had 'recently come into the library of the Dean and Chapter of Wells', where it still remains. It is thought to have been given to the library by the Revd. T. F. Palmer, vicar of Witham Friary, who bought it at a sale for a considerable sum. Mr. Linzee Colchester, F.S.A., librarian to the Dean and Chapter, has kindly communicated to me a ms. note by Dean Armitage Robinson that throws some light on the subject. The charter was found in a chest with other documents which came into the possession of F. N. Hodges, a solicitor of Newport, Shropshire. Some of the associated deeds belonged to the Whitworth family, 'of Batchacre Park, Adbaston, Staffordshire, a diplomatic family to which belonged Lord Whitworth of Galway and Earl Whitworth, F.S.A. Can any reader suggest a link between Witham and Adbaston or between the Whitworths and the Hoptons, Wyndhams or other owners of Witham?

MICHAEL MCGARVIE

REVIEWS

John Weller, *Canons' Barn, Wells, Somerset* (Verandah House, Bildeston, Suffolk IP7 7EF. Pp.45, £5.00 incl. postage.) Barns are under threat, and tithe-barns especially, since they were made obsolete by 1840. As remarkable, and sometimes beautiful, ancient structures they excited interest long before that. Yet they remained little studied until the Revd Geoffrey Shaw Hewins published his pioneer *Notes* in 1938. Hewins listed 200 tithe-barns in England, of which 14 in Somerset, where 6 were already scheduled Ancient Monuments at 31 December 1937. Dorset, with 8 listed, had 4 scheduled;

Wiltshire, with 21 listed, also had 4 protected; while none of the 18 in Gloucestershire nor of the 4 in Devon had then been officially recognized. By the time that the Vernacular Architecture Group, effectively founded in 1954, had issued its *Bibliography* (1972), a total of 65 published items related to barns in England alone.

Among barns protected was the Bishop's Barn at Wells; but not the more important Canons' Barn, which had been incorporated into the Grammar School in 1884. Although visited by the Somerset Archaeological Society in 1873, the barn's rediscovery is due to Mr Linzee Colchester, who gave the information to Pevsner for *North Somerset* (1958), which in turn brought the matter to the attention of Professor Walter Horn. This train of events is not made clear in Mr Weller's book, but it is satisfying to find in it numerous references to Mr Colchester, the godfather of all Wells research.

A highly specialized monograph cannot be adequately reviewed in short space, but it brings to our notice that what is left of the Canons' Barn is the oldest known surviving example in England. Fittingly compared with the timbered halls of the Royal Palace at Cheddar, its construction is rather associated with buildings in northern France. Since Mr Weller gives much attention to the prebends, one wonders why he does not see some contact with Geoffrey de Montbray (Mowbray), Bishop of Coutances 1049-93, *who originated the prebendal system*. Montbray was rewarded after 1066 with immense English estates comprising 75 manors in Somerset alone, of which 14 were in his own hands in 1086. Lamenting the unhelpful plan of 1735 by William Simes, the author seems not to have noticed the barn on the Prospect of 1736 by the brothers Buck. The long roof is unmistakable, and the view of its west gable suggests a relatively steep pitch (say 48°-55°), rather than 35°. The lowering of pitch by 1884 would probably be due to the common practice of cutting off decayed feet and re-using the old rafters.

The booklet is well produced and the drawings are excellent, but it is a serious defect to give metric dimensions only. Millimetric dimensions in round figures (260, 420, 540) are highly suspect, and precise figures in feet and inches are *essential* in the study of English buildings from AD1100 onwards. The one advantage of the millimetre is sacrificed unless it is made clear that all dimensions are exact.

J.H.H.

Rodney Legg, *Lawrence of Arabia in Dorset* (Dorset Publishing Co., 1988. Pp. 112, photographs, line drawings and maps. £7.95) In the author's words, this book shows 'the national Lawrence from the unashamedly exaggerated Dorset perspective.' It records the life of T. E. Lawrence while he was stationed at Bovington, and living at Cloud's Hill where his 'tortured mind ... found token peace.'

One's impression is that Rodney Legg would have liked to have written an uncontroversial book about this enigmatic figure, and, perhaps, clarified some aspects of his fatal accident. Unfortunately, the complex life cannot be simply explained; the unsavoury evidence entirely ignored; and the incident of May, 1935 fully investigated. To the author's credit, he recognizes this and does not flinch from making tentative observations where final verdicts are impossible.

Judging from the author's preface the book had a long gestation, and the research and rumination have resulted in a book in which the author has become closely and emotionally involved. The text has a certain measure of intensity and personal concern, and this makes it all the more attractive to read.

G.J.D.

Rodney Legg, *Purbeck's Heath : claypits, nature and the oilfield* (Dorset Publishing Co., 1987. Pp. 144, illus. & photographs. £9.95). This is the story of the natural history of the Purbeck landscape and of the industries which it supports. The text is divided between two main concerns: the Heathland, described and commented upon; and the clay industry which has been present since Roman times.

To read the text is like being given a personal tour by a highly eccentric and outspoken native guide. The observations are often trenchant, and because one is never quite sure what the next page will hold, one is often startled by the sudden switch in narrative, or departure from the tour, to receive a revelation or an 'aside' which may be both instructive and amusing. This mingling of natural history and personal observation with sherds of historical evidence, leads to a lively text which is more of a celebration of the Heathland's diversity than a conventional guide. It is a book to be read by those who enjoy the Purbecks rather than by those who are looking for a strait-laced guide.

G.J.D.

Jocelyn Berthoud and Nora Windridge, *St. Andrew's Church, Yetminster* (Yetminster Local History Soc., 1987. Pp. 116, line illus. and photographs, £2.50 plus pp 50 pence from N. Windridge, Stone House, Church St., Yetminster. DT9 6LG) This Church history has been produced 'camera-ready' by word processor, and it deals with St. Andrew's Church in three chronological chapters taking the story up to 1900, with further matters of local interest following like the Victorian restoration, the churchyard, the bell-ringers, the clock, the silver, the tithes, and the disputes between Yetminster and the chapelries of Chetnole and Leigh. The authors have done an honest and painstaking job of sifting through most of the primary source material, and their text is enlivened with numerous examples and incidents, all of which serve to re-create the activities of the parishioners in the past. It is pleasant to read about the celebration of clandestine marriages by a tolerant eighteenth century vicar, and the disputes occasioned by the unseemly crowds of mourners forced to travel from the chapelries to the Yetminster churchyard. These, and other lively examples centred on the church, make for absorbing reading. The Yetminster Local History Society can be proud of this publication. This is a pleasant, well-illustrated, readable text which has reproduced very clearly.

G.J.D.

Ilchester and District Occasional Papers, available from Toucan Press, Rue des Monts, Delancey Park, St. Sampson, Guernsey.

- No. 68 Sale of Manor of Ilchester, 1834.
- No. 69 Trial of Mrs. Jane Leigh (Jane Austen's aunt), 1800.
- No. 70 An Ilchester Collectanea, 1986.
- No. 71 Ilchester 1832-1841, 8 sketches by J. Buckler.
- No. 72 Ilchester Almshouse.
- No. 73 Ilchester Borough Records, 1629-85, & 1790.
- No. 74 The Dominican Priory at Ilchester.
- No. 75 Yeovil in 1880: a brief description.
- No. 76 Rev. H. Cresswell's Speech on the election of a Coroner, 1821.
- No. 77 An Act for enclosing Ilchester Common, 1806.
- No. 78 Monumental Inscriptions, Northover Church, Ilchester.
- No. 79 Durotrigian Roman and Byzantine Coins from Ilchester.

*N.B. - All replies to advertisements to be sent to
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WHO'S AFPEAR'D

The Dorset County Record Office will be presenting an exhibition of Dorset's Archives from medieval times to the present to mark the Centenary of Dorset County Council. Come and see a colourful and eyecatching display illuminating many aspects of life in Dorset's past.

The Dorset County Museum, Dorchester 6 May — 1 July 1989

The Guildhall Museum, Poole 31 July — 30 September 1989

FRIENDS OF DORSET'S ARCHIVES

A new body is being proposed to help preserve Dorset's priceless written heritage and to support the work of the Dorset Record Office. It is hoped that owners of archives, users of the Record Office and all interested in Dorset's History will support the formation of the Friends.

A public meeting will be held on Thursday, 11 May 1989 at 7.00 p.m. to consider the formation of a Friends of Dorset's Archives and, if the organisation is formed, an Inaugural Meeting will be held on Friday, 23 June, 1989. Both meetings will be held in the Dorset County Museum where the Record Office's exhibition WHO'S AFPEAR'D will be on display.

Those wishing to record their interest should contact the County Archivist, Dorset Record Office, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset. DT1 1XJ
