

NOTES & QUERIES

FOR
SOMERSET AND DORSET

EDITED BY

D. M. M. SHORROCKS, M.A., F.S.A.,
222 Staplegrove Road, Taunton, Somerset. TA2 6AL

AND

G. J. DAVIES, B.A., PH.D., F.S.A.,
16 Melcombe Avenue, Weymouth, Dorset. DT4 7TH

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

HERRICK

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D. M. M. SHORROCKS, M.A., F.S.A.

HUGH JAQUES, M.A.

18 Louise Road, Dorchester. DT1 2LU

(Hon. Secretary and Treasurer)

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All contributions should be clearly typewritten. The Editors regret that hand-written manuscripts, or copy which has not been fully corrected, cannot be accepted.

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THE RESIGNATION OF THE CHAIRMAN. At the last meeting of the Editorial Committee in October 1990 Mrs. Rawlins expressed a wish to give up the chairmanship, which she had held for twenty-eight years, and reluctantly the members agreed to her request.

As Miss Sophia Wyndham Bates Harbin she became a subscriber to *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries* soon after leaving Bedford College where she had taken a first class degree in history and, following her parents' interests, began studying and writing on local history. In the course of this work she met Mr. Cosmo Rawlins whom she married in 1940 and on his retirement came to live at the Court House in Stoford. She joined her mother on the committee, became chairman on the death of Mr. A. W. Vivian Neal early in 1962 and, after her mother's death later in the same year, settled in the family home at Newton Surmaville, where she continues the long-established custom of holding the meetings of the committee.

Mrs. Rawlins supported with great interest the work of the two editors, was always ready to give useful advice and help to the secretary-treasurer and herself made many scholarly contributions to the journal. She was especially interested in tracing the many links between her family and those of her neighbours in Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire and a glance at the indexes of *SDNQ* reveals the extent of her detailed knowledge in all its aspects. The publication of her book, *Kay of the Hills* in 1987 (recently reviewed in *SDNQ*, XXXII, 868) shows also a more imaginative interpretation of the legends and traditions of the Somerset countryside.

In 1988 when *SDNQ* reached its centenary, Mrs. Rawlins played a major role in the organisation of the celebrations held at Newton which marked the occasion and many subscribers were able to thank her personally for the part she had played in producing the journal for so many years.

Finally, the Editorial Committee would like to express their appreciation not only of her untiring support in the many trials of publication but also of the hospitality offered to them in the meetings — and teas — at Newton Surmaville, where the background of her love for her family, home, and local studies, gave a feeling of continuity to a publication so closely connected with them all.

LEONARD HAYWARD

Sharp-eyed subscribers, when looking at the names of contributors in the present issue, will have felt that it must be

too much of a coincidence that virtually all share a common thread as members of the Editorial Committee (the single exception being the name of Philip Dawe, former Dorset Editor between 1953 and 1968 and the only survivor among its officers) — and they would have guessed correctly.

The Editorial Committee decided that as an alternative to making a conventional presentation to Mrs. Rawlins, which, however well-chosen, has the drawback of being both private and transitory, it seemed peculiarly appropriate instead to offer the *whole* of issue 332 (March 1991) as a dedication in honour of Mrs. Rawlins. At the same time, by restricting contributions to present members of the Committee it conveys on the one hand the affectionate regard which Mr. Hayward has neatly expressed, and which all share, and on the other hand gives a wider permanence for all present and future readers.

Dorset and Somerset Editors

1. TWO SEYMOUR MANORS. Among the Seymour papers at Longleat (Box V, ff. 210/11) are brief descriptions of two Dorset and Somerset manors 'Lands in the joynture of La. Beauchamp desired to be exchanged'.

The Dorset manor is that of Kingston and Povington:

'The said Mannor doe lye within the Isle of Purbecke in the said Countie being a fforrest replenished with red and fallowe deere, and at the pleasure of the chief Lord (as in Sir Christopher Hatton's time it was) may be surcharged in such sorte with the said games as will greatly diminish the profit thereof.

They containe a great quantitie of acres, but are very barren, heathry & unprofitable, so colde of their owne nature, and lying so high upon the sea side as not anie kinde of plantes doe hardly growe there.

ffor the reasons aforesaid they yeeld smaller fines then anie land the right honble. the Earle of Hertforde hathe, and lie many miles remote from anie his other landes.

In these mannors power is reserved unto his lordship and the nowe Lord Beauchamp to make estate for 3 lyves by lease or copie according to the custome of the said mannors. The old rent is 47li 16s. 1½d.'

The Somerset manor to be exchanged is that of Hatch Beauchamp:

'The said mannor is the auncient state of the Barony of Beauchamp. It lyeth in the harte of Somersetshire neare Taunton and is all verie good ground, & much more fineable then Kingston & Povington.

The tennentes have comon in the forest of Neyroch without number, the soile thereof being verie rich and profitable, of farre more value then the comons expressed in the former mannors.

The said manor is extraordinarily well wooded.

The old rent is 31li 08s. 9d.'

Kingsbury Regis (in Milborne Port) is also mentioned but the only significant detail is that it 'hath great royalties'.

The details probably date from the 1630s. The Earl of Hertford was created a marquess in 1641; his sister-in-law, Lady Beauchamp, widow of his elder brother, was still living in 1638.

MICHAEL McGARVIE

2. ECONOMIC PRESSURES AND VILLAGE DESERTIONS IN SOUTH DORSET. The social and economic pressures created by the profitability of large-scale sheep farming during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are well demonstrated in the area around Dorchester which is notable for the number of shrunken and deserted villages. Considerable evidence survives for the way in which these settlements were abandoned and for the changes in farming practice which led to the departure of the inhabitants. A recent study of Winterborne Ashton has suggested that the settlement was abandoned in the late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth century and provides evidence of the sheep-farming activities of the Newburgh family who owned the land there.¹ Likewise, the tenants of the manors of Winterborne Came and Bincombe complained to the Court of Star Chamber in 1521 that their landlord, Sir William Fylloll, was overstocking their common pastures with his sheep, enclosing the common downland and converting the ancient arable lands to pasture for sheep. They also asked the Court to stop Sir William from destroying their crops with his sheep and cattle and from driving his carts and wains across their arable land. They added, significantly, that 'because of the greate oppressions and injuries' which they suffered they would not be able to pay their rent 'nor Able to Abide in their countrey by cause of the said greate oppressions'.² Clearly their plea to the Court of Star Chamber failed, for all along the valley of the south Winterborne there is a string of deserted sites, including Herringston, Farrington, Came and Whitcombe. By the time of the Hearth Tax returns of 1662 Winterborne Herringston had only three remaining households, Winterborne Farrington or Germaine was completely deserted and Winterborne Came had only two households.³ During the early-sixteenth century all of these places had supported numerous households and it was of this area and of Winterborne Farrington in particular that Thomas Gerard wrote in c.1630

¹ 'a lone church, for there is hardlie any house left in the Parish, such of

late hath been the Covetousness of some private Men, that to increase their Demesnes have depopulated whole parishes.⁴

By the time that Thomas Gerard was writing, the profitability of using the downland grazing for large sheep flocks had become even more attractive and the pressures upon the smaller tenants to abandon their lands were correspondingly greater. The church of the deserted settlement of Frome Whitfield was united with Holy Trinity, Dorchester in 1610.⁵ At Stratton and Charminster there were complaints from the tenants about overstocking of the common grazing lands by the farmer of the demesnes and 'controversie, vyanance and debate ... concerninge the usinge and having of customes, feedinges and commons for the cattle and beasts of the said Farmer and other tenants.'⁶

The strength of feeling engendered by the attempts of the wealthier inhabitants to extend their rights of grazing and thus increase the size and profitability of their sheep flocks can be illustrated from a case which came before the Court of Star Chamber concerning Osmington in 1624. John Warham, 'gentleman', had extended his lands by enclosing two acres of common land 'with quicksetts and a stronge hedge and ditch at his great charge'. Whereupon a crowd of people from Osmington assembled at night, tore down the hedge and erected a gallows on which they hung an effigy of John Warham 'amid great rejoicings'. Interestingly, the actual work of destruction was done by the women and children on the grounds that they would be more difficult to identify and prosecute, or as John Warham himself put it in his evidence to the Court, 'a company of unruly and disorderly women and children, against whom they pretend your subject should have no remedy at law'.⁷

Although Stratton, Charminster, Osmington and several other villages in the area survived in spite of the pressures they faced, many others were deserted and destroyed or shrank to a single farmstead or a few houses, with the lands of the former tenants given over to large-scale farming. An example of the effect of the economic pressures can be seen from a dispute over tithes payable on lands at Winterborne Came and Farringdon in 1680. The details emerge from the evidence given by witnesses to the Court of the Exchequer concerning a complaint made by Joseph Bateman, rector of Winterborne Came. Almost all the land in his parishes belonged to the Meller family of Little Bredy, and, since both parishes were almost completely depopulated, the lands were leased to Melchisedick Gillett. Gillett had flocks of more than 2,200

sheep and the case arose because of the large scale of Gillett's farming concerns and the consequent difficulty of assessing his liability to pay tithe. In addition to the lands at Winterborne Came and Farrington, Gillett leased lands all around Dorchester, in the common fields of Fordington, in West Knighton, West Stafford and Cripton, as well as farming lands of his own at Watercombe, between Warmwell and Owermoigne. Most of the land was pasture and some of it was let to cow keepers, but the bulk was used for sheep grazing and the sheep flocks were constantly on the move. Thomas Meaden of Herringston, a shepherd aged 50 years, gave evidence that at Michaelmas 1676 Gillett had only 150 sheep at Winterborne Came, but early in October another flock was brought from his land elsewhere; at St. Andrewstide (30 November) another flock of 750 sheep was brought from Somerset where Gillett had also leased land, shortly afterwards more sheep arrived from Whitcombe, a flock of 520 came from West Stafford and another flock of 100 was driven from West Knighton. On 6 December 100 sheep 'were put abroad att Lease att a place called Jordan near Weymouth, and 120 sheep we drove to a place called Watercombe where they remained till Ladyday, and then 170 sheep were brought back to Winterborne Came and Farrington'. The sheep were shorn at Midsummer, and then a large flock was sent to 'the Moores called King's Sedge Moor in the county of Somerset'. There they remained until Ladyday 1677 when they were driven back with their lambs to Winterborne Came.⁸

With so much movement of the sheep flocks, it was impossible for the clergy to levy tithes on them, and this was the basis of Joseph Bateman's complaint to the Court of the Exchequer. Before any satisfactory conclusion was reached, however, Gillett died, aged 75 on 6 September 1680, and was buried in the churchyard at Whitcombe.⁹ The activities of men like Gillett meant that in many places little arable land remained to be cultivated and the smaller tenants were gradually ousted from their lands. The very large numbers of sheep kept by the wealthy entrepreneurs reinforce the comments of seventeenth century observers of the area around Dorchester. Thomas Gerard in c.1553 had written of the downs 'all overspread with innumerable Flockes of Sheepe'; Edward Leigh in 1659 claimed that there were 'within six miles of Dorchester three hundred thousand sheep' and in c.1720 Daniel Defoe calculated that there were 600,000 in the area.¹⁰

The most striking comment upon the effect of the large sheep flocks was made by the poet and former fellow of New College,

Thomas Bastard. He was born at Blandford Forum in 1566, and was educated at Winchester and New College. In 1591 he was obliged to leave Oxford because of his satirical and libellous poems, and later became vicar of Bere Regis where he continued to write poetry. In 1618 he was imprisoned for debt in Dorchester Gaol where he died. Among his poems, the following verse could well have been inspired by the situation in south Dorset,

Sheepe have eate up our meadows and our downes
 Our corne, our wood, whole villages and towns
 Yea they have eate up many wealthy men
 Besides our Statutes and our iron Laws,
 Which they have swallowed down into their maws,
 Till now I thought the proverb did but jest
 Which said a black sheep was a biting beast.¹¹

1. John Oswin, *The Manor and Hamlet of Winterborne Ashton*, Dorchester Association, 1987.
2. Public Record Office STAC 2/19/35.
3. C. A. F. Meekings, *Dorset Hearth Tax Assessments 1662-4*, 1951, 16-18; J. Hutchins, *History of Dorset*, 3rd Edn. 1861-70, II, 519-22.
4. Thomas Gerard, *Survey of Dorsetshire c.1630*, 1732, 73.
5. C. H. Mayo, ed., *Municipal Records of the Borough of Dorchester*, 1908, 620; Dorset Record Office, PE/DO(HT)IN3, Glebe Terrier of Frome Whitfield 1533.
6. P.R.O. E134/13 James I Mich. 1.
7. P.R.O. STAC 8/293/12.
8. P.R.O. E134/31 Charles II Easter 6.
9. J. Hutchins, *op. cit.*, II, 518.
10. Thomas Gerard, *op. cit.*, 3; Edward Leigh, *England Described*; Daniel Defoe, *Tour* (Everyman Edn.), I, 210.
11. Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, II, 227; J. Hutchins, *op. cit.*, 229-30.

J. H. BETTEY

3. TAUNTON ARCHDEACONRY DEPOSITIONS. Among the many known losses of Somerset records, three major casualties spring immediately to mind: the diocesan probate records, lost in the WWII bombing of Exeter in 1942; the records of the old borough of Taunton, presumably neglected and, thus, destroyed after the lapse of burghal status in 1792; and the records of the archdeaconry of Taunton, which seem to have disappeared within a bracket of 90-130 years. Social and genealogical sources for W. Somerset are particularly badly hit by all three losses, and the occasional survivors are all the more prized.

In the case of the archdeaconry records, a few wills, some inventories, miscellaneous court papers and a (printed) Visitation book of 1623,¹ have long been known and to these can now be added a later discovery and the present subject of this note.² This is an isolated deposition book, which lists (in English) the evidence of witnesses, but not the questions from

which the responses were made, in *Instance* business in the court. *Instance* cases may be compared with civil actions being brought by one party to another, as opposed to the corrective (or criminal) action initiated by the office (described as *ex officio*) within the particular ecclesiastical court.

The volume covered 4 years, Nov. 1690 to Dec. 1694, and the indications are that at this time the court was not particularly stretched and the range of business, as will be seen, was similarly limited. During the period there were 18 separate cases in which depositions were heard, spread over 26 dates: 13 were simple cases requiring single hearings, 4 involved the complication of a second day (but never on successive dates) and one, a complex affair presenting outright contradictions, ran to 5 hearings.³ Of the 18 cases, 2 concerned defamation, 1 tithe, 1 the audit of the churchwarden's accounts and 14 testamentary matters. The maximum number of witnesses called on any day was 11, and as this occurred on the first of two successive dates of the same — the complex — case it is fair to assume that this represented a full day's work. In all, 107 witnesses, but not the opposing parties involved in the case, prefaced his (or her) evidence with address, occupation, age, length of residence at that time and place of birth, all in all, a boon for family histories. In addition, the credibility of witnesses was established by questions of wealth and their relationship to the persons involved in the business. Of the 107 persons called, 80% were either native born, had been resident for over 10 years or lived within 3 miles.

Deposition cases offered a curious mixture of formal and informal procedures. On the one hand, every witness was presented with a rigid, pre-set, pattern of questions, following in the same order, but which they were not required to answer if they did not have direct knowledge. There was no examination or cross-examination of the sort with which we are familiar, which can be tailored to suit particular circumstances for individual witnesses; inevitably, therefore, answers tend to be repetitive. In simple cases, where possibly only the establishment of a legal backing to an irregular situation was required, nothing further would follow, but occasionally, where the basic facts were in dispute, a counter, or excepted, allegation followed, with its own questions, and in the one baffling case a further excepted allegation was brought by the initiator to counter the defendant's exception. On the other hand, this very rigidity aided participants in allowing remaining procedures to be less formal. The result was that there was less need to have qualified specialists present and as a

consequence they were kept to a minimum. Depositions were apparently not held in formal sessions of the court, but were often taken locally at a convenient venue for witnesses. The place was not always named, but of those given, 8 were taken in Taunton, 3 in Bridgwater, and 1 each in Combe Florey, Crewkerne and Crowcombe. There was no regular day of the week for sitting and, in fact, all days (including Sunday) were used in the limited cases involved. The registrar of the archdeaconry, John Southey, great great uncle of the poet,⁴ styled 'n.p.' (for notary public), was always present and would have been the main source of ecclesiastical law in the absence of the official of the archdeacon, Richard Healey, D.C.L., who was only present on one occasion — for no obvious reason.⁵ Otherwise, all remaining court days were presided over by a surrogate, or duly appointed deputy. Where all can be positively identified, all were clergymen and all held a master's degree.⁶ Four acted only once, two on three occasions and one, Thomas Jenkins, appeared 14 times. It cannot be coincidence that local incumbents presided at Combe Florey, Crewkerne and Crowcombe when the case involved their own parishioners. With the possible exception of Thomas Jenkins, the minor role played by other surrogates may be judged from the fact that of the five cases which occupied more than a single day, only two had the same surrogate, two were continued by a different surrogate and the third had no less than three surrogates.

Not surprisingly, in view of the absence of court proceedings, there can be no indication of the verdict reached and, indeed, in the absence of questions raised to witnesses, it is not clear, at least in testamentary cases, what was the point at issue, but this is not important. The value of the deposition book lies rather in the incidental information portrayed and the glimpses of local circumstances, augmented, as it is, by the immediacy of language in the vernacular, which is, thus, not lost in the formal translation by a court official.

Inter-family disputes over wills have a long history and the present four-year period was no exception: brother versus brother, brother versus his own sons or wife versus sister occur and all provide nuggets which might otherwise have remained hidden. Thus, 1690 brought to light the presence of small-pox in Crowcombe, and a resulting hasty re-marriage provided proof, long suspected, but not so plainly verified, that the reason was to preserve a copyhold estate, which otherwise would fall to the lord on a widower's death. There were obvious dangers arising out of nuncupative, or oral, wills and the high

incidence of illiteracy, and both gave opportunities for collusion. In one case, the explanation for the will of the small-pox victim being nuncupative and not a signed will was that his hands were badly swollen and he needed to wear white cotton gloves, which has the ring of truth. Less likely was a nuncupative will, where the opposing party counter-claimed with evidence that the deceased, John Morse of Taunton, had been a schoolmaster with many years' experience in a writing school and that he was employed in drawing, making and engrossing several bonds, wills and settlements. Elsewhere, the way in which ambiguities could easily occur if someone was quick to seize the opportunity was illustrated in the matter of Thomas Webber of North Petherton who, on his death bed overnight told the watchers that he intended giving a tenement to 'Tam'. The problem was that he had a sister and a daughter both named Thomazine and, inevitably, witnesses were prepared to support either one. The irony is that the daughter was likely to have been so named in honour of her aunt.

Being solely dependent on witnesses over-hearing a defamation, the cases were normally short-lived, and, judging by the two instances, repetitive. The conversation reported at Milverton was unambiguous, 'Hold thy tongue, thou old Bart's whore'. But in a similar situation at Bradford, the witness clearly did not know what was meant by the description of the wronged husband as a 'sea-buck' and it had to be explained in specific terms that the wife was Abraham Turner's whore.

At Pitminster the occasion in dispute was the annual audit of the parish accounts, where a parishioner present questioned the over-spending of a particular item. Parties involved were the current churchwarden, John Mallack, and his former officer, James Cade. In an incidental aside it was added that the vestry took place in the parish house on Easter Monday. As a secondary element, it is a matter of significance that accounts were not routinely approved without a debate. Faced with the many formal volumes of accounts, which exist parish by parish and year by year, we may *suspect* that this may indicate that parish audits could be debated, but as with the earlier instance of the re-marriage in Crowcombe, it is easy to lose sight of this and proof is hard to find. Finally, as a bonus, the subject matter is intrinsically interesting: the fifth bell needed re-casting and the question turned on the interpretation of the agreement with the well-known bell-founder (but apparent novice at this stage), Thomas Wroth, 'then aged 40 years, born in Oake and presently resident in Wellington for 16 years.' There were practical problems of weighing on Wroth's part and a mistake

alleged on the churchwarden's part in converting from the rate of 100lbs per cwt to the avoirdupois standard 112lbs. But in addition there was a basic conflict of what standard had been agreed: Wroth contended that this was at the rate of 20s per 100lbs, plus 40s for waste, and cited his recent payment for a new bell at Holcombe Rogus, where he agreed at 24s per cwt of 112lbs.

But richest of all was the one which should have been, on the face of it, a simple case relating to the proving of the nuncupative will of William Treble of Combe Florey, involving the father and a brother of the deceased. The case hinged on the alleged date of the will, which was flatly contradicted by the defendant who, in support, supplied evidence of the movements of the protagonist throughout the day. In so doing, witnesses presented glimpses of the daily routine in a rural community as they referred to their particular circumstances. In addition to the normal agricultural work, there were other instances: the tailor, for example, working for the whole day within the house in question, with his apprentice, in cutting from 9.00 to 6.00. Happily, too, it was the day of Stogumber Fair, where witnesses claimed to have seen him watching people playing nine-pins or 'skeeles' in the churchyard, one of whom, a fuller, was employed, presumably temporarily in the holiday, as an ostler in the 'Wine Hoop'. One described how he went to Taunton in the evening for a meeting with the Assize Judge, who was travelling from Exeter to Wells, but stopping at the Three Cups (now the County Hotel), to seek for the appointment of a guardian. Another recalled that he saw them pass by when he had gone to the Gore Inn in Bishops Lydeard to see the bull-baiting.

The general impression remains that speakers were remarkably indiscreet, however sensitive their conversation was, and, conversely, eavesdroppers were always to hand, perhaps being aided by the fact of multiple occupancy and the flimsiness of buildings. Thus, discounting the cases of defamation where witnesses are necessarily present, deponents in the Treble case overheard opponents describe how they were bribed to witness a false will. Among several quarrels, one was an intriguing, but otherwise undeveloped tale, of lodging two Irishmen with an inference of treason. The time of the quarrel would have been the end of 1689 and the suggestion, presumably, was that they were plotting the return of James II. This reported conversation was given as over a year ago and the long-term recall was a feature in the depositions, aided, no doubt, by their limited horizons. In similar fashion, eye-

witnesses could be reasonably expected without question to remember particular occasions, as instanced by the witness who saw the Combe Florey travellers going through Bishops Lydeard, given the preponderance of the numbers of native-born or long-term residents.

The volume provides such tantalising glimpses of life in rural Somerset that it is a tragedy that it is a solitary survivor.

1. *Som. Rec. Soc.*, 43, (1928), 'Collectanea II, Act Book of the Archdeaconry of Taunton'.
2. SRO, DD/SP 423.
3. *Treble v Treble* (for which see above).
4. *SDNQ*, XXIII, 288 (1942).
5. The Registrar, in a private capacity, advised re-drafting a nuncupative will (*Morse v Morse*) because it was 'not well-composed', lacking mention of 'last sickness' or being in 'his own house'.
6. Wm. Allen of Bridgwater, John Farthing of Crowcombe, Richard Hill of Combe Florey and Richard Doble of Taunton St. Mary. Thomas Jenkins may be the one later instituted in Cheddon in 1706.

DEREK SHORROCKS

4. WIMBORNE MINSTER CHURCHWARDENS' PRESENTMENTS. The act books and court papers of the Royal Peculiar jurisdiction of Wimborne Minster were deposited in the Dorset County Record Office among the parish church records. In all there are seventeen bundles of court papers dating from 1557 to 1888 comprising 2,934 documents, principally from the late 16th and 17th centuries, and two volumes 1601-1602/3 and 1720-1746. Among the court papers, which include an important group of probate records, there is a bundle of court papers c.1581-1714 (DCRO Ref: PE/WE:CP 2/10) which includes a number of presentations by churchwardens at visitations. The Dorset County Record Office does not hold records of the bishop's or archdeacon's courts, apart from probate records. So churchwardens presentments are rarely to be found in the Office.

The duties of churchwardens went far beyond the wardenship of the fabric of their church as is illustrated by the 'Articles to be inquired upon ...' by the Wimborne churchwardens, which is to be found in this bundle (DCRO: Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/15). The questions which the churchwardens were required to answer show something of the range of the matters on which they had to report to higher church authorities. They also are a pointer to the type and variety of information which the student of local history may expect to find in the churchwardens' presentments about life in their parish. In order to illustrate the content, variety and usefulness of these records transcripts of the Articles and a

limited selection of some presentments made by the churchwardens of Wimborne Minster between 1589 and 1600 follow.

In these transcripts I have modernised spellings and expanded standard abbreviations silently to aid the reading. Where I have felt it essential to the sense I have introduced a limited element of punctuation. I have standardised the use of capital letters. Words or parts of words in square brackets are my suggestions where a word is missing or of doubtful reading. In two places a word has been lost, as the Articles are in poor condition, very frail and worn down the right hand side. I have been fairly bracing towards the transcription of the selected excerpts as my intention here is to show a very small sample of what may be found in these records and not to provide a serious publication of text.

Articles to be inquired upon within the peculiar jurisdiction of Wimborne Minster as followeth

1. Imprimis whether your minister have used any other form or manner of public prayers, administration of sacraments or any other rites, ceremonies or orders than are prescribed in the book of Common Prayer or hath he altered them or any of them, how and in what manner.

2. Item whether doth he or any other take upon them to read lectures or preach being mere lay persons or not ordered according to the laws of this realm or not lawfully licensed, doth he or any other preachers remaining in your parish at some times every year personally say the public service and administer the Holy Communion himself according to the said book of Common Prayer or no. Doth he or any other keep any exercise of expounding read any lecture in private houses other besides those of that family do resort. And whether have you a preacher at this instant and what stipend is paid to the preacher.

3. Item whether upon Sabbath Days Holy Days doth your minister call for and instruct the youth of his parish in the Catechism and principles of Christian Religion, And whether likewise on every Sabbath Day do put the churchwardens in mind of their duty as well to note who absents himself from Divine Service and upon the goods and chattels of such to levy 12d a piece for every default to the use of the poor, as such also who unreverently behave there themselves And whether do the churchwardens perform that duty accordingly.

4. Item whether hath your minister used the form of thanksgiving after child birth for any woman unlawfully begotten with child otherwise than on a Sabbath Day or Holy

Day in time of public prayer, and also with public Acknowledging of her sin in such form as the ordinary hath prescribed, and whether any such offenders came into your peculiar jurisdiction then to present them presently to your ordinary or send the same presentment to your register.

5. Item whether any married within the forbidden degree of consanguinity or affinity, any separated in that respect do keep company still together, any lawfully married elsewhere any man which hath two wives or woman two husbands, are there in your parish or precinct any incestuous, adulterous or incontinent persons, any common drunkards, ribalds, swearers, usurers or vehemently suspected of these or any of them and have not done penance for any of these offences or left [*? punishments*] by churchwardens your predecessors before you or now or any of them or by dicing carding playing bowls or any other unlawful exercises do profane the Sabbath.

6. Item whether any in your parish or precinct of your [*partly lost & illegible*] have departed this life whose wills are not yet [*proved*] Doth any administer or intermeddle with the dead, go without authority from the ordinary for the ti[*me*] being, hath any wills been proved or admin[*istrations ? granted*] since the last visitation what be their names [*and*] surnames which offend against this or any other of [*these*] Articles.

7. Item whether your church and churchyard be in re[*pair*] and decently kept and your service distinctly read accordingly.

8. Generally you shall by virtue of the oath which [*you*] have taken make diligent inquisition and truly [*lost*] in writing not only the names and surnames of all who have offended or suspected or are Ton[*lost*] in any these Articles, but also who have Offended against any part of the Queen's jurisdiction or any ecclesiastical law of this realm, and shall hereof every quarter put down in writing that is to say ten days before Christmas, ten days before our Lady Day, ten days before Midsummer Day and ten days before Michaelmas Day, And the same presentment to be sent to the register, his office, whereby reference may be had in exequ[*illegible*] presently.

Examples from the presentments returned by the Wimborne Minster churchwardens add flesh to the bare bones of the Articles and further illustrate the value of this type of document to the student of local history.

1589/90 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/2)

Imprimis Thomas Foller we are hear to present unto you for laying of straw in the church liden [*sic*] and will not make it clean, being warned thereof by the sidesmen moreover the aforesaid Thomas Foller misusing the sidesmen in the

time of service while the omene [*sic*] was reading, misusing them and called them dolts.

Elizabeth Man the wife of John Aman using of other men[']s company and not her husband's upon a rumour as the sidesmen be informed and this is the cause we do present her.

Joan Aman the daughter of John Aman for keeping company with men at unlawful times as the sidesmen are certified upon a rumour and this is the cause we do present her.

Imprimis we present that there is a woman in the borough with one Melmoth great with child as we be informed.

Item we present John Burten for keeping company with a woman and not married as we be informed.

[signed by two churchwardens and three sidesmen]

1591/92 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/8)

We present George Loup for abusing the Lord's Sabbath for playing at a unlawfull game called bowls in the time of God's service.

also we present Francis Waye servant to Thomas Fuller for playing with him.

Also we present Joyce Clarke widow for that she keeps open her doors and doth sell drink and other victuals in the time of God's service.

Also we present William Lucas of Holt for playing of a fiddle in the time of God's service.

1591/92 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/9)

We present William Woods for that he keeps company with Margery Highcocks and that she is a poor woman and likely to be spoiled and we pray the court to take some order.

1593/94 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/13)

We present that there is a crime going betwixt George Jay & Margaret Habgood for that she said George Jay was found in his house between 12 & one of the clock at night.

We present that John Paynter & John Jay was found sitting in the market place at the time of the sermon.

1594/95 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/14)

We present Alexander Foular for not coming to the church at least if he do come it is very seldom but he never tarrieth at the sermon.

We present Christopher Sylar for sitting by the fire in the sermon time and when we asked him if he would go to the church he said he would go when he listeth.

We present Joan Warmington for that she liveth incontinently.

We present Timothy Lewes & Phillipe Bouch that they have lived incontinently with her as she hath confessed.

We present Simon Jerrat the younger that he lived incontinently with Joan Warmington by her own confession.

We present Anthony Pit for that he liveth incontinently with Joan Warmington by her own confession.

Alexander Fowler about Christmas last did say that he would not go to the church to hear such a knave to preach as Mr Norman was and that Mr Norman was hunted from other places and could not be suffered to preach anywhere in Dorsetshire but here. And that he never heard Mr Norman to preach more than once since his coming.

12 June 1595 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/16)

Item we present William Delacourt the son of Peter Delacourt for beating the

drum in the time of service in the Churche Haye.

No date [after 1595] (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/17)

We present that Mary Longman hath used very opprobrious and reproachful speeches of Mr Giles Lawrence sometimes schoolmaster of Wimborne tending to the breach of charity: viz that he hath lived incontinently within the Jurisdiction of Wimborne Minster

We present a crime spoken by Thomas Fuller by Mary Evans that she should be a misliving woman.

[The next document in the bundle describes in detail the basis of the presentment to the court concerning Mary Longman. DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/17)]

Words spoken by Mary Longman concerning Giles Lawrence of Wimborne Minster this 13th of February 1595 viz. in the hearing of John Studley & Mary his wife Charles Studley & Henry Dav[lost].

On Cuthburga's even last Giles Lawrence rode to Blandford and brought home drugs to his chamber and appointed his woman on Cuthberga's day to go to the Crown & fetch prunes & white wine which prunes, the stones taken out, put in drugs & made little balls for his woman to take & appointed her to take the white wine after saying there were ladies in the Court would give £20 for such a medicine but the woman would not take the balls but drank the white wine. Afterwards the woman was conveyed to Shaston & there had child whereof there was but acquainted with all and that she said to them one had promised her marriage but died before.

Also Giles Lawrence had appointed her to go to Clement Jeyes & to stay there till his coming home. And the same night sent for her again to attend his brother the person who lay in his brothers chamber in the school & taught the scholars in his stead which person misused this maid so much that she had much a do to save herself from dishonesting of her. And said to her that his brother told him that she was at a beck for him.

She sayeth since his last coming home she demanded certain money of him whereupon he fell out with her and called her whore & she called him knave with divers other vile words whereupon Joseph Collett came demanding the cause of their chiding and Lawrence said to him that his maid & he reckoned about household stuff, the maid said it is stuff indeed.

She sayeth she sent him two letters since his coming home saying that she would go to the Justice if he would not pay her the money that was behind.

Also she said God forgive her for she had foresworn herself before Edmond Uvedale when he examined her concerning matters between herself & Giles Lawrence.

The copy of a letter sent by Mary Longman to Giles Lawrence: For as much as you have shut me out of doors when I came friendly to speak with you it shall be a dear shutting out I farther advise you to make your purse strong against Saturdays to entertain your bastard and make your part as good as you can to answer for yourself for I will reveal to the Justices such practices of yours which if other would have commented to you defer[?] hanging I never mind to seek you any more fearing you have dealt so with me but if you have anything to say to me send to me I am near enough to answer you for that & a great deal more for thus you may thank no body but your own discourtesy.

The copy of Mr Nicholas letter sent to Mr Pupton of [?Sarum]
The maid you write of was at my house about Michaelmas as she came from

London as a guest only but no servant of mine & she stayed at my house but one night; she dwelt with my sister Lane by my brother Lane's time but not in her widowhood And I do not know where she hath been abiding since or before she was at my house; but as my wife sayeth she told her she was then going homewards but where that home is I know not so with my hearty commendations I leave you to the Almighty this Sunday the last of February 1595.

Memorandum she reported that the corporation were twice so many more as they be, that they should not rid [*sic*] away Lawrence so soon as she would lay her life, if she did declare that she knew by him he would not tarry 23 hours. Also she said he had a [*document ends*].

1595/96 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/21)

Item We present Peter Delacourt for not repairing the wall next the churchyard

Item we present that the minister Mr Withington do not wear & use such habits & square cap as by the Queen's Majesty's injunctions he is enjoined unto

Item we present Richard Wels & Elizabeth his wife for that she was found with child before they were married

Item we present all these recusants

Edward Dewey

Alice Silver the wife of Christopher Silver

William Cornish of Holt

Robert Habgood

The wife of Roger Loowpe

Agnes Loowpe }
Annis Loowpe } his daughters

Tomssey Gibbs, widow

Henry Youngs, his wife

Margaret Trim the wife of Richard Trim

Mary Silver

Widow Pinson & her daughter

1596/97 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/23)

Item we present that the wife of Thomas Fuller and Mr Adams wife when they came to church could not be purified

Item we present Thomas Browne, John White alias Gilbert, Thomas Clarke, Henry Locke, John Fisher, John Plowman for opening their shops before sermon be ended.

1596/97 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/27)

Item we present Mr. Dackone for serving the communion with wine not fit for the place.

Item we present Richard Gaye for because he maketh the churchyard common with his pigs.

No date [after 1596] (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/28)

Imprimis we present Robert Allen for that in the time of the administration of baptism he caused to be brought into the church many cakes to the profanation of the church and the disturbance of the minister.

1597/98 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/33)

Item we do present that the widow Sanders doth keep a youth in her house and as the common sort doth say he lieth with her.

29 December 1600 (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/47)

Also we present a woman commonly called Whitelegge for certain base

children that she had had; and for suspicion of further lewd living beside.

No date [c.1600] (DCRO Ref: PE/WM:CP 2/10/54)

Item we present that John Barnes of Holt keepeth company with John Hanvordes [*sic*] wife as much as ever he did afore and he sayeth that he will do it do thou what thou canst do ...

Item we present Marie Brewer for she said that she did see a devil in the pulpit when that Mr Hanson did preach.

HUGH JAQUES

5. TOLLER WHELME DURING THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY. A dispute over the tithes payable on land at Toller Whelme in 1550 provides interesting details about this small settlement in the parish of Corscombe. Throughout the later Middle Ages the estate at Toller Whelme was part of the possessions of the Cistercian abbey of Forde which was then in Devon, and until shortly before the dissolution of the monasteries the land was farmed directly by the abbey, and one of the monks together with some of the abbey servants were permanently resident there.

The information emerges from the depositions of elderly witnesses who were examined before the eminent lawyer, John Tregonwell, at Milton Abbas on 2 October 1550.¹ The purpose was to establish who was responsible for paying tithe to the parish priest of Corscombe on the former abbey lands at Toller Whelme, and the witnesses were asked to describe the situation before the dissolution of Forde abbey and the dispersal of its lands in 1539.

One witness, Richard Douch husbandman aged 70 years, stated that during the time of Abbot William White (abbot of Forde 1490-1521), the lands had been farmed directly by the abbey, and no tithes had been paid on it, although the shepherds, ploughmen and other servants employed by the abbot had paid tithe to the parson of Corscombe on their wages. Another witness, William Seinklere (St Clair), husbandman aged 66 years, said that Abbot White had built a large house at Toller Whelme and that the abbot occasionally stayed there himself; and Thomas Fawne, husbandman, added that 'there was a monke of Forde continually lyinge in the howse of the said farme, and other olde men there'. This house or mansion which was built by Abbot White must be the surviving medieval part of the present manor house at Toller Whelme which on architectural evidence has been correctly dated to 1470.²

As at many other settlements in Dorset, the population of Toller Whelme had evidently once been much larger, and a

chapel had been founded to serve the community there during the twelfth century, but the declining population in the later Middle Ages meant that the chapel had fallen into ruins by the fifteenth century.³ Richard Mattheuwe, aged 90, stated that he could remember as a boy having seen the walls of the church or chapel still standing, and that he had helped to carry stone from the walls to build a house for the abbot. All the witnesses agreed that the farm was very productive, and that the abbot had kept 1,600 sheep and 20 large cattle, as well as growing 30 or 40 acres of corn each year and producing hay for the livestock. The profitability of the land and property belonging to Forde abbey at Toller Whelme is confirmed by the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535 which valued the estate there at £39 2s 11d *per annum*, representing nearly 10 *per cent* of the net annual income of the abbey.⁴

The situation at Toller Whelme changed radically when Abbot White died in 1521 and was succeeded by Thomas Tybbe *alias* Chard who was to remain as abbot of Forde until the suppression of the abbey in 1539.⁵ Like the heads of many other religious houses, Abbot Chard no doubt realised that the future was very uncertain for his house, and he began to raise money on his estates by granting leases on the lands. As his name implies, Abbot Chard was a local man, and was also at pains to safeguard the interests of members of his own family, granting them beneficial leases of abbey lands, and making Ralph Tybbes *alias* Chard and his son Thomas of Charmouth bailiffs of the abbey lands at Toller Whelme with an annuity of £5 0s 0d *per annum*.⁶ Moreover, Abbot Chard had a particularly pressing need for money to finance the major building work he undertook at Forde, notably the construction of the sumptuous apartments for himself with the fine dining hall and tower which survive. He therefore leased part of the lands at Toller Whelme to Alexander Payne, a baker, and Thomas Fisher, husbandman, both of Evershot. The lease was for 40 years and the abbot charged £200 for it. Having paid such a large sum for the lease, it was naturally a blow for the two men to find that they were called upon to pay tithe to the parson of Corscombe on the grounds that when the lands were farmed directly by the abbot they were tithe-free, but as soon as they were leased they became liable to tithe. Payne and Fisher attempted to dispute this, and even travelled to Forde to discuss the matter with Abbot Chard, but he totally refused to support them in any refusal to pay, and told them 'I will not hinder you therein, but do for yourselves the best that ye can.' The abbot added that 'he would not maynteine them in the law,

nor have to do with them.' The protests of the two leaseholders proved to be in vain, and the witnesses deposed that although the two men had taken legal advice, they had been obliged to pay tithes to the parson of Corscombe like all other parishioners.

When the matter was raised again during the reign of Edward VI, the task of examining the witnesses fell to John Tregonwell who had retired to live in great style and splendour in the former monastery at Milton Abbas which he had acquired in 1540 as a reward for his service to the Crown, particularly over the dissolution of the monasteries. He had been one of the Commissioners who received the surrender of Abbot Chard and his 12 monks at Forde on 8 March 1539, and arranged for the dispersal of the monastic lands. Abbot Chard's forethought was rewarded, and he obtained a pension of £80 *per annum*, the nearby benefice of Thorncombe, and 40 wain-loads of firewood each year from the woods of the former abbey.⁷ In 1544 the former abbey estate at Toller Whelme was granted by the Crown to William Paulet, Marquess of Winchester, one of those who profited most from the dissolution of the monasteries, acquiring a vast estate of former monastic lands in the west country. Paulet had risen rapidly in the service of Henry VIII, and under Edward VI he became Lord Treasurer; in this capacity he ordered the enquiry to be made into the tithe dispute over his own lands at Toller Whelme.⁸

The depositions taken by John Tregonwell at Milton were bound in a piece of medieval parchment containing beautiful script and illuminated initial letters, which was no doubt part of the great store of manuscripts which Tregonwell acquired with the abbey buildings and estates of Milton Abbas.

1. British Library, Add. MSS. 28677.
2. *Royal Commission on Historical Monuments*, Dorset, I, 1952, xxxix, 107.
3. J. Hutchins, *History of Dorset*, 3rd Ed., 1863-70, II, 92; G. Oliver, *Monasticon Dioecesis Exoniensis*, 1846-54, 352-3.
4. *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, Record Commission, 1814, II, 300.
5. G. Oliver, *op. cit.*, 339-40.
6. *Ibid.*, 340-1.
7. *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, XIV (i), 468.
8. J. H. Bettey, *The Suppression of the Monasteries in the West Country*, 1989, Chapter 8.

J. H. BETTEY

6. PHILLIMORE'S PARISH REGISTERS, DORSET VI CORSCOMBE MARRIAGES. In *SDNQ*, XXIX, 208 the Rev. Peter May contributed a list of errors and omissions he had found in Phillimore's transcriptions of the Stoke Abbott marriage registers, 1560-1812. Those who have had occasion to examine

the Corscombe marriages, 1595-1837, contained in the same volume will no doubt have noticed there is a gap 1688-1713. A search in the register revealed the pages which had been missed and a list of entries appears below. However, the legibility of the entries to the year 1694 is variable and I am grateful to the County Archivist for providing additional entries to those which I was able to transcribe by making use of an ultra-violet light.

It should be pointed out that there are a number of misreadings of surnames in entries *before* 1688 and some entries are incomplete. Two examples in the former category are, *Jone Ross* for *Bess* (1672) and *John Fowler* for *Howlet* (1675). The marriage of *John Hearne* and *Susan Russell* has been missed out altogether. In total, however, the number of errors would not appear to be proportionately as great as those recorded by Mr. May for *Stoke Abbott*, but a search of the original register would prove rewarding in some cases.

Corscombe marriages 1688-1713

17 Apr	1688	Joseph Matthews and Honora Russell
5 May	1688	Alexander Russell and Martha Wiltshire
16 Jul	1688	[]ight and Martha Abbott ("Raindle" crossed
out) 9 May	1689	William Chubb and Mary Gillingham
15 Oct	1689	George Vivion and Elizabeth Martin
17 May	1692	Matthew Raindle and Hannah Andrews
[] May	1693	Henry Burt and Mary Stone
20 May	1695	William Jey and Mary Bishop
14 Oct	1695	Anthony Mattocke and Jane Russell
25 Apr	1696	Henry Fowler and Elizabeth Cox
14 Apr	1696	William Snayden and Anne Horsford
25 Dec	1696	Robert Bush and Mary Cox
8 Nov	1697	Henry Raindle and Rachel Taylor
6 Mar	1697/8	Ellis Burt and Mary Swerdridge
20 Feb	1698	John Sartain junior and Mary Bunn
7 May	1699	Peter Barret and Mary Bowditch
3 Apr	1700	John Napp and Sarah Demment
9 Apr	1700	Richard Lovelace and Avis Fisher
28 Apr	1700	Mark Ford and Joan Dyer
23 Sep	1700	Henry Abbott and Joane Kedgel
21 Jul	1702	Zachariah Banton senior and Elizabeth Cox, widow
13 Apr	1703	George Martin and Avise Cooper
27 Jun	1704	Abraham Banton and Grace Bailly
19 Jan	1704/5	Roger Hoit and Sarah Freake married by licence
1 May	1705	George Cox junior and Jane Vivion
22 Jul	1706	John Hill and Anne Gally married by Banns
24 Dec	1706	John Bragge and Elizabeth Parke
22 Dec	1706	William Hiscocke and Joane Besse
13 Jan	1706/7	Hugh Gilham and Jane Legge
19 May	1707	John Hawkins and Mary Helliard
25 May	1708	Nicholas Palmer of the parish of Crookhorn and Joan Park of this parish

2 Jul	1709	John Dennis and Elizabeth Cookes married by
Banns 26 Apr	1710	Jeremiah Smith and Joane Smith
2 Aug	1710	William Gilham and Anne Edwards married by
Banns 17 Oct	1710	Thomas Tayler junior and Avis Harding married by Banns
23 Oct	1711	Thomas Warham and Joan Elish
22 Jan	1711/2	Henry Willis and Magdalen Ellis married by licence
4 Feb	1711/2	Edmund Hardy and Christabel Foan married by
Banns 18 Feb	1711/2	John Dunne and Rachel Douch married by Banns
24 Aug	1712	John French and Elizabeth Smith married by Banns
6 Dec	1712	Thomas Churchil and Mary Knight married by
Banns [] Jun	1713	Constantine Hoar and Grace Cox married by Banns

P. N. DAWE

7. LITERACY IN DORSET, 1750-1800. There were remarkably few occasions during the eighteenth century when ordinary people needed to sign their names. One of the very few occasions was after 1754 when, under the terms of Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act, brides and grooms were required to sign their names, or make their marks, in the marriage register.¹ It is difficult, in the absence of any widespread testing of reading and writing levels in the later eighteenth century, to make any reliable estimate of literacy among the general population. To provide a guide, therefore, researchers have assumed that newly weds who chose to sign rather than make their mark were literate to some degree. 'If a man can write his own name, it may be presumed that he can read it when written by another; still more that he will recognize that and other familiar words when he sees them in print ...'² Assuming that those who could sign, did, and that those who made a mark were, to a greater or lesser extent, illiterate, we can, by counting the number of marks entered in the marriage registers, arrive at some understanding of the extent of literacy, and illiteracy, in the population.

Ordinary people in the eighteenth century did not keep diaries or write letters, and had few occasions, other than that provided by the marriage ceremony, of signing their names. We have, therefore, no other reliable and consistent sources of evidence against which we may test our conclusions deduced from the counting of signatures and marks in the marriage registers. Because it relies on only one signature or mark, interpretation of literacy — and illiteracy — from marriage registers has sometimes been questioned. It could be argued that intending brides and grooms may have been subjected to

social pressure which prompted them to learn, for this one great and solemn occasion, the trick of signing their names. However, there is no evidence that any pressure was brought to bear on the bride and groom to sign the register, for there was very little opprobrium attached to making one's mark. Indeed, if the practice was to learn the trick of writing one's name for this one occasion, why, despite their attraction to near illiterates, are capital letters or individual letters ignored, and cursive script substituted in *all* cases? Furthermore, it would have to be explained how figures for brides and grooms vary quite considerably, yet show a high correlation between different parts of the country. It would be unreasonable to suppose that brides and grooms signed the registers yet were not capable of reading what they had written. As one historian has so tersely commented, this could not be a once-and-for-all gimmick to win social prestige, for any increase in the practice during the century would have to be attributed simply to an increased growth in the average propensity to perform a gimmick!³

We may assume that those who made their mark were to some extent illiterate. We may also assume that those who wrote their names had been taught writing. We know that reading was generally more widely taught than writing. Teaching reading was, by comparison, much easier, and once the skill had been acquired it was a simple matter to practise it. Therefore, those who could competently sign their names would, in all probability, also have received instruction in reading.⁴ The weight of argument, therefore, points towards the counting of marks in the marriage registers as being an indicator of illiteracy, and the counting of signatures as an indication of literacy among those who were married.⁵

Some preliminary work in gathering numbers of those who signed the registers has been done for various parishes in Dorset. Parishes have been selected at random but further statistics are being gathered, and the closer investigation of some of the material is essential before any firm conclusions are drawn. Figures for the towns are incomplete, and the percentages of illiteracy which they indicate should not be taken as well established. Additional investigation for Wareham is needed, and figures for Poole and Dorchester from 1791 to 1800 have still to be gathered.

It appears that the only figures available for Dorset are those provided by W. L. Sargant in 1867, in which, for the period 1799-1804, he recorded that 31% of adults in various rural parishes made their marks. From the evidence so far available

**Totals and percentages of newly wed brides and grooms making marks
in marriage registers in Dorset, 1751-1800**

Years	Number of parishes examined	Number of weddings in the sample	Number of marks made by men (grooms)	Number of marks made by women (brides)	% of men making a mark	% of women making a mark mark	Total percentage of adults making a
1751-60	28	1091	387	632	35.4	57.9	46.7
1761-70	28	1495	576	933	38.5	62.4	50.4
1771-80	24	1203	429	706	35.6	58.6	47.1
1781-90	23	977	401	596	41	61	51
1791-1800	22	873	331	531	37.9	60.8	49.3

Average in percentage of all grooms making a mark
Average in percentage of all brides making a mark
Average in percentage of all adults making a mark

37.6
60.2
48.9

**Totals and percentages of newly wed brides and grooms making marks
in various rural parishes in Dorset, 1751-1800**

Years	Number of weddings in the sample	Number of marks made by men (grooms)	Number of marks made by women (brides)	% of men making a mark	% of women making a mark	Total percentage of adults making a mark
1751-60	138	65	95	47.1	68.8	57.9
1761-70	278	129	191	46.4	68.7	57.5
1771-80	285	120	198	42.1	69.4	55.7
1781-90	290	139	206	47.9	71	59.4
1791-1800	236	107	159	45.3	67.3	56.3

Parishes represented in the sample: Askerswell, Broadwindsor, Stalbridge, Symondsburys, & Canford Magna

**Totals and percentages of newly wed brides and grooms making marks
in Dorchester, Poole, and Wareham, 1751-1800**

Years	Number of weddings recorded	Number of marks made by men (grooms)	Number of marks made by women (brides)	% of men making a mark	% of women making a mark	Total percentage of adults making a mark
1751-60	344	78	164	22.6	47.6	35.1
1761-70	495	125	247	25.2	49.8	37.5
1771-80	423	91	184	21.5	43.4	32.5
1781-90	161	39	65	24.2	40.3	32.2
1791-1800	117*	29	59	24.7	50.4	37.6

* Wareham only

the percentage would appear to be 56%.⁶

The figures for Dorset may be compared to those provided by researchers who have worked on the registers of other English counties. Illiteracy in the rural parishes of Dorset appears to be similar to Worcestershire (50% from 1750 to 1800), and Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire (averaging 58% between 1750 and 1800).

The figures indicate that there was a higher degree of illiteracy among women than among men. This is true in England as well as other European countries. In Europe during this period, well over one half of the men were capable of signing their names but less than one third of the women could do so. In England, W. B. Stephens found that female illiteracy, about 60% in 1754, dropped to just below 50% by 1840. Michael Sanderson's researches show that the level of literacy of women was commonly just less than half that of men. From the figures now available it appears that the level of literacy for women in Dorset was above the average for England as a whole, for the period 1750 to 1800. However, literacy among women was consistently below that of the men. As the century progressed the degree of illiteracy among women in Dorset actually increased.

The figures for Dorset's towns, though at present incomplete, seem to show a similarity to Oxford and Richmond (Yorks) for 1750-61, and Exeter and Ludlow for the period 1791-1800. Overall, however, for the period 1750 to 1800, Dorchester, Poole and Wareham seem to have had a higher degree of literacy than can be found in most other English towns for which figures are available. The national average for English towns, 1754-62, of brides and grooms making a mark, was 52.5%. In Poole, Dorchester and Wareham, the figure is 35.1%, showing that in Dorset's towns, adults were significantly more literate at this period than they were in English towns as a whole. In 1799-1804, the national average in the towns of those making a mark was 49.9%, while in Dorset for the same period this is 37.6%, showing that this higher level of literacy was maintained in the towns of Dorset throughout the second half of the eighteenth century.⁷

Studies based upon evidence from some European towns have discovered that towns were superior to rural areas in standards of literacy. Bridegrooms in towns were much more literate than their rural counterparts, and urban brides were marginally more literate than the bulk of rural men. In England, bridegrooms from towns were more literate than rural bridegrooms during the period 1754-62, but rural brides

and grooms by 1804 had significantly improved in literacy, the gap between them had closed, and only 46.2% made their mark in the registers compared to 49.9% of brides and grooms. In Dorset, bridegrooms from Poole, Dorchester and Wareham were on average 22% more literate than men from rural areas. Town brides in Dorset, unlike their European counterparts, were not marginally more literate than the bulk of rural men. On average, for the period 1750 to 1800, 46.3% of women marrying in the towns made their marks in the parish registers, while 45.7% of men in the rural areas did so. There may be some indication here that a future study should look more closely at the bridal partners of grooms in Poole, Dorchester and Wareham. If a large proportion of the Dorset town brides came from rural parishes, then this might help to explain how we can interpret the Dorset figures. However, it is true that both bridegrooms and brides from the towns of Dorset were more literate than their rural counterparts.⁸

All available evidence shows that in the west country, as in the eastern counties and the midlands, rural illiteracy in the mid eighteenth century was at a higher level than in the towns of those areas. This may indicate that elementary education was more generally available in the towns, and that there was a greater emphasis placed on the ability to read and write. We know that schooling provided from charitable bequests was often available for children of 'the lower orders', but these bequests were more frequently found in towns than in rural areas. The higher standards of literacy in the towns may indicate also that there was some additional encouragement for children to attain good levels of reading and writing because there were more opportunities for literate work. Although towns possessed better facilities and greater advantages, rural areas were not entirely without some provision for the teaching of reading and writing. Dorset, like many other English counties, had a largely agricultural economy with an under employed labour force. Villagers had to utilise whatever rudimentary skills they possessed in order to make a living. Women had fewer opportunities for paid employment, and in the rural parishes the teaching of reading, number, and perhaps some writing, was generally provided by widows and elderly females who could offer some form of fairly cheap elementary instruction.⁹ These 'dame schools', as they were later to be called, were not even remotely adequate as a substitute for salaried school teachers — generally found in towns — whose work was done under the surveillance of the church or the trustees of an endowment, but, the evidence of rural literacy in

Dorset — 42% could sign their names — shows that some teachers in dame schools were proficient enough, and had sufficient sustained contact with children, to be able to offer writing skills as well as reading.

Some form of simple instruction in reading, and, perhaps, writing, was also provided in some workhouses. In 1750, for example, the workhouse at Dorchester had 5 children, and one adult was designated as a school-mistress. In Puddletown in 1769 the fairly substantial house which had been the residence of a schoolmaster in 1724, was used as a Poor House and was occupied by a widow and 23 children. Some villagers could also, from time to time, offer casual tuition to children. In Puddletown in 1724, a total population of 608 was served by a schoolmaster and a schoolmistress, but the parish also had Henry Skinner 'who teaches children to write'. In 1770 in Weymouth, William Crossman, who made a living drawing up indentures and insurance claims for merchants, also visited houses to teach writing and navigation. In Corfe Castle in 1790, where there were 241 boys under the age of 15 years, there were two schoolmasters, but the parish also had two 'writing clerks' who would have been capable of teaching writing. Evidence of this sort is patchy and difficult to evaluate, and we should also be aware that the existence of any simple and direct connection between reading, writing and schooling is now beginning to be questioned.¹⁰

The level of illiteracy in the county did not substantially alter during the period 1750-1800, though examination of certain individual parishes may disclose some significant variations. In England generally, for the period up to 1840, rural parishes which experienced a considerable increase in illiteracy tended to be predominantly agricultural, dominated by a single landlord, with little or no schooling available, and with a high level of poor rate. Those where illiteracy decreased were characterised by a tendency to have day schools, a wider dispersal of land ownership, lower poor rates, and a greater diversity of non-agricultural occupations.¹¹ Further research may establish whether any of these general conclusions may be applied to parts of Dorset.

1. 26 Geo II, c.33.

2. *Report of the Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England for 1860*, (1861), xviii, p. vii.

3. E. G. West, *Education and the Industrial Revolution* (Batsford, 1975), p. 41; Sara T. Nalle, 'Literacy and Culture in Early Modern Castile', *Past & Present*, No. 125, Nov. 1989, 65-96. In the Appendix pp. 95-96, the author demonstrates that there existed a high correlation between reading and writing. Of 634 adults, 4 could sign their names without being able to read them; 47 could read but not write. 'Thus signatures would appear to be a reliable indicator of literacy although ... the source actually under-

estimates the total number of readers by a factor of 8%.' R. S. Schofield, 'The Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England', in J. Goody (ed), *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, (Cambridge, 1968), attempted a more precise definition of what is meant by 'literacy', and concluded (p. 324) that '... a measure based on the ability to sign probably over estimates the number able to write, under estimates the number able to read at an elementary level, and gives a fair indication of the numbers able to read fluently.'

4. Victor E. Neuberg, *Popular Education in Eighteenth Century England* (Woburn Press, 1971), p. 96.
5. In drawing more general conclusions about the extent of illiteracy in the population at large, it must be remembered that the statistics are gathered from the age group of marriageable age.
6. W. L. Sargent, 'On the progress of elementary education', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, xxx, (1867), p. 127, as reported in W. B. Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society, 1830-70, the geography of diversity in provincial England* (Manchester University Press, 1987), p. 9.
7. Comparison with the results shown by other researchers is made with reference to the tables of statistics (Table 1.1 and 1.2) provided in Stephens, *Education, Literacy & Society*.
8. R. Houston, 'Literacy and Society in the west', *Social History*, vol. 8, No. 3, Oct. 1983, pp. 269-293, reporting studies from Spain, France, Poland and Scotland.
9. Lawrence Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England, 1640-1900', *Past and Present*, No. 42, 1969, 69-139; Michael Sanderson, 'Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England', *Past and Present*, No. 56, 1972, 75-104.
10. C. L. Sinclair Williams (ed), *Puddletown, House, Street and Family. An account of the Inhabitants of Piddletown Parish, 1724, Dorsetshire* (Dorset Record Society, vol. II, 1988), pp. 55, 83; Minutes and Accounts of Dorchester Workhouse, Dorset Record Office, D 188 B/X 1; Public Record Office, Customs letter books, Weymouth, 59/13; J. Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset*, 2nd ed., II.; Houston, 'Literacy and Society', p. 271.
11. Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society*, p. 10.

G. J. DAVIES

8. THE MAPS OF MELLS AND LEIGH-UPON-MENDIP: A NOTE ON THEIR RECONSTRUCTION.¹ Somerset is not rich in maps and plans of earlier date than 1800, but the important Horner property was an exception. Occupying most of the Liberty of Mells and Leigh-upon-Mendip, the estate formed a compact block some 4½ miles from east to west by 3 miles north to south (besides land in other neighbouring parishes). The country is hilly and cut by steep valleys, presenting a difficult problem to surveyors before accurate baselines had been laid down. It is remarkable that, before the O.S. and the tithe maps of 1839, two independent maps of the area should have been made, one in 1682 and a second in 1779. The two maps have differing orientations and do not cover precisely the same area. Alike in one respect, neither marks parochial or manorial boundaries, while both tend to disregard freehold lands marginal to the estate although within the Liberty.

The maps seem to have been for many years in the custody of the Revd. George Horner (1849-1930), who studied them in relation to the 6" O.S. of 1885, published early in the following

year. On 7 Feb. 1886 Horner wrote: 'I have been busy over the new Ordnance map — comparing it with our old sheets of 1779 and 1682'. At that time both the old maps must have been in almost perfect condition. Tragically, they were overlooked in the war of 1939-45 and suffered serious damage from damp and, in the case of the 1682 sheet, even from running water. Grave defects were caused and it has only been possible to reconstitute the greater part of the information by the use of several other sources.

The map of 1682

The overall dimensions of the original are $7'7\frac{1}{8}"$ (2.314m) east-west by $5'5\frac{1}{16}"$ (1.653m) north-south; the scale is 4 chains to 1" or 20" to a mile (1:3168). The map was drawn on sheets of paper size 23" x 18" (584mm x 457mm) pasted together and has in recent years been remounted on strong linen-backed cartridge paper. There is little or no distortion, but parts are lost at the edges, and there are other lacunae. Essentially, however, loss of information is due to washing out of the ink and to general surface darkening and discolouration.

The present copy, though traced from the original, has had to be extensively reconstructed from secondary sources. Chief of these is the reduction onto sheets of the O.S. map at 6" to 1 mile (1:10560) of 1885-6, marked in brown ink by the Revd. George Horner, with a transcription of names and areas made on each parcel. This was necessarily abbreviated and is not entirely complete, but very few mistakes have been detected. In 1906 the area of Mells village, a square of some 3 furlongs or 600 metres, was very accurately copied by Mr. Mark Horner (1891-1908) and coloured to correspond with the original. It does not appear that any photographs of the map were taken before 1939. Some details taken in colour by Mr. Michael McGarvie, before remounting, show that the condition has remained stable in recent years. By the kindness of Mr. K. H. Rogers, County Archivist of Wiltshire, it has been possible to examine the map carefully under ultra-violet light, but this did not reveal additional details.

The map includes holdings of several separate manors besides that of Mells and Leigh, viz.: Samuels, Frenchhouse and Heydon, both in the enclosed lands and strips in the common arable fields. The documentary sources available for these manors include long series of leases for all of them and court rolls of Mells dealing with copyholds (but suffering from a gap between 1678 and 1693). For Mells and Leigh a rental and terrier of 1678 exists as a set of loose papers, which in the 19th cent. were abstracted into book form. Now indexed for

personal and topographical names, this has provided a substantial amount of supporting evidence in the case of doubtful readings. Similar help for Samuels and Frenchhouse is provided by the recent *Transcription of the Indentures of Lease* for the two manors (Samuels 1622-1761; Frenchhouse 1656-1736) by Mr. and Mrs. Michael Morris (1988); and their *Lists of Leases* for Heydon, 1590-1827 (1989). The manor of Heydon consisted in part of scattered enclaves outside the Liberty of Mells and Leigh: as late as 1663 in Radstock, but by 1682 apparently confined to Nunney with Trudoxhill.

The surveyor of 1682 included these separate parcels of Heydon in the south-east corner of the plan, where each enclave is drawn to scale and correctly orientated, but there is no spatial relationship between them. Several can be identified with the help of the tithe map as being spread over a wide area of the parish of Nunney and including the sites of Combe Farm, of Rockfield House, and of the Roman Villa with tessellated pavement found on the northern edge of the parish south-east of Whatley Combe. Another two parcels lay north-west of New Close Farm in Trudoxhill, but several of the areas surveyed remain unidentified.

Singularly, the inscription explaining these scattered portions of the manor of Heydon has survived, whereas other legends are wholly lost. Faint traces of writing, only visible under ultra-violet light, alone remain to prove that the several cartouches were originally inscribed. The former inscriptions were six in number in addition to the achievement of arms of Horner (Horner quartering Malt with an inescutcheon of Fortescue) at the top of the left side of the plan: (1) the principal description, with date, in an ornamental cartouche. Part only remains legible; if the name of the surveyor was included, it has disappeared; (2) beneath the scale of 20 chains; (3) beneath the heraldic achievement; (4) above the open arable fields at the top left of the north-east quarter; (5) the explanation of the enclaves of Heydon, still legible; and (6) a larger cartouche, both these in the south-east quarter of the map.

It can be assumed that (2) explained the scale and may have given equivalents of 4 perches, 22 yards and 66' for the chain, and $\frac{1}{4}$ mile for the total scale; (3) may have been a general statement of the manors which constituted the estate; (4) above the open fields, must have explained the use of initial letters and of colours to distinguish the various parcels. The letters may be deduced to stand for: D demesne; F Frenchhouse; H Heydon; M Mells (with Leigh); P Parsonage; S Samuels; this is confirmed by the leases and other records.

Coloured outlines on the original distinguish freeholds, including glebe (always spelt as 'glibe'), parsonage, and parish lands, and agree with the descriptions marked on the parcels; (5) deals with the separate parcels of the manor of Heydon. It is possible that (6) described the characteristics used to mark roads, footpaths, stone walls (a narrow 'ladder' on the map), other enclosures, and the divisions between strips in the open fields. The marking of 'ways', named as such, and of several footpaths, is a feature of the map.

The reconstitution of the 1682 plan is here and there defective, particularly as to names of cottagers, not recorded by the Revd. George Horner and perhaps not all mentioned on the original because of the limitations of scale. There is some doubt as to the precise course of the Mells Stream near Vobster and between Mells and Mells Green, and a few houses and cottages may have disappeared and left no trace. Tentative reconstruction of these areas has been based upon comparison with the 1779 plan and the 1839 tithe map of Mells (on a scale of 3 chains to 1" (1:2376).

It is disappointing that no evidence for the name of the surveyor should have come to light. He was evidently a distinguished expert and produced a most notable map of a large area of Somerset, including one of the last surviving systems of open arable fields before their disappearance.

From the leases and court rolls it is possible to add a little to our knowledge of the owners and occupiers of lands shown on the map, especially the freeholders. Mr. Pacie or Pacy was of Babington; Mr. Thomas Bridges was of Manor Farm, Leigh, in which he had succeeded Thomas Blackborne, evidenced in 1673. Mr. Henry Cornish was of London. Two strips in the open field, three-quarters of a mile north of Mells Manor House, are marked W.D. — W.R. It is possible that W.D. stands for William Dallimore, and probable that W.R. was William Raxworthy. Lands called Everetts belonged to James Everett, a blacksmith of Vobster. Some of the instances of two names appearing on the same parcel indicate subtenancy of a head-lease from the manor.

Manorially the map is interesting in that it shows that Frenchhouse, Samuels, and the Parsonage or Rectory manor were intermixed with Mells in the enclosures as well as in the common open fields, whereas Heydon was a separate territory or township between Mells and Whatley, though in Mells parish except for its outliers in Nunney and Radstock. The fields named Frenchhouse and Culverhouse Close, both adjacent to the house now Branch Farm, indicate that this is on

the site of the former manor-house. The manor-house of Samuels, now gone, is known from other sources to have been the large house in a walled enclosure a quarter-mile west of Mells church. The manor-house of Heydon had probably been where Heydon Farm stood in 1682, a quarter-mile south of Mellsgreen Farm and almost a mile south-south-west of the church.

The map of 1779

As it now exists, the map forms a sheet roughly 5".0' (153cm) from east to west and 3'.2" (97cm) from north to south. The scale is 6 chains to 1" or $13\frac{1}{3}$ " to the mile (1:4752). It is composed of four main sheets of parchment, with additional narrow strips stuck onto the eastern edges of the north-east and south-east quarters. Owing to unequal shrinkage/expansion of the sheets, and possibly also to inaccuracy in the original draughtsmanship, the four sheets do not match where they join. Correspondence of detail is particularly bad along the east-west median line. Xerox prints of the map, made before modern cleaning and re-mounting on linen show that much detail has recently been lost in some parts, besides earlier disfigurement of the area around the village of Mells. The prints have preserved an accurate record of almost all the lettering, which consists of parcel numbers, field names, and a key by letters and numbers. This corresponds to the 1783 *Survey of the manors of Mells, Leigh on Mendip, Stoke Lane and Doulting*, transcribed and fully indexed by Mr. and Mrs. Michael Morris (1988). In spite of the gap of four years between the map and the written survey, there is almost complete correspondence. The survey book gives the area of every parcel in both statute and customary acres, roods and perches, as well as the names of the fields.

The survey was made by Samuel Donne in 1779 and drawn out by R. Beard in the same year. Donne is known to have been of Melbury Osmond, Dorset, and flourished from 1754 to 1786 (*Dictionary of Land Surveyors*, ed. P. Eden, 1979, p. 87). The map includes Dunkerton Farm in Stoke Lane manor, but no other holdings in Stoke Lane (Stoke St. Michael), of which no map survives. Donne also produced a 'great Map' of Doulting manor in 1782, of which a reduction by Mr. Abrahams, made in 1795, has been preserved.

The copy made in 1989-90 is basically a direct tracing from the original, but some details had to be completed with the help of other sources, notably the survey of 1783.

1. My thanks are due firstly to the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, who entrusted me with the maps over a long period, and also lent other documents from the

archives at Mells Manor House and the Estate Office. Next I wish to record my gratitude to Mr. Michael McGarvie, FSA, FRSA, Hon. Archivist of Mells Manor, who inspired the project and has undertaken much relevant research as well as checking the draft tracings for omissions and errors. Mr. Kenneth Rogers, FSA, County Archivist of Wiltshire, kindly arranged special facilities for examining the map of 1682 under ultra-violet light.

JOHN HARVEY

9. YEOVIL — EARLY FIRE PRECAUTIONS. In common with most medieval towns, the ever-present danger from fire continually threatened Yeovil, particularly since it consisted largely of timber-framed and thatched dwellings,¹ while only generally ineffective measures were employed to combat the menace. The town suffered badly in 1450 when no fewer than 117 houses were completely overwhelmed,² and subsequently in the 17th cent. further destruction occurred in 1622³ and 1640,⁴ two hundred families being rendered homeless in the latter year.

The primitive nature of available equipment is indicated in the churchwardens' accounts for 1556, when a halfpenny was expended for 'reck hooks'. These, fixed to the end of long poles, could be used to pull burning thatch from roofs. Under the poor laws, churchwardens and overseers of the poor combined to ensure that such fire-fighting equipment as was available was provided and stored in the parish church, where it would be readily accessible at all times. So far as water supply was concerned, there was a Horse Pool in the centre of the town at the lower end of Silver Street, while nearby were two wells — 'Millers' in Market Street and 'Nuns' at the foot of steps leading to the north side of the churchyard,⁵ the latter being kept in constant repair by the churchwardens.

18th cent. records reveal that a quantity of buckets were kept in the church. In 1715 the churchwardens paid Robert Hodges 6d 'for mending two buckits', and from this time there is evidence of growing awareness of the need to keep such equipment in good repair. In 1726 they spent £5 15s 'for Two doz of Church Bucketts & Carriage', and from 1733 there are almost annual payments in their accounts either for maintaining or providing new equipment. At the same time, pressure was being applied by the lord of the manor. An undated document in the Phelps papers in the Somerset Record Office,⁶ but obviously of this period, is critical of the handling of the town's finances by the portreeve and burgesses. Among suggestions put forward 'to take off the scandell of pocketting public moneys and giving away estates, instead of

selling them, and favouring each other', was 'the provision of buckets and engines to prevent fires'.

The censure was taken to heart, for in the portreeve's account book for the period 1733-1843,⁷ it is shown that by the time the book commences, the town already possessed a number of buckets and an engine, entries reading:

1733 Pd. for a New Buckett and Sucker to the Town Pump	4s 0d
Pd. for Work about the Engine	2s 6d
Pd Mr. Helyar for Mending the Engine	10s 2d
Pd. for Mending the Town Bucketts — 6 Bottoms, 12 Handles and Bound	18s 0d

In the same year the churchwardens' disbursements included:

Paid Jno Coggan mending ye Church Bucketts	19s 0d
Bott 1 Dozn Church Do	£3 4s 0d
Paid Jno Churchouse for pins to hang ye Church Buckets and a Leather for the Great Bell	1s 0d

In 1740 the portreeve paid 10s 2d for 'repairing the upper Pump' and 7s 6d 'For a new Wheel to the Engine and painting'. 4s more went to 'Wm Compton for playing the Engine' and 6d 'Paid Thos. Trent for crying that Water Sho'd be put out at the Door'. This latter showing that in case of fire breaking out during the night, a ready supply of filled buckets was available for immediate use. Two years later the report of a vestry meeting reads:

29th April 1742

We whose names are hereunder written, being met at a Vestry held for the Town of Yeovill, do impower, order, and direct the present Churchwardens Mr John Dier and Mr Thomas Sheane to buy (as soon as convenient may be) one of Newsam's Engines and appropriate the same to the Use of the Town and also to repair the now Engine belonging to the said Town in such a manner as they shall think necessary and convenient And we do order that such expence as they shall be put unto in buying the New Engine and repairing the old one be repaid them on the Settling their Accounts in such manner as their other Disbursements are usually paid ...

The entry is signed by 24 parishioners. In the same year's accounts expenditure included:

Paid John Coggan for two New Buckets	10s 0d
Pd. Geo Beard for mending the Engion	15s 0d

While the portreeve's accounts show:

To old Coggin for mending Bucketts	2s 2d
Pd for 4 times playing the Engine	4s 0d
To old Coggin for mending 2 Bucketts	1s 0d

Comparison of the portreeve's and churchwardens' accounts for the next few years shows each party maintained a stock of buckets and that the vestry's directive to the churchwardens bore immediate response in regard to assisting with the repair

of the existing fire engine. At the same time the portreeve appears to have accepted responsibility for maintaining the town pumps in good working order and, in addition, assisted with the upkeep of Nuns Well.

The decision to acquire a new engine appears to have been implemented in 1748 or early in 1749. In the portreeve's accounts for the latter year 6s was 'Pd for playing the old and the new Engines', though, strangely, the churchwardens' book contains no reference to its purchase. On 24 April 1753, however, the church vestry meeting ordered 'that no expense for the future relating to the Fire Engines shall be brought into this Account', a resolution which was either over-ruled or simply ignored. The accounts for that year show 10s being paid 'To Standing the Engine', and, for the next three years, more payments were made for 'Standing the 2 Engines', the first two years at 10s, but increased to 15s in 1756. During this period the sexton, Frank Butts, received 5s in 1754 'for mending 21 Church Buckets', in 1755 '2 stems for ye Fire Crooks' cost 2s; while Thomas Hart charged the churchwardens £1 2s in 1756 'for mending ye Engine pipe'. The portreeve, in the latter year, paid 'Mr Gerrard for a New Pump Trow' £1 2s 4d and a further 1s for 'Setting it'.

Entries of similar nature occur throughout the remainder of the 18th cent., one or two appearing odd to us now as, for instance, 'To Oyl and Suet to the Engine Pipes, 1s 6d' in the churchwardens' accounts for 1758, though less so when one remembers that hosepipes were made of leather and were constantly in need of being kept supple. Church accounts for 1761 include:

Octo:7 Contributed towards loss by Fire	2s 6d
For drawing home ye Engines at the Fire	1s 0d
For playing the Engine	5s 0d

In 1768 the church vestry meeting of 8 March, ordered the churchwardens to obtain 'three Douzin of Leather Bucketts for the use of this Town in case of ffire and to repair the Engines and Leather pipes for the like Use'. The cost of the buckets are shown in the account as 6s 6d each — a total of £11 14s. Repair of the engine in 1768 is recorded as:

To Work done about the Engine Carpenter & Smith	£3 0s 0d
<i>(The £3 has been overwritten on an original figure of £2 15s)</i>	
Deduct part of Taylor and Slocombe their Bills for repairing the Engine the same being an unreasonable Charge	£2 5s 0d
Chas. Edmunds Bill	
Augt. To Righting the Iron of Ye two Engines	6s 0d
Thos. Churchouse's Bill	
Augt. 20 18 Feet Oak Board for the Engine at 5d	7s 6d

2 Pieces of Elm Board	9d
4 Wheels	1s 4d
Nails	1s 0d
3 Days Work about the same	5s 3d
Oil paint &c & Painting the Engine	5s 0d
a Sucker Oak Nails & Work abt ye Old Do	4s 6d
John Selwood's Bill	
Labour in Cleaning mending and Leathering the Little Engine	£3 4s 0d
Soder 3 lb at 10d	2s 6d
Leather	8s 6d
Oil	1s 6d
Labour in Cleaning mending and Leathering the Old Engine	£1 4s 0d
Leather	8s 0d
Oil	1s 0d
Churchwardens' Bill	
for taking out the Engines	3s 0d
for Do. omitted last Year	4s 0d
for playing the Engines several times about the time of being put in thorough repair	5s 6d
Mrs Masters for looking after the Engine Pipes	2s 6d
In all this year £8 1s 10d was spent on the engines.	

The 1783 accounts reveal 4s spent 'Cleaning the Engine after the Fire at Revd. Mr. Parsons's'. Prebendary F. C. Parsons was vicar of the parish church from 1766 until 1780. Repairs to engines and buckets continue to appear regularly, in 1790 a shilling was given to 'a Man for collecting the Church Buckets after Mr. Garland's Fire', later that year 6s was paid 'Mending 12 Buckets after the Fire at Stafford' [Stoford] and a further 8 guineas went to the purchase of new buckets.

'At Easter 1794 There was a Hundred and thirty two Buckets in good repair', states a note at the end of the churchwardens' accounts for the preceding year, and that compares with a similar entry 8 years before when 'This Year there were in the Church 61 Leather Buckets all firm and Sound'.

'Proving the Engines' accounted for regular payments by the churchwardens from 1801 onwards. In 1803 they recorded the 'Guift' of three dozen buckets from the Royal Exchange Fire Insurance Company, and a like quantity from the Sun Fire Office, they also made payments for engine repair work.

A church vestry meeting of 4 August 1807 ordered the churchwardens and overseers to produce an estimate of expense for purchasing a new fire engine and the erection of a house to keep it in. Enquiry was also to be made of fire insurance agents as to what support might be expected for such provision. The year's accounts show two payments of 5s each for 'Keeping the Engines in a House by the Horse Pon'. This

was a small building, adjoining the then 'Fair Ground', later cattle market and now a car park, at the junction of North Lane and Court Ash with Silver Street, the 'Horse Pon' being on the opposite side of the street.

In 1810, the vestry in ordering the churchwardens to repair the engines, requested that 'Mr. Cha: Hutchings do go to Martock to see their Engine and report the same' to a subsequent meeting. The minutes, however fail to record this report. The Tite Collection in Yeovil Library's Reference Section contains correspondence detailing an appeal for subscriptions towards the cost of the proposed new engine and a building to contain it. There had been complaint about damage caused to the existing engine housed in the tower of St John's church, it being alleged that this was due to the actions of the bellringers. This, indeed, was the reason the small 'Engine House' had been provided close to the Horse Pond.

By 1811 Yeovilians had subscribed £70 towards the cost of the new engine, and an appeal was now made by John Goodford and John Daniell, two local magistrates, to six fire insurance offices with agents in the town. The Royal Exchange, the Sun Office, and the Salamander, each contributed, but the British and the West of England offices declined, on principle. Eventually a total of £119 15s was raised.

On 28 April 1812 'A Vestry was Call'd and held this Day to fix on a Plan for an Engin House to be built in front of the Tower. And a New Engin to be bought. Which was done by Subscription'. Later that year a decision was made 'to sell the larger Tub Engine, the Parish not having any occasion for it'. The accounts show a total of £3 5s 11d paid to Mr Edwards for various items 'had for the Engine House in the Church Yard'. This occupied a space at the foot of the tower, between the south porch of the church and the Grammar (Chantry) School which, at that time, abutted the tower at its south-west corner.

Expenses incurred over the fire engines were met out of the church rates, as is shown by the record: 'At a Vestry held the 20th November 1813, We do hereby authorize and empower the Churchwardens to pay out of the Church Rates (the expenses respecting the Fire Engines appearing to have been always paid from that Fund, and the superintendence of the Engines having been always left to the Churchwardens) the arrears due to William Thomas for building the Engine House, amounting to £2 6s 11d; and to George Perry for Carriage Freight &c of the New Engine the sum of £6 0s 6d. We do also authorize them to get the Engine Buckets properly repaired and oiled, and to keep them and the Engines in good repair'.

A serious fire broke out in a blacksmith's shop in 1815 and, spreading to adjoining premises, in the space of four hours reduced 17 houses to ashes, rendering 20 families homeless.⁸ A vestry meeting on 7 April 1825 gave authority for the 'old Engine' to be sold 'and a Bucket Carrier to be made for the use of the Parish in case of Fire'. Receipts in the churchwardens' accounts for 1831 show 5s from 'Wyndham Goodden of Compton for repairing the Engines used on his premises'.

A memorandum, dated 18 April 1835, states: 'There are now 169 Buckets belonging to the Church Engines (at the present time in good repair) — John Perratt'. On 16 February 1836, 2s 6d was paid for 'Collecting Buckets after Castle [Inn] fire'. Fire crooks were made and paid for in 1839, six men receiving 1s each, in the same year, 'for collecting buckets after fire in Vicarage Street, &c. &c.', and in 1844 26 men were paid a total of 10s 6d for attending another fire and the engines in Vicarage Street, while 'Sutton & two Men' received a further 6s for 'collecting & cleaning buckets &c.' In 1848, 'Sutton and others' received a total of 10s for 'collecting the Buckets after 2 Fires in South Street'.

During the whole of the foregoing period, annual sums were paid for 'proving', repairing, oiling, etc., then, in 1853, a final reference in vestry minutes is the resolution 'That the proposal of the Town Commissioners to take charge of the Parish Engines be accepted, and that the Churchwardens be Authorized to resign them to the charge of the Commissioners and permit them to take to their use the materials of the present Engine house'.

The following year saw the inauguration of Yeovil Town Council, and the fire engines then passed under its control, though with no regular brigade until a little later, when Yeovil Volunteer Fire Brigade was formed and recognised by the Council in 1861, when it was resolved to 'encourage' it by placing one of the engines under its control. At the same time the Council agreed to purchase thirteen helmets for a sum not exceeding £50, and to allow an annual contribution of £5 for the brigade's expenses, and a further £4 for each fire attended. How the Council's other engine was manned is not apparent, presumably casual operators were relied upon. At this time, also, there was an engine maintained by the West of England Fire Insurance Company, kept in a building on the north corner of Wine Street and Union Street. It is not known when this was first provided.

A report⁹ of a fire which destroyed the John Bull Inn and adjoining premises, with loss of life, in 1863, shows the method

of summoning the engines at that time. 'The fire bell was rolled, and the engine of the Volunteer Fire Brigade soon made its appearance. A supply of buckets and tubs was soon obtained from Mr Hurdle's, Mrs Westover's, and elsewhere. The Volunteer engine was followed by the town engine and the engine belonging to the West of England Insurance Company; but when they arrived, they could not at once be used for want of water — a want which ought not to be felt on such an occasion in such a town as Yeovil . . . As there was no constant supply of water, all the pumps in the neighbourhood had to be resorted to. Ranks of men were formed between these and the engines, and the buckets were passed from hand to hand.'

The fire bell referred to still remains affixed to a wall of the Town House in Union Street. The minute book of Yeovil Volunteer Fire Brigade shows that a request was made to 'the offices interested' for subscriptions 'towards obtaining a sufficient sum to pay the 70 Men employed by this Brigade at the fire'. Subsequently £8 15s was received from the West of England and Atlas Fire Insurance Companies and disbursed in the following proportions, one of 15s, one of 5s, 18 of 3s 6d, 35 of 1s 6d, and 14 of 1s each, leaving a balance in the treasurer's hands of £1 5s 6d.

As a result of this fire, the Town Council granted a sum of £100 for the provision of a new engine. Lack of an adequate water supply remained a pressing problem, and it was not until 1871 that a mains supply was provided for the town, and a year after that when 'new Hydrants' are referred to in the Fire Brigade minutes. The supply of water was still giving trouble for a few years after that, for in 1875 the brigade requested 'about 200 feet more new hose' to cope with 'the great distance from the hydrants to many large Houses in the Town'.

To conclude this account of Yeovil's fire precaution methods leading to the establishment of a regular brigade, the increased efficiency in dealing with outbreaks by such formation, the provision of adequate water supply, and the ever-improving mechanical devices available, all rendered the necessity of Fire Insurance companies maintaining their own fire-fighting equipment in the town unnecessary. In 1889 the West of England company offered its appliance to the Town Council as a gift, and this was accepted.

1. Daniel Vickery, *Sketch of the Town of Yeovil* (1856), p. 18.
2. *Som. Rec. Soc.*, 'Bishop Beckington's Register', 49, p. 147.
3. *Do.*, 'Quarter Sessions Records', 23, p. 328.
4. *SDNQ*, I, p. 69.
5. Vickery, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
6. SRO ref. DD/PH.

7. Yeovil Library, Ref. Sect.
8. *Sherborne Journal*, 8 October 1815.
9. *Western Gazette*, 7 March 1863.

LESLIE BROOKE

10. THE ORGAN AT BRIDEHEAD, LITTLE BREDY. At the south end of the Victorian Gallery of the Dorset County Museum work is all but complete on an early 19th century organ from Bridehead, Little Bredy. The instrument was built in 1829 by Flight & Robson of London, the firm who built the famous apollonicon, an instrument with five manuals, forty-five stops, and three barrels, exhibited in London between 1817 and 1840.

The room next to the library at Bridehead until fifteen years ago was a gallery used by the family and staff as a domestic chapel. Sometime in the 1850s the organ was built into the wall of this gallery, and thereafter was the instrument which accompanied family prayers. The late Sir David Williams Bt (1909-1970) remembered it in use during his childhood, but it fell into disuse in the late 1930s and had not been played for forty years.

When the organ was dismantled the Great soundboard was found to be severely damaged by rainwater from a leaking roof. The keys were ruined. It has only been possible to retain the frames, which have now been re-fitted with new ivory keys, exact copies of the damaged ones. About thirty of the pipes were missing. Rumour has it that some of those were used by the children of the house as hockey-sticks, or swords. Some have been restored, some replaced, but over twenty have had to be newly made and fitted. In addition some of the wooden pipes have collapsed and have been rebuilt.

Because the organ was in private hands it has kept its original G compass and specifications, escaping the alterations to the tonal design which befell most church organs at the hands of Victorian and Edwardian organ-builders. Examination has shown that it was originally a one-manual design. The small fiddle G Swell was added later. The name of Joseph Robson and the date, 1845, were found inside the Swell box, the assumption being that the organ was enlarged (a pedal-board was added at the same time) by the original maker. The organ has a complete Diapason Chorus topped by a combined two-ranked mixture breaking on middle C. No alteration having been made to the specification, this instrument faithfully reproduces the authentic sound of the early 19th century organ. The restoration work has been lovingly undertaken by Mr.

Derry Thompson, Organ Builder, of St. Andrew's Road, Bridport.

Specification

Great organ GGG-F 58 notes

1. Open diapason 8'
2. Stopped diapason 8'
3. Dulciana 8'
4. Principal 4'
5. Twelfth 2.2/3'
6. Fifteenth 2'
7. Sesquialtera and Cornet — two ranks

Swell organ Tenor G-F 35 notes

1. Open diapason 8'
2. Stopped diapason 8'
3. Flute 4'
4. Cremona 8'

One octave of pull-down pedals.

Swell to Great Coupler.

The organ has a G compass pedal-board, and the A# is missing in the bass. The case is slightly unusual in that no pipes are visible, since the arches which frame the pipes are backed with embroidered silk.

R. N. R. PEERS

11. WIMBORNE WORKHOUSE IN 1890. The common view of Dorset's workhouses as 'grim reminders of the severity of attitudes in the Victorian era'¹ is only partly supported by the surviving documentary evidence, and the purpose of this article is to examine the workings of one workhouse almost exactly a century ago.

The decision to construct a workhouse in Wimborne was taken in 1750. The site chosen was in East Borough, on a parcel of land with a tenement belonging to Elizabeth Raven (GR 010002).² A contemporary plan of Wimborne shows its position, with what were probably gardens running down to the River Allen and the 'necessary houses' close to the river bank so that the effluent could go straight into the Allen.³ As originally conceived, it was intended that the Workhouse would be self-supporting, and its early inmates were employed making watch chains and the throwing of silk for the Sherborne mills.⁴

The 1832 Reform Act and the New Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 transferred the care of the poor from magistrates, churchwardens, and the parish overseers to an elected Board of Guardians, who in turn were controlled by the Poor Law

Commissioners. Dorset was divided into 12 Unions, the Wimborne and Cranborne Union being formed to embrace 24 parishes: Chalbury, Chettle, Corfe Mullen, Cranborne, Edmonsham, Farnham, Gussage All Saints, Gussage Saint Michael, Hampreston, Hinton Martell, Hinton Parva, Horton, Long Crichel, Moor Crichel, Pentridge, Shapwick, Sixpenny Handley, Sturminster Marshall, West Parley, East and West Woodyates, Wimborne, Wimborne St. Giles, Witchampton and Woodlands. It was a largely rural constituency, and many of the parishes included the estates of some of Dorset's largest landowners — amongst whom, in 1890, was the then Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury.

The passing of the Act was intended to bring about economies in the way the Poor Law functioned, partly by reducing the money paid in 'Out Relief', but equally importantly by introducing the principle of 'less eligibility' — by which life inside the workhouse was made worse than outside it. Wimborne Workhouse became a 'General Mixed Workhouse' that made few distinctions between the misfortunes of its inmates. The old, the sick, the 'feeble-minded and orphaned', lived side by side with vagrants and able-bodied paupers.

The number of parishes in the Wimborne and Cranborne Union meant that the Workhouse required enlarging. The Registers of authorizations for workhouse expenditure for Wimborne and Cranborne record its expansion in the wake of the Act.⁵ Between 1836 and 1838 £1,555 was spent on alterations and building a schoolroom and chapel, creating accommodation for 180 inmates. Surviving late 19th century photographs of the exterior show a long two-storey building adjoining East Borough. The delicate brickwork and large sash windows lend it an almost residential air, only betrayed by the gas lamp over the arched doorway and a sturdy studded door.⁶ Behind the brick facade lay a complex range of rooms and courtyards, all of which are shown in an undated plan marked 'Sketch of a Plan for the Wimborne Union Poor House', and which almost certainly dates to after the passing of the 1834 Act.⁷ The three years were for the 'Old and Infirm', 'Able Bodied' women and 'Able Bodied' men. Whilst the guardians elected to run the workhouse enjoyed both a 'living room' and meeting room, those in their charge were allotted three workrooms downstairs and long 60 feet dormitories above. Also shown are a school room and chapel, a wash house and laundry complete with two coppers, kitchens, store rooms for such items as bread and potatoes, and an infirmary mentioned

as standing apart in the garden.

Despite the enlargements, Wimborne Workhouse was beset by allegations of overcrowding and mistreatment. In 1839 an anonymous article appeared in *The Times* stating that 'although cases of small pox have occurred for upwards of a fortnight, and are rapidly spreading amongst them, the Mothers with their children sleep three in a Bed, and in one very small room there are now five Beds for thirteen people, five of whom at this moment are labouring under the disease'. At the time there were 195 people in the workhouse, and a report prepared on behalf of the Poor Law Commissioners criticised both the numbers and their lack of medical attention.⁸

Throughout the mid-19th century the main task of the inmates was picking oakum, and by 1870 all but children and the sick were obliged to pick 6 pounds a day. There were cases of rickets, scurvy, pneumonia and tuberculosis, hastened no doubt by a diet that consisted of meat once a week, a weekly allowance of 6 pounds of bread, a breakfast of broth, and until 1849 no vegetables other than potatoes.⁹

Conditions gradually improved. In the 1860s more land was bought and a new infirmary built at the cost of £2,000.¹⁰ A chaplain and schoolmistress were appointed, as well as medical officers for each of the four districts into which the Union was divided. But the regime remained harsh. After morning service the men were locked in their workroom before the women were permitted to leave the chapel. Unmarried women with children were identified by the compulsory wearing of a mop cap and grey dress, and as late as 1905 photographs of the inmates show them dressed in their various uniforms.

The Applications Book for the middle years of the 19th century survives to record the requests from inmates for financial help.¹¹ Each was decided by the guardians, with no right to appeal. April 1850 began with Uriah Amey, a 'single man', being granted the money to buy boots and a shirt in order to 'quit' the workhouse and seek employment. Wm. Hayter's request for boots, a pair of stockings and 1/6d a week was refused, as were his subsequent requests for the 'privilege of daily exercise, same as granted to the old men', and 1/6d per week out relief to enable him to leave. Hayter's failed bid for liberty was characteristic. Louise Phillips was refused assistance to emigrate, whilst Mary Down, a single woman with 'bastard children' met with little success in her attempt to persuade the guardians to buy boots for her children. Apart from Amey, only a widow called Maria Batchelor found favour with the guardians, and once boots had been bought for her six

and eight year old children she 'quit the House'.

The Application Book for 1890 does not survive, but this is more than compensated for by the meticulously detailed Minute Books in Dorset Record Office covering the years 1835-1900, and 1902-1930. The minutes for 1890 are contained in a single quarter bound volume titled *Board of Guardians, Wimborne & Cranborne Union: Minutes 1887/1890*.¹² The first meeting of the year is headed 'At a meeting of the Board of Guardians of the Wimborne & Cranborne Union held at the Boardroom of the Union Workhouse, Wimborne, the Tenth Day of January being the second fortnightly meeting of the Quarter ending 27th day of March 1890.' It goes on to list the 16 members of the Board in attendance, beginning with the chairman, Charles Joseph Parke. Parke lived at Henbury Hall, a fine 18th century house west of Wimborne near Sturminster Marshall. By 1890 he had served as Chairman for thirty-two years, a task he combined with Chairmanship of the Wimborne Magistrates bench. Only 8 of the other members of the Board are listed in the 1880 Directory, and all but one, a farmer, are described as 'private residents'. In short, they were local worthies, but it is worth pointing out that none was paid and that their duties were great. Apart from Parke, the most influential member was undoubtedly the Reverend Carr John Glyn, rector of Witchampton for nearly sixty years, and a member of 'that band of noble Evangelical churchmen that helped to make our country great in the last century'.¹³ Nine years earlier, in 1881, Glyn's concern at the 'objectionable passages to be found in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*' had led him to propose providing an expurgated version for use in the Workhouse.

If the evidence for 1890 is typical of the guardians fortnightly meetings, their primary function was the collection of Poor Rate contributions from the parishes in the Union, followed by allotting its expenditure to salaries, the tradesmen who supplied the workhouse, and the needs of the inmates themselves. The funds were collected by overseers in each of the parishes, following the assessing of the rate to be levied by an Assessment Committee. Money was no more forthcoming than it is today, and few meetings end without the clerk regretting the late or partial payment of contributions by one or more parishes. The Union's total income for 1890 is virtually impossible to untangle from the minutes, as is its expenditure and the precise numbers in the Workhouse. Hinton Parva, both the smallest parish in the Union and the smallest in Dorset, provided £10, but more typical are the £50 from Horton and the

£150 levied from Hampreston. Following the establishment of Dorset County Council in 1888 an additional annual payment of £1159 was paid to the Board to meet the salaries of its officers.

The daily supervision of the Workhouse was left to the master, who in 1990 was Charles Taylor. His wife was its matron, whilst other resident staff were an infirmiry nurse and a schoolmistress — in 1890 Edith Parsons at an annual salary of £26. The other salaried officers were the clerk, two Relieving Officers, the assistant overseer for Wimborne, and medical officers for each of the four districts. I envy none their task. Assisted by the guardians, they combined all the functions of the modern Welfare State. They literally ruled those their charge, deciding who was to be taken in and who was to be turned away, who was to be fed and who was to starve. The fortnightly catalogue of deprivation and misfortune recorded by the minutes must have at times affected even the most hard-hearted.

1890 opened characteristically, with the clerk drawing attention to a series of letters received by the master from a man named Uyatt in London asking that a boy brought up in the Workhouse be released into his care. Nothing was known of Uyatt, nor of the boy's parentage, and the guardians decided to send Mr. Taylor to London to talk to Uyatt. By the date of the next meeting Taylor and Uyatt had met and it had been established that Uyatt was the boy's uncle and that he 'kept a very respectable Boarding House for Gentlemen.' Taylor had also received a letter from the boy's father, and had returned with a cheque for £9.2.0, drawn by Uyatt, to meet the annual cost of his nephew's maintenance in the workhouse, which was to be cashed if his request was granted. The guardians agreed, only delaying the boy's departure until a further sum was received to pay for new clothing.

The guardians were less liberal over the second item to be deliberated. One of the medical officers had claimed £5 for amputating the arm of a young man at the Victoria Cottage Hospital, and for which no Order had been given by the Relieving Officer. This they refused to pay, though they did pay the 'usual' £5 fee to another doctor in March after he had been forced to amputate a crushed hand without first 'obtaining a certificate from a Second Medical Practitioner.' Their munificence on this second occasion can perhaps be explained by the preceeding item in the minutes, a letter from a W. Brouncker enclosing 5/- towards the purchase of hot cross buns for the Workhouse inmates.

The hardship revealed by some of the cases confronting the guardians is well illustrated by the abandoning of a two year child outside the Workhouse door one April night. The child was found clutching a letter. Eventually it transpired that it was illegitimate, that its mother had left the area, and that it had been deliberately left outside the Workhouse by its grandfather in an attempt to bring pressure to bear on its father to provide money for its support.

Outside the workhouse the task of distributing relief to the needy in the various parishes was done by the Relieving Officers. Out relief averaged approximately £70 a week, with an additional £3 being received from other Unions to help the poor or unemployed who were only temporary residents in the area. Curiously, the sums show little seasonal adjustment. Typical of these latter cases is one whereby the clerk is directed to write to the 'South Stoneham Union, asking the guardians of that Union to grant non-resident relief to the amount of 1/6 a week in the case of Lily Stickland, aged 10 years, a pauper, who until recently had relief paid to her by that Union, and had now come to reside with her uncle at Gussage Saint Michael.'

Conversely, the guardians were also obliged to meet the upkeep of men and women from Wimborne who were housed in other unions. The accounts for March 23rd record four such cases:

W. Locke in Star Cross Lunatic Asylum 5.17.0

E. Sheering in Home for Waifs & Strays, Leamington 1.12.6

J. Fenton in St. Saviour's Home, Taunton 2.2.3

W. E. Francis in Deaf & Dumb Institute, Exeter 1.12.6

The accounts themselves offer a detailed portrait of the Wimborne tradesmen who supplied the Workhouse, and underline its importance to the town's economy. Basic commodities such as meat and flour were put out to annual tender, but there are few significant changes from the preceeding year. The accounts suggest that by 1890 the inmates enjoyed a much healthier diet than earlier in the century, with the butchers' and grocers' bills accounting for the largest proportion of the weekly costs. Only two butchers supplied the Workhouse, but six grocers are listed. A total of 30 tradesmen are included in the first list of 'Cheques drawn to pay tradesmen'. Amongst them are a brewer, an outfitter, a china dealer and bootmaker, as well as the 15/- paid to G. Habgood for 'Half Year's Rent' for a 'Standing Hearse'.

Amongst the most interesting items recorded by the minutes are various letters hinting at the air of moral improvement that swept late Victorian England. The first was from the National

Vigilance Association asking as to the number of 'weak minded women leading immoral lives' in the Workhouse. After deliberating, the guardians elected to define such cases as 'women entering the Workhouse to be confined'. Another was from the Workhouse Drink Reform League stressing the dangers of alcohol and asking the guardians to inform them as to the amount spent on it during the year. The figure exceeded £100, and the guardians pre-empted further correspondence by deciding that no alcohol be given 'to any pauper, except in the case of extreme necessity.' A third letter came from the Emigration Home for Little Girls offering to take girls from the Workhouse for emigration to Canada.

The minutes of the final meeting are rather more cheerful, for the guardians agreed that every inmate be given a Christmas dinner at the rate of 1lb. Cooked Meat, 1lb. Pudding and 1 pint of beer per head.

The workhouse system remained in operation until 1929, after which Wimborne Workhouse became known as the 'Public Assistance Institution', or Allen View House. It was demolished in 1958 and the site is now occupied by Allen Court flats.

1. S. R. Lough and the Dorset Countryside Treasures Team, *Dorset Workhouses* (1980).
2. DCRO P204/VE1.
3. John Hutchins, *History of Dorset*, 3rd Edn 1861-1870, Vol. III, facing p.180.
4. Jude James, *Wimborne Minster* (1982).
5. PRO MH 34/3.
6. Priest's House Museum, Wimborne.
7. PRO MH 14/34.
8. Colonel A'Court, *A Report Respecting Certain Charges Contained in an Anonymous Paragraph Published in 'The Standard' and 'Times' Newspaper* (1839).
9. I am indebted for all this to Jude James, *Wimborne Minster* (1982), which contains much else of relevance.
10. PRO MH 34/3.
11. Priest's House Museum, Application Book 1846/47 (Mn 4).
12. DRO BG/WM: A1/17, and for all that follows.
13. *The Times and Directory*, 14/1/1922. 'Rambles in and Around Wimborne Minster' "By a Dorset Gentleman".

DAVID BURNETT

12. THE NEW DORSET COUNTY RECORD OFFICE. The Dorset County Record Office will be closed to the public during February and March for the transfer of its archives, staff, equipment, books and furniture to the new County Record Office, Bridport Road, Dorchester DT1 1RP. It is planned to open the new Record Office to the public on Monday 8 April 1991.

The County Archives Service apologises for the

inconvenience its temporary closure may cause but hopes that all users of its services will appreciate the benefits of the new building. In addition to providing the best possible conditions for preservation and storage in its new purpose-built repositories the new County Record Office will provide much better conditions for searchers and help to make the County's rich archival heritage more widely available. There will be more room for the study of archives, a special room for the use of microfilm, another for catalogues, transcripts, indexes and general enquiries. In addition there will be a lecture room which may be used for group studies and an exhibition gallery. There will also be a public common room where readers will be able to have a break or discuss their research.

When the Record Office re-opens searchers will be required to leave their coats and bags in the entrance hall where supervised facilities are provided. From 8 April 1991 the County Record Office will also require all readers to provide a form of identification on their first visit. Sadly security is a matter which all Record Offices have to take more and more seriously.

I hope that we shall be able to improve our service to our archives and our users in the new Record Office and that all who use the new building will find it a great improvement.

During the temporary closure the service's correspondence and research service will continue to operate. All enquiries should be addressed to me at the County Record Office, Bridport Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1RP (telephone 0305-250550).

The new County Record Office is a major step forward for the preservation and conservation of, and access to, Dorset's priceless past, and I hope that, in spite of temporary disruption, all interested in the archives and history of Dorset will welcome the move and enjoy using the new facilities.

HUGH JAQUES
County Archivist

QUERIES

As a result of the re-siting of part of the village of East Lulworth, the church has become isolated from the village. Can anyone provide evidence, or speculation, which building might, in 1840 or thereabouts, be described as 'The Old Vicarage'? There is no mention of any likely building in *RCHM*, II, Part I, pp. 144-151, or in Hutchins.

Almshouses at Corfe are mentioned in an indenture of 1610 and a will of 1621, but the present Almshouses, with their characteristic external stone stairs, on the east side of East St., date, according to *RCHM*, II, Pt. I, p. 81, from the eighteenth century. Were the earlier Almshouses on the same site, or can they be identified from among the surviving buildings in the village?

Can anyone identify a cottage, built originally in 1829, somewhere near Stoborough, Wareham, which carries, or once carried, the name 'Rogvald', or 'Rogwald'?

Replies to the above three queries to the Dorset Editor, please.

REVIEWS

Derek Shorrocks, *Your Somerset House: A Practical Guide to Sources in the Somerset Record Office* (Somerset County Council, 1988). Pp. 40 + 12 illus. £2.00. Although trailing behind genealogy as a serious pursuit, the search for the histories of individual houses has recently grown in popularity. Some general guides exist, as well as sections in handbooks on local history (notably *Oxfordshire*, edited by D. M. Barratt & D. G. Vaisey, 1973), but the present booklet pioneers in dealing fully with the resources of a single county for the study of domestic buildings.

Somerset has been unlucky in its archives: the appalling loss of its probate records, inventories as well as wills and administrations, at Exeter in 1942 has merely overshadowed the fact that what had until then survived began only in 1528. The trend away from manorial agriculture to early enclosure likewise deprived much of the county of the court rolls which form the backbone of so much domestic history elsewhere. Worse still, there was little map-making before the nineteenth century: for only 72 parishes, some 15% of the whole county, is

there a map earlier than 1800 in the County Record Office. These are all listed and of them only five are before 1700; none before 1650. Even in the national records the Hearth Tax is defective for over two-thirds of Somerset.

So much for the bad news. To restore the balance, there is virtually total coverage of tithe maps dating from c.1840, though in more than a dozen towns there is no detailed apportionment for the urban areas. The land tax records include a windfall for 1766-67 and are complete 1780-1832, being immediately followed by the registers of electors. Parish records, including not only the registers but large numbers of rate books have been deposited for over 98% of parishes, and provide the main source for detailed investigation of houses and lands over the county as a whole.

Even closer coverage is given by the many deposits of family and estate records, as well as those of the Church Commissioners and of the Merchant Venturers of Bristol. Much valuable information is given as to what may be expected of these papers, and on the typical form of tenancy. This changed from the customary or copyhold tenure of mediaeval times to the system of renewable leases for lives: the earliest found is of 1546, and such leases are general after 1600 and continued into the present century. As with copyholds caution has to be exercised over cases where the actual occupant of a house was a sub-tenant of the lessee.

Finally there is a detailed description of the manor of Taunton Deane, with its five 'hundreds', and a system of land registration lasting from the later Middle Ages until 1845, with extremely full records. Within this area only patience is needed to obtain the continuous story of a given property.

This is a remarkable little book, well illustrated and clearly printed, and deserves to be a model for the whole country.

J.H.H.

Ruth A. Lavender *A Thousand Years of Christchurch* (Pp. 25, map & illus., 1977, new ed. 1990, £1.80 + 38p p. & p.); David Popham *Bournemouth in 1890* (Pp. 54, plates & illus., 1990, £2 + 38p); M. A. Edgington *The Citizen-Soldiers A History of the Bournemouth Volunteers 1860-1908* (Pp. 68, 14 plates & illus. 1988, £1.95 + 38p). Available from Teachers' Centre Local Studies Group, 15 Strouden Ave., Bournemouth BH8 9HT.

These are three very worthwhile booklets produced, as so many of these local history publications are, by local unpaid volunteers who engage in their own research and who depend upon sales to cover their printing costs. For that reason alone they would be worth supporting, but it also happens that these booklets are very good examples of what could be produced at the local level, and they represent extremely good value. Ruth Lavender's work is a new edition, but one which would have benefitted from some footnote indication showing the origin of some of the main sources of information. David Popham has produced his booklet to celebrate the centenary of Bournemouth's charter of 1890 which granted it status as a municipal borough. He has produced a textual snapshot of what Bournemouth was like at the time of the charter celebrations. His researches into local newspapers have led to a very well informed and interesting text. M. A. Edgington has produced an admirable short history of the volunteer units — Rifle, Artillery and Yeomanry — raised in Bournemouth between 1860 and 1908. Until reading his booklet I had no idea that these units played such a significant part in the local scene, or that they were so well supported. The author is to be congratulated on producing such a well researched and original study.

G.J.D.

W. D. Lydford, *Some Memories of Sturminster Newton Sixty Years and more ago* (Pp. 8, price 50p); Irene Jones, *Sir James Thornhill of Thornhill House Stalbridge* (Pp. 8, price 55p); *Harry John House 1898-1971 some stories from his early years* (Pp. 20, price 70p); Irene Jones, *Robert Boyle Lord of the Manor of Stalbridge 1643-1691* (Pp. 24, price 85p). Published by Sturminster Newton Museum Society (p. & p. 20p for each booklet) and available from Miss Barber, Waterloo Cottage, The Row, Sturminster Newton.

These are the first of what may be a number of booklets which this local museum will be producing. The booklets on Robert Boyle and Thornhill are worthwhile as local museum publications. It is important for visitors to appreciate that these significant figures were associated closely with the locality, and that their contributions were internationally important. Casual reminiscences, which form the basis of the other two booklets, would have been better displayed under the sympathetic guidance and questioning of a general editor who had a

reasonably detailed knowledge of the history of the locality, and whose questions could have provided a framework for the publications.

G.J.D.

L. W. Coffin, *Holwell and Villages, Past and Present* (available from Miss S. E. M. Coffin, Red House Farm, Holwell, Sherborne, 1990. Pp. 234, maps, 120 plates, numerous line drawings & poster reproductions, £5.50 + 85p postage). The name of Leslie Coffin is very well known as a local historian and a lover of Dorset. In this, his latest book, he has rendered a great service to Holwell; and to the people of Dorset, by recording the minutiae of village life, the oral traditions of a village society, and the living memories of all those people of the locality whom he has known over the years. This is not a history of the village, though much incidental history is recorded, it is a richly embellished journal of anecdotal delight. It is like taking a ramble through Dorset, meeting characters, listening to tales and gossip, seeing buildings, peeping into the past, and enjoying the warmth of the people and the delights of the countryside. Minor asides are entertaining: it is interesting to note that Holwell was closely associated with the suffragette movement, that Napoleonic prisoners carved their names in the lead roofing of the church, and that Shovell's Pit is named after the murder of Sir Cloudesley Shovell's nephew. But the main purpose of this book is not to provide a historical description, but, in the words of the author, to write for the future, and to record a personal testimony: 'having gleaned a wealth of information from my family and older people I felt it should be recorded for posterity'.

G.J.D.

*N.B. – All replies to advertisements to be sent to
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