
NOTES & QUERIES

FOR
SOMERSET AND DORSET

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"Attempt the end, and never stand to doubt;

Nothing's so hard, but search will find it out".

HERRICK

No.	CONTENTS	Page No.
1	Gildas and imported pottery in Somerset.....	1
2	Medieval episcopal rings from Somerset and Dorset	3
3	The glory that was once Bruton Abbey	10
4	First news of the Great Fire of London, 1666	16
5	Peter Greenwood: a plasterer's apprentice	18
6	The 1740 and 1745 censuses of Trent	20
7	Rural conditions in Glastonbury in 1845	25
8	The Princes of Widcombe - a most unusual family	27
9	Bridport textile industry. A family view	31
10	Purbeck quarries in 1893	37
	Book Reviews	41
	Notes	43
	Queries	44

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1. GILDAS AND IMPORTED POTTERY IN SOMERSET. In a recent study of Gildas' *pauca de situ* [a little concerning geography] in the *De Excidio Britanniae* [The Ruin of Britain] Nick Higham has convincingly argued that Gildas provides a credible and largely original description of Britain from a South-Western geographical perspective, specifically from somewhere in Somerset, Wiltshire or Dorset.¹ This is all persuasive, but is problematical if one dates the composition of *De Excidio* to c. 500 A.D. as Higham does. The problem arises out of what Higham lists as Gildas' ninth statement of fact in the *pauca de situ*:

*duorum ostiis nobilium fluminum Tamesis ac Sabrinae
veluti brachiis, per quae eidem olim transmarinae deliciae
ratibus vehebantur*

two splendid rivers, the Thames and the Severn, arms of the sea along which luxuries from overseas used to be brought by ship.²

This passage, which is apparently original and not derived from an earlier source,³ clearly implies that at the time when Gildas wrote the *De Excidio* no goods were being imported up the Severn estuary anymore, yet at c. 500 A.D. there is good evidence for imported pottery from the Mediterranean reaching Somerset.⁴ This pottery takes the form of fine red slipped tableware from North Africa and Asia Minor [A ware], amphorae from various places in the Eastern Mediterranean [B ware], probably containing wine and olive oil, and occasional grey tableware with a black slip from Western France [D ware]. Examples have been found on a number of hilltop sites in Somerset, most notably Cadbury Congresbury, South Cadbury and Glastonbury Tor.⁵ The best dating evidence for these imports is provided by the red slipped tableware which are of the period c. 475-550 A.D.⁶

Kenneth Dark has argued that Gildas actually wrote before the importation of Mediterranean pottery into western Britain and that he lived in a more southerly area, possibly Devon.⁷ His dating, however, renders the reference to luxuries from overseas unintelligible and the case for a Devon origin is weakened by the fact that no imported pottery has been found there.

If one accepts that Gildas was writing from somewhere in or near Somerset around the year 500 A.D., then it is difficult to

see how he could have been so ignorant about this trade as to imply that luxuries from overseas no longer came up the Severn. The dating of Gildas is subject to much debate and a different school of thought would place him in the second quarter of the sixth century or slightly later.⁸ If one follows this dating it is possible that when Gildas was writing no more imported pottery was arriving in Somerset. Pottery was still being imported into Western Britain at this time in the form of a range of coarse tableware from Western France which dates to the period c. 550-650 A.D. None of this pottery, known as E ware, has however been found in Somerset.⁹ This absence is notable because certain well excavated sites, which produced the earlier forms of imported pottery and carried on being occupied after c. 550 A.D., did not produce any E ware, for example South Cadbury and Cadbury Congresbury.¹⁰

One of the major elements of *De Excidio* is the attack on five contemporary British rulers: Constantine of Dumnonia, Aurelius Caninus, Vortipor of the Demetae, Cuneglasus of Dineirth and Maglocunus the Dragon on the Island [Anglesey].¹¹ These rulers who attracted Gildas' ire lived in parts of Wales and the South-West which as well as receiving the earlier imports which reached Somerset also received the later E ware. In this context the lament in the *De Excidio* concerning the fact that goods from overseas no longer arrived via the Severn makes perfect sense. Gildas would be able to remember a time when luxuries such as fine tableware, wine and oil were still available but by the time he wrote such products no longer reached Somerset, instead they were only available in those kingdoms whose rulers he attacked.

Gildas, by lamenting the lack of luxuries from overseas, allows us to draw a number of important conclusions. He cannot have been writing in the South-West around 500 A.D., as Higham argues, but must have been writing considerably later. The latest imported pottery at South Cadbury is dated to 520-30 A.D.¹² so it is likely that Gildas wrote in the second quarter of the sixth century. As no post-Roman imported pottery has been recovered in Wiltshire, Dorset or Devon it allows us to suggest a more precise location for Gildas and to argue that he wrote in Somerset. The reason why the earlier imported pottery reached Somerset but the later did not is unclear, it may relate to either a deteriorating economic situation in the

area or a shift in political alliances.

1. N. J. Higham, *Journal of Hist. Geog.*, 'Old Light on the Dark Landscape of Britain in the *De Excidio Britanniae* of Gildas' 17.4 (1991), p. 363-372.
2. M. Winterbottom (trans. and ed.) *Gildas. The Ruin of Britain and Other Works* (1977), p. 16-7 and 89-90.
3. Higham, *op. cit.*, p. 365.
4. M. G. Fulford, *Medieval Archaeology*, 'Byzantium and Britain: a Mediterranean perspective on Post-Roman Mediterranean Imports in Western Britain and Ireland', 33 (1989), p. 1-6.
C. Thomas, *Cornish Archaeology*, 'The Context of Tintagel: a new model for the diffusion of Post-Roman Mediterranean Imports', 27 (1988), p. 7-26.
5. P. Rahtz et al., *Cadbury Congresbury 1968-73: a late/post Roman hilltop settlement in Somerset*, BAR British Series 223 (1992); L. Alcock, *Proc. of the British Academy*, 'Cadbury-Camelot: a fifteen year perspective', 68 (1982), p. 355-88.
P. Rahtz, *Archaeological Journal*, 'Excavations on Glastonbury Tor 1964-6', CXXVII (1970), p. 1-81.
6. Fulford, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
7. K. R. Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom: British Political Continuity 300-800*, (1994), p. 258-60.
8. M. Lapidge and D. N. Dumville (eds.), *Gildas: new approaches* 'Gildas and Melgwyn: problems in dating', by Dumville (1984), p. 51-60.
9. C. Thomas, *Medieval Archaeology*, 'Gallici Nautae de Galliarum Provinciis' - A Sixth/Seventh Century trade with Gaul, Reconsidered, 34, (1990), p. 1-26.
10. Alcock, *op. cit.*, p. 358; Rahtz et al., *op. cit.*, p. 220-23 and 246.
11. K. H. Jackson, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 'Varia: II Gildas and the names of the British Princes', 3 (1982), p. 30-40.
12. Alcock, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

CRAIG CESSFORD

2. MEDIEVAL EPISCOPAL RINGS FROM SOMERSET AND DORSET. Three medieval episcopal rings have at various times been mentioned in these pages (1) and should be considered in the light of other such rings found in England, in ecclesiastical records, and in grave-goods found in medieval priestly tombs.

A bishop necessarily corresponded widely, and a signet would have been necessary to authenticate that correspondence. St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, *d.* 430, and St. Avitus, Bishop of Vienne, *d.* 525, are known to have owned signet rings (2). King Clovis of the Franks, writing to some bishops in 511, promised to recognise letters bearing the impressions of their signets (3). St. Isidore of Seville, *d.* 636, clearly described these rings as marks of priestly honour also used for signing documents (4). However, the existing episcopal rings believed to have belonged to Dorset and Somerset bishops are not signet rings, but supposedly the true episcopal rings, conferred at consecration and used liturgically. These latter rings, unless inscribed, have no obvious official purpose, and have only been

identified by having been found in the tombs of bishops.

The earliest reference to the true episcopal ring appears in the Sacramentary of Pope Gregory the Great, *d.* 604, in which the use of pastoral staff and the episcopal ring are clearly ordained (5). The 7th century Synod of Milan ordained that such rings should be of pure gold, set with an unengraved gemstone (6), and many of the supposed medieval episcopal rings belong to this category with regard to the cutting of the stone, the exceptions being those of Ahlstan of Sherborne, *d.* 867, which has no gemstone, and three from the graves of later bishops, which contain classical intaglios.

The following supposedly episcopal and abbatical rings have been found in England and Wales, which conform to the requirements of the Synod of Milan and can be ascribed to particular clerics. They are set with unengraved sapphires, rubies, or amethysts.

- Bishop Flambard of Durham, *d.* 1128
- Bishop Rufus of Durham, *d.* 1140
- Bishop de St. Barbara of Durham, *d.* 1152
- Bishop Jocelin of Bath and Wells, *d.* 1242
- Archbishop de Bovill of York, *d.* 1258
- Abbot Henry de Worcestre of Evesham, *d.* 1263
- Archbishop Ludham of York, *d.* 1265
- Bishop de Carew of St. Davids, *d.* 1280
- Bishop Longespée of Salisbury, *d.* 1297
- Archbishop Greenfield of York, *d.* 1315
- Bishop Woodlock of Winchester, *d.* 1316
- Archbishop Wytesley of Canterbury, *d.* 1374
- Bishop Wykeham of Winchester, *d.* 1404
- Bishop Courteney of Norwich, *d.* 1415
- Bishop Lacy of Exeter, *d.* 1455
- Bishop Bekynton of Bath and Wells, *d.* 1465
- Bishop Stanbery of Hereford, *d.* 1474
- Bishop Beauchamp of Salisbury, *d.* 1481
- Bishop Mayo of Hereford, *d.* 1516

Further such rings of uncertain date have been found at Chichester and St. Davids, in the tombs of unidentified bishops. The ring of Bishop Bitton of Exeter, *d.* 1307, seems to adhere to the spirit of ecclesiastical law, but not the latter, for its sapphire is engraved with the *Manus Dei*, as are several surviving medieval patens, including that from the tomb of Bishop Longspée of Salisbury, *d.* 1297 (7). Another such ring, set with a serpentine engraved with the head of a cock, belongs to the Dean and Chapter of Chichester Cathedral (8), and it

may be that this gnostic gem was used as symbol of St. Peter. It is apparent from the inventories of the period that particular stones were at times set in the episcopal rings of particular dioceses. The Dublin, York, St. Asaph and Salisbury rings had sapphires, whereas those of Canterbury, Bath and Wells, Coventry, Exeter and Lichfield had rubies (9). This is not borne out by supposed examples, for the 1307 Exeter ring and the 1374 Canterbury ring are set with sapphires, the 1465 Wells ring is set with an amethyst (10), and the ring worn by St. Thomas à Becket at his martyrdom was set with a peridot (11). In this latter instance it may be that Becket was not wearing his sacerdotal ring, for portraits of archbishops Warham, *d.* 1532, and Cranmer, *d.* 1556, show pre-Reformation bishops not always to have done so. (12).

Apart from the rings ordained by the Synod of Milan, there also existed pontifical rings, worn by bishops at the high mass, over a glove, and therefore of a large size. These appear from medieval inventories to have been set with mixed rather than single stones, and often to have belonged to the cathedral treasuries rather than to individual bishops (13). Archbishop Reynolds, *d.* 1327, bequeathed one set with an emerald, rubies, and other gems, and William of Wykeham, *d.* 1404, bequeathed one set with a sapphire, rubies, diamonds and pearls (14). Another, with a sapphire, emeralds and garnets, was among the jewels of Elizabeth I, and had presumably been confiscated from a cathedral in the previous reign (15). The only polychrome ring recorded, which might be one of these is from the tomb of an unidentified bishop of Chichester, and is set with an unengraved sapphire, flanked by four small emeralds to form a cross (16), and a similar ring exists which was found at Durham. A silver-gilt signet ring said to have belonged to Bishop Wykeham, *d.* 1404, is held by his college at Oxford, and is traditionally known as his pontifical (17). A further type of ring, of which none has survived to be identified, was worn by the boy-bishops, elected from among the children of cathedral choirs on St. Nicholas's day. Such a ring is listed in a Salisbury inventory of the 1220s (18).

Of the episcopal rings from this area, the earliest is that probably of Ahlstan, Bishop of Sherborne, *d.* 867. It was found at Llysfaen, Carnarvonshire, before 1773 (19). In favour of its attribution to this bishop, it has been suggested that Ahlstan

may have taken part in King Egbert's attempted conquest of North Wales in 828. Certainly the ring is of a type which is known to have been used by important personages of the period, and comparable rings exist of King Aethelwulf of Wessex, 839-858, and of his daughter Queen Aethelswith of Mercia, 853-888 (20). Another early episcopal ring which is not set with a stone was found in the tomb of Giraldus of Limoges, *d.* 1022.

The two rings excavated in Wells Cathedral are of Bishops Jocelin, *d.* 1242, and Bekynton, *d.* 1465. Unlike that of Ahlstan, these are quite ordinary rings of their time, of which many such examples exist, and which might have belonged to any man of wealth. Bishop Bekynton's ring appears extremely old-fashioned for its day, and were it found outside any archaeological context a much earlier date might well be ascribed to it. A very similar ring in the Waterton Collection is thought to be of the 12th century (21), and yet there seems no doubt from the contemporary account that the ring ascribed to Bekynton was found in his tomb, behind the shoulder, where it would have fallen from his finger if his arms were crossed on his chest (22). A further ring of this type was found in Coglett Field, adjoining Mynchin Buckland Priory, Somerset, in 1858 (23).

That rings were buried with ecclesiastical dignitaries at an early date is not in doubt. William of Malmesbury tells us of a gold ring set with a sapphire found when the body of St. Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury and Archbishop of Canterbury, *d.* 968, was exhumed (24), and the earliest example seems to have been found at the exhumation of Pope Caius, *d.* 296 (25). Both these rings have long been lost, and they may have been the actual priestly rings of these men, but it has been pointed out that the ring found in the tomb of Archbishop Booth of York, *d.* 1480, is of so mean a nature that it is difficult to imagine it as having been used at his consecration (26). That some ecclesiastics might wear a simple ring of little cost is evident from the will of St. Hugh of Lincoln, who requested that he should be buried with his consecration ring, which he describes as being of gold, of modest weight, and set with a cheap pale sapphire (27). However, most ecclesiastics of this rank were men of very considerable temporal power, and it seems probable that their rings would have reflected this. Few

seem to have been as godly as St. Hugh.

It seems likely that the supposed episcopal rings, found in the tombs of bishops and therefore seemingly unquestionable, are not invariably their episcopal rings. What, then, are they? In pagan Saxon times a man was buried with the tools of his trade, but after the conversion of the Saxons, only priests were buried with grave-goods, and these were almost always symbolic. There exist numerous pewter chalices and patens from the graves of medieval priests (28), and these can only have been symbolic because pewter was disallowed for this purpose by ecclesiastical law. Occasionally silver or silver-gilt chalices and patens were also used as grave-goods, as in the tomb of Bishop Longspée of Salisbury, *d.* 1297, which also contained fragments of a wooden pastoral staff and a ring (29), but in these instances inventories generally give us reason to suppose such goods to have been very much inferior articles to those in general use in cathedrals. The church commonly received rings as votive offerings and bequests, and inventories sometimes show large numbers of them. There may have been little difficulty in finding a more or less appropriate ring for the inhumation of a bishop (30). Apart from the evidence of the rings themselves, this is also suggested by the known practice of returning the episcopal ring to the royal treasury upon the demise of the bishop. An inventory of 28 Edward I shows 11 such rings in the treasury (31), though it could be argued that either the treasury or the tomb could at times be satisfied with a ring of equal value or similar type, for the treasury inventories tally roughly with the types of excavated ring, and both rings cannot have been the original. However, it seems probable that the original was usually returned, and that something similar if dissimilar was entombed with the bishop, for this would explain the rings set with stones not proper to their dioceses, the inappropriate quality of some of the rings found, the apparent earlier date of some, and those rings set with intaglios and thereby not conforming to ecclesiastical law. A ring set with a classical intaglio might seem to our eyes quite improper to priestly use, showing as it sometimes must the rather varied erotic frolics of the classical gods, but a Salisbury Cathedral inventory of the 1220s show a morse set with a cameo, presumably classical, given by Daniel de Ponte, a canon of *c.* 1175-1180, and another given by a Prior of Wilton Abbey (32). A number of cameos were also

seized by Henry VIIIth's commissioners from Lincoln Cathedral (33). The intaglios in rings found in bishops' tombs show Cupid and Psyche, (Exeter 1307), and Minerva (Winchester 1555). To explain such finds both in England and on the Continent it has been suggested that the record of the Synod of Milan as it now stands has been added to at a later date to discourage the use of pagan gemstones (34), but a simpler explanation may be that these are not the original rings, but similar rings used as grave-goods. This is also suggested by inscriptions in two such rings, *honneur et joye York* 1423, and *En bon an, Hereford* 1474. The first of these was perhaps a betrothal ring bequeathed to the church by a widow, and the second was a new year's gift perhaps similarly bequeathed. It cannot be Bishop Stanford's episcopal ring, even were the inscription appropriate, for he was consecrated in June.

The practice of returning such rings to the crown in the medieval period is attested not only by English but by German and French texts (35), and finds in France seem to suggest that initially something approximating, the episcopal ring was buried, but that later a base only might be used. The Cathedral Treasury at Troyes contains gold and sapphire rings from episcopal inhumations of 1190 and 1223, and a gold and ruby ring from 1269, whereas a group from archiepiscopal inhumations of 1254, 1274 and 1336 at Sens are of copper-gilt or silver-gilt set with crystals (36). The tendency to regard rings exhumed with the skeletons of bishops as important rings of their day and as rings which may be precisely dated should therefore be resisted.

A further type of medieval ring, thought to be ecclesiastical, was found in Broadworthy Field, by Mynchin Buckland Priory, in 1853. This is stylistically a signet ring, but with the letters *i h s*, for *Iesus Hominum Salvator*, shown in cameo rather than intaglio (37). Such rings have been found elsewhere in Europe, and could conceivably be 'wedding' rings worn by nuns, as Brides of Christ. A further gold ring found in the immediate neighbourhood of Mynchin Buckland Priory, in 1851, brings the total discovered there in the 1850s to three, and may give reason to suppose the burial ground of the priory to have been ploughed up. This ring was taken abroad before 1860, and no description of it exists save that it was of a cable pattern (38), and one can only guess whether it was a late Saxon ring of

woven gold wire, such as was found at Bath (39), or a later iconographical ring with a barley-twist shank, of the type found at Glastonbury (40) and South Wraxall, Wilts (41). Another type of ring, apparently sacerdotal, has not been recorded locally. This bears some contraction of the words *et Verbum Dei caro factum est et habitavit in nobis* (42), and could reasonably have been worn by a celebrant.

If our knowledge of the actual consecration rings of bishops is hazy, similarly obscure is our knowledge of how they were worn. Pope Gregory IV, *d.* 844, decreed that such rings should be worn on the right hand, as this was used in blessing, and the representations of the *manus Dei* on patens and upon the Exeter ring of 1307 might suggest that it was worn on the first finger of the right hand (43). In the time of Archbishop Hincmar of Reims, *d.* 852, the ring was normally worn on the third finger of the right hand (44), which was used liturgically in giving the *Sign of Silence*, but by the 17th century the first finger of the right hand appears to have been in use (45). That this may also sometimes have been the case in the 16th century is suggested by the portrait at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, of Bishop Gardiner of Winchester, *d.* 1556, in which a ring set with a sapphire is shown upon the first finger of the right hand.

1. Alcock, *Bishop Bekynton's Chantry & Vault in Wells Cathedral*, *SDNQ*, XVII, March 1922, pp. 122-126; Mayo, *Bishop Ahlstan's Ring*, *SDNQ*, VI, June 1898, pp. 94-5; Robinson, *The Episcopal Ring of Bishop Burnell*, *SDNQ*, XVII, March 1922, pp. 126-7. This ring is now given to Bishop Jocelyn *pers comm* Mrs. F. Neale, Archivist, Wells Cathedral.
2. Smith & Cheetham (1875-80), *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, col. 1804; Migne (1845-6), *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, lix. 280-1.
3. Oman (1930), *Victoria & Albert Museum: Catalogue of Rings*, 28.
4. St. Isidore of Seville, *Ecclesiastical Offices*, ii, 5.
5. Muratori (1748), *Liturgia Romana Vetus, Tria Sacramentaria Complectens*, ii. 442.
6. Cabrol (1907), *Dictionnaire d'archaeologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, col. 2185.
7. Oman, *op. cit.*, 29 fn. 6; Nightingale (1891), *The Church Plate of Wilts*, 4.
8. Taylor & Scarisbrick (1978), *Finger Rings from Ancient Egypt to the Present Day*, no. 293.
9. Oman, *op. cit.*, 30 fn. 4; Rymer (1706), *Feodera*, iii, 389.
10. Alcock, *op. cit.*, 124.
11. Hearne (1727) *Iohannis Confratris et Monachi Glastoniensis Chronica*, i. 26.
12. National Portrait Gallery.
13. Oman, *op. cit.*, 32.
14. Oman, *op. cit.*, 30-1, fn. 4.
15. Collins (1955), *Jewels and Plate of Queen Elizabeth I*, no. 30.
16. Oman, *op. cit.*, 30-1, fn. 4; Chadour & Joppien (1985), *Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Köln, Fingerringe*, no. 198.
17. Taylor & Scarisbrick, *op. cit.*, no. 298.
18. Jones (1884), *Vetus Registrum Sarisburiense, alias dictum Registrum S. Osmondi Episcopi*, ii, 128; Ledwich (1771), *Antiquitates Sarisburienses*, pp. 176-183.
19. Hanstall (1823), *The Ring of Alhstan, Bishop of Sherborne*, in *The Gentleman's*

- Magazine*, December, 1823.
20. Tait (1986), *Seven Thousand Years of Jewellery*, p. 228.
 21. Victoria & Albert Museum, *Register*, no. 644-1871.
 22. Alcock, *op. cit.*, 124.
 23. Hugo (1860), *Mynchin Buckland Priory and Preceptory*, in *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 57; Taylor & Scarisbrick, *op. cit.*, no. 287; Oman, *op. cit.*, nos. 736-7.
 24. Hearne (1727), *Williemi Malmesburiensis Monachi de Antiquitate Glastoniensis Ecclesiae*; Chaffers (1883), *Gilda Aurifabrorum*, 19.
 25. Aringhus (1651) *Roma Subterranea Novissima*, ii, 426, iv, c. 48.
 26. Oman, *op. cit.*, 30.
 27. Dimock (1864), *Magna vita Sancti Hugonis Episcopi Lincolnensis*, 339.
 28. City Museum, Bristol.
 29. Nightingale, *op. et loc. cit.*
 30. Serel (1875), *Historical Notes on the Church of St. Cuthbert, Wells*, 97-104.
 31. *Liber Quotidianus Contrarolatus Garderobiae anno regni Regis Edwardi I. vicesimo octavo* (1787), 343-8.
 32. Jones, *op. cit.*, ii. 129.
 33. Williams (1540), *A List of Diverse Pieces of Gold Plate which accrued to the King*, printed in appendix to the 1846 edition of Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*.
 34. Cabrol, *op. et loc. cit.*
 35. Kirchmann (1672), *De Annulis Liber Singularis*, 183; Labarte (1879), *Inventaire du Mobilier de Charles V, Roi de France*, 136.
 36. Oman, *op. cit.*, 31 fn. 1.
 37. Hugo, *op. et loc. cit.*; Taylor & Scarisbrick, *op. cit.*, no. 365.
 38. Hugo, *op. et loc. cit.*
 39. Roman Baths Museum, Bath; Taylor & Scarisbrick, *op. cit.*, no. 242.
 40. Sherlock, *The Glastonbury Ring*, SDNQ, XXVII, Pt. CCLXV, pp. 125-6; Taylor & Scarisbrick, *op. cit.*, 57-8.
 41. Goddard (1904), *Gold Ring found at South Wraxhall*, in *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*.
 42. Taylor & Scarisbrick, *op. cit.*, nos. 306-7.
 43. Martigny (1865), *Dictionnaire des Antiquités chrétiennes*, 60, citing *De Cultu Pontificum*.
 44. Migne, *op. cit.*, cxxvi, col. 158.
 45. Longus (1672), *Tractatus de Annulis Signatoriis*, 41.

N. du QUESNE BIRD

3. THE GLORY THAT WAS ONCE BRUTON ABBEY. The year after the Dissolution of Bruton Abbey in 1539, the town was visited by John Leland who was commissioned by King Henry VIII to make a search into England's antiquities. He visited Bruton in 1540 and had this to say about the town:

Bruton, as I came from the north-west, into it by the south, lyeth all on this side of the Brue river. There is a street running from north to south, and another far fairer than that from east to west. The town is now much occupied with the making of cloth.

The parish church, and the abbey by it, stands beyond the river, hard over the east bridge in Bruton. The bridge is of three arches of stone.

There is in the market place a new cross of six arches, and a pillar in the middle, for market folks to stand in, begun and brought up by Ely,

last abbot of Bruton. The abbey there was, afore the Conquest, a place of monks, founded by Algarus, Earl of Cornwall. De Mohun set canons there since the Conquest, and divers of the Mohuns were buried there. One William Gilbert, of late time being prior of Bruton, went to Rome and there procured first that the name of the priory of Bruton might be changed into an abbey. This Gilbert, being abbot, did great cost in the abbey of Bruton in building, almost reedifying it.¹

His observations suggest a degree of prosperity in the town, a town which was dominated by its abbey. It, therefore, seems strange to think that, apart from the old Abbey Wall, there is little remaining of the once great building, that had so impressed and welcomed the many travellers to Bruton over the centuries.

Some of the earliest information about the church in Bruton comes from the writings of William of Malmesbury, who, in the early 12th cent., wrote an account of the 7th cent. saint, Aldhelm. According to William, St. Aldhelm reputedly founded a church in Bruton, dedicated to St. Peter, alongside another church already in existence. This latter was dedicated to St. Mary and had been founded by the king. Indeed, Bruton was by the 7th cent. a settled royal town and was the occasional residence of King Ine of Wessex. William, too, wrote of St. Aldhelm's visit to Rome at the end of the 7th cent., who, on his return journey, was laden with gifts and relics of the saints. One of these was a splendid and richly carved marble altar stone, which, it is said, was presented to the King of Wessex, who placed it in St. Mary's at Bruton.

Although Leland makes reference to the existence of an abbey in Bruton before the Norman Conquest, his is the only such reference. If correct, it is likely that it would have been a house of the Benedictine monks, since there were other foundations in Somerset, most notably at Glastonbury and Bath. Leland's words, however, must be treated with a degree of caution, particularly as the Domesday Survey of 1086 makes no reference at all to a church or religious foundation in Bruton. Nevertheless, Bruton was, in the 11th cent., of a considerable size and was styled a royal borough. At the same time, William de Mohun was Sheriff of Somerset, and William the Conqueror had conferred upon him the Honour of Dunster as well as numerour manors in Somerset, including North and South Brewham. As sheriff, he would have to adminster the estates of the Crown – and this would have linked him with Bruton.

Indeed, by the 12th cent., William de Mohun's grandson, Earl William, had been given control of the manor of Bruton.

In 1142, the latter settled at Bruton canons regular of the order of St. Augustine, brought from Normandy. They were endowed with St. Mary's and St. Aldhelm's churches, the attendant lands and income and that of the dependant churches of Pitcombe, Redlynch, Wyke, Witham and Brewham. Earl William further enriched his foundation at Bruton with the gift of various estates and churches from his family's holdings in Normandy, principally in the dioceses of Coutances and Bayeux. Further endowments were given by Robert, Bishop of Bath, who gave the rectories of Priddy, Westbury and Banwell to Bruton Priory. By the end of the 12th cent. other benefactors had given to the priory control of the churches, lands and associated chantries at Shepton Montague, Milton Clevedon, South Petherton, Charlton Adam and Minehead. This made it very wealthy and in the *Taxacio* of 1291 the wealth of the priory's holdings is given as £92.9s.0d. (£92.45) and £197.13s.4d. (£197.66½) in 1332; by the time of the Dissolution in 1535 the total value had risen to £480.17s.2d. (£480.86).

The Augustinian, or Austin, Canons had been founded as a religious order in 1061, for the purpose of raising moral and intellectual standards of the parochial clergy, by placing them in communities where they might administer to the people of neighbouring parishes, and by offering hospitality to travellers. In this the Augustinians were rather different from the traditional monks, since there was less emphasis on the vows of obedience and poverty, the parish would share the same church as that of the canons, and it was not unusual for the canons to move on to become parish priests in their own right. The practice of hospitality at Bruton Priory to travellers (who were principally those taking the road from Salisbury to Ilchester) placed an increasing financial burden on the house during the 13th cent., and in 1301 the Bishop, William of March, gave the priory the church, lands and income from Chilthorne Domer to help offset the costs.

Throughout the next three centuries, the endowments and gifts in various wills steadily grew and typical were those of Richard Bruton, John Gregory and Margery Moleyns. In 1417 Richard Bruton left money to provide frontals for the altar, an

image, in wood, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and a banner adorned with gold and silk, with further provision that 'my executors cause all the glass windows to be mended and repaired and keep them so mended as long as they conveniently can'.² In 1429 John Gregory left 'a chalice of silver gilt, two banners of silk and a cup of silver',³ and in 1493 Margery Moleyns bequeathed a 'cuppe of silver and to our Lady in the priory church my wedding ring'.⁴ Furthermore, by the end of the 13th cent., the priory had exchanged its properties in Normandy for lands in the dioceses of Chichester and Worcester, which made the process of administration easier. Despite all this acquisition of wealth, the foundation at Bruton was never especially large and contained on average about fourteen or fifteen canons.

Little is known of the affairs of the priory during the 14th cent., but the early 15th cent. was one of trouble and disorder. By the time John Schoyle had become prior in 1418, there was a feeling of laxity in the priory, with the prior setting a very poor example. It appears from the Bishops Registers of Bubwith and Stafford that Schoyle was singularly unfit for his office, since there appears in the Registers a number of criticisms of the prior. Indeed, his own canons reported him in 1423 to Bishop Bubwith, and in October of that year the prior was given the opportunity to redeem himself by being present himself at all canonical offices, both by day and night, saying mass not less than three times per week and by not absenting himself from the priory except on proper business and then only when accompanied by trustworthy witnesses. Evidently the problem was not resolved, and in 1427, as a result of a Visitation, Bishop Stafford condemned the priory on a number of counts. These include the general laxity in the house and the careless way in which the offices were said, if indeed they were said at all. Many faults were found with the prior himself, which included the fact that 'he scarcely celebrates mass twice in the year' and that he 'retains the instruments and muniments of the priory and unduly appropriates the custody of these.' As to the general state of the priory, it was discovered that

dishonourable women have access to the priory and very often come there, with whom the prior and brethren have dishonourable converse, whence arrive various temptations.

It is not only the prior who is named for his unacceptable

behaviour, but William Hooper, the prior's chamberlain,

who has often sowed grievous strifes, discord and scandals between the prior and the convent, insomuch that not charity or love, but deadly hatred has long prevailed between them, by whose perverse and nebulous manners not only their good report, but also the tone of the whole priory is immensely injured.⁵

Two years later, Bishop Stafford complained that little had been done to improve the situation at Bruton, 'especially in regard to the removal of suspicious women within and near the priory.'⁶ Probably as a consequence of pressure of the bishop, Schoyle resigned as prior in 1429 and was sent to live at the House of the Augustinian Canons at Ploughley in the diocese of Salisbury.

Schoyle's successor was Richard of Glastonbury, who was elected prior in August 1429. He remained prior until 1448, but appears to have been no better than his predecessor. In November 1444 Prior Richard was admonished for not giving Bishop Bekynton a report on the state of the priory and for failing to show him the books, rolls and accounts. Further criticism was levelled in the following year, when they were ordered to appear before the bishop because the house was accused 'of dilapidation, incontinence and many other abuses and excesses'.⁷ Although the bishop had intended to visit Bruton in person in January 1446, three commissioners were appointed to conduct an enquiry on behalf of the bishop. It appears that little of consequence was achieved and with the death of Prior Richard in 1448, it fell to his successor, John Henton, to improve the situation.

John Henton was very much a reforming prior, who was assisted in his efforts to improve Bruton Priory by a series of 20 injunctions that were issued by Bishop Bekynton in 1452 relating to the state of the house. Amongst the injunctions are the following decrees:

no canon is to play at dice, inside or outside the priory, under penalty of fasting on bread and water the whole of the following Friday ... The infirmary is to be built anew as quickly as possible ... No woman, especially suspected ones, among whom Margaret Stowel is particularly notorious, are to be allowed to enter the priory ... The bishop admonishes and exhorts all the canons not to accustom themselves to oaths or dare to swear by the humanity of Christ and if anyone contravenes thus, let him fast on bread and water every Friday for a month ... Inasmuch as it was found that confabulations and conspiracies and sometimes drinking-bouts and gluttonous feasts have

heretofore been held in the canons' private chambers, and that too at improper times, divine offices are performed negligently, the bishop enjoins the prior to see to it that no such things happen in future ... The conventual bread, which has been, and is, very defective in quality and quantity, is to be improved and made of pure wheat only ... The bishop strictly enjoins that no one take any food or drink into the dormitory under penalty of keeping complete silence for two months.⁸

It appears that these rules were completely adopted, which is a measure of Henton's strength of character. A further example of the commitment he showed to his office was his concern that his appointment as prior had been the result of his father paying money to two unspecified noblemen to further his election. In 1455 Henton petitioned Pope Calixtus III for absolution for the possible crime of simony and in December he was absolved by the pope and confirmed in his appointment as prior. Henton, in fact, belonged to a wealthy local family, and in 1458 his parents (John, a mercer, and Agnes) presented 'a great bell for the conventual church and £400 for the fabric of the said church and the cloister of the priory'.⁹

1. L. T. Smith (ed.), *The Itinerary of John Leland* (1907), pp. 149-50.
2. *Som. Rec. Soc.*, 'Somerset Wills, 1383-1500', XVI (1901), p. 93.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 312.
5. *Som. Rec. Soc.*, 'Register of Bishop Stafford, 1425-1443', XXXI (1915), pp. 80-83.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
7. *Som. Rec. Soc.*, 'Register of Bishop Bekynton', p. 52.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-83.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 323-25.

To be continued

MARTIN PASSMORE

4. FIRST NEWS OF THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON, 1666. Amongst the papers deposited in the Somerset Record Office by the Trollope-Bellew family of Crowcombe Court is a letter from Sir Edmund Wyndham (1601-1683) to his son Sir Hugh (?-1671) of Kentsford, St. Decumans, which describes the event now known as The Great Fire of London in 1666 (SRO ref., DD/TB 56/40). We do not know why Sir Edmund was in London at this time, but as he had lost a great deal of money through his support of the Crown during the Civil War and Interregnum it is very likely he was at Court seeking some redress. Certainly, in the following year, he drew up a list of the property he had sold to raise money for the cause and made

the point that he could not now afford dowries for his daughters. (DD/TB 18/16).

The letter is a fairly short one and does not give the amount of detail found in Pepys' or Evelyn's accounts of the same event. It confirms, however, the opinion found in both Pepys and Evelyn that the fire had been started deliberately, by treason, and was not an accident. Pepys wrote on the 5th of "discourses now begun that there is plot in it and that the French had done it" and Evelyn on the 7th that the French and Dutch "had been the occasion of firing the town".

On the same day that Sir Edmund was writing to his son listing the streets that had been burnt, John Evelyn wrote in his diary "all Fleet Street, the Old Bailey, Ludgate Hill, Warwick Lane, Newgate, Paul's Chain, Watling Street now flaming, and most of it reduced to ashes". It is usually accepted that one of the reasons for the spread of the fire was the reluctance of the City authorities to order the pulling down of premises in its way which would have formed firebreaks. Sir Thomas Bludworth, the Lord Mayor, refused to give permission for this, saying he "durst not do it without the consent of the owners" and Wyndham speaks in his letter of "neglect or omission" in pulling down houses. Evelyn blames "some tenacious and avaricious men, aldermen etc. [who] would not permit because their houses must have been of the first ...".

While it cannot be said that Sir Edmund's letter adds anything new or startling to our knowledge of the Great Fire of London it confirms information we have from other sources and is of interest as probably being the first account of the event to reach Somerset.

For my honoured frend Sir
Hugh Wyndham Knight
at Kensford to be left at
Taunton in Somersett
post payd

Sonne 4 7bris

We are heare at present in soe great confusion & distraction that I know not how or what to write to you but only to tell you the sadde newes that all the famous Citty of London is in 3 dayes reduced to ashes by a suddaine fire wch hapned upon saturday night none knowes whether by accident or treason but most suppose the latter it began at a place called pudding lane not farre from new fish street neare the bridg & by some neglect or omission at first in forbearinge to pull

downe houses it spread soe farre & became soe violent that nothing afterwards could ever stoppe it soe that it hath already burnt downe all the houses towards the water betweene the Tower & the Temple Cannon street Lumbard street Gracious street Tower street East Cheap Cornwell the old Exchange Cheape side are all burnt downe & it burnes still as violently or rather more fiercely than at first soe that it is believed that there will not be a house left standing in the Cittye. All that is hoped is that some of the Suburbs & Westminster may be preserved. nothinge can resemble the confusion & distraction that is heare but the last day of Judgement. such cryes lamentation as never the like was heard, & what wilbe the consequence of it hereafter god knowes. I can at present only give you this short accompt. god blesse you & yours & divert his heavy iudgements from us. I am

your most affectionate father
Edmund Wyndham

SUSAN BERRY

5. PETER GREENWOOD: A PLASTERER'S APPRENTICE. In a recently published work on decorative plasterwork in Somerset, 1500-1700, the authors have drawn attention to the fact that little is known about the identity of individual plasterers during that period.¹ They refer to Robert Eaton of Stogursey, who is known to have worked in Dorset and also, in 1599, at Combe Florey, and on stylistic grounds they believe that he was responsible for other work in Somerset and adjoining counties. They also refer to the possibility of links between the Abbott family of Frithelstock in North Devon and some of the plasterwork in Somerset, although in discussing a particular set of plasterwork examples in south and west Somerset they conclude that 'It is just possible that [the craftsman] was Eaton; it seems less likely that it was the Abbotts, since Frithelstock lies some 50 miles away to the west'.

The purpose of this note is to identify another individual, named a century later, and to make the point that the apprenticeship system may have been responsible for spreading the styles of particular craftsmen further afield, perhaps accompanied by modifications to those styles. According to the record of a settlement examination dated 5th January 1732,² Peter Greenwood, an 'intruder' into the parish of Langford Budville, stated that he had, as a boy, served a seven-year apprenticeship in Frithelstock with 'John Abbott Junior a Plaisterer'. John Abbott the younger, who died in 1727, was the most renowned member of a family which had worked as

plasterers since the late 16th century,³ and the fact that in 1732/3 Greenwood was old enough to have a wife and four children confirms that his boyhood would have coincided with Abbott's active career.

There is no evidence that Peter Greenwood was actually responsible for any plasterwork in Somerset, and indeed the fact that he was brought before two J.P.s as an 'intruder' suggests that at the time of his examination he had no work by which he could support himself and his family, but the arrival in Langford Budville of a man who had been born and apprenticed in North Devon nevertheless indicates the potential for the dissemination of skills over a much wider area. The Abbotts, and perhaps Robert Eaton also, may have been responsible for training a number of apprentices during their careers, as may other, as yet unidentified, craftsmen. In consequence work might be done, perhaps over an extensive area, which was reminiscent of that of a particular master, which is one possible explanation of the 'family' likenesses which have been found in some examples of decorative plasterwork in Somerset.

The record of the settlement examination was signed by Greenwood himself (in a practised hand) as well as by the two J.P.s who conducted the examination. The text of the document is as follows:-

Somerset 5th January 1732

Peter Greenwood an intruder into the parish of Langford Budvile in this County & being now before us & Examined as to his last legall place of settlement saith upon his oath that having been borne in the parish of Langtree neer Great Torrington he there lived untill he was about seven years old then went into an adjoyning parish called Frissellstocke where hee served seven years Apprenticeshipp with John Abbott Junior a Plaisterer, & hath never since done any Act whereby to gain a settlement in any other parish, tho he now lives in the said parish of Langford Budvile where he now hath Margret his wife & Peter, William, Elizabeth & Anne his children.

Jurat Coram

J. Clarke

Peter Greenwood

Edw. Dyke

1. J. & J. Penoyre, *Decorative Plasterwork in the Houses of Somerset 1500-1700* (1994), pp. 41-45.
2. S.R.O., DD/SF 169.
3. P. Beacham, *Devon Building. An introduction to local traditions* (1990), pp. 139 & 1442-3.

MARK MCDERMOTT

6. THE 1740 AND 1745 CENSUSES OF TRENT. About 1747 the Revd. Barnabus Smyth, Rector of Trent (originally in Somerset, though since 1896 in Dorset) wrote a detailed and fascinating description of his parish, entitled 'Account of ye Parish and Parsonage of Trent' of which three broadly similar versions have been located: in the parish records;¹ in the archives of Corpus Christi College, Oxford;² and in the private possession of Mr. J. Stevens-Cox, the historian of Ilchester.³ These reveal that Smyth was not only an antiquarian, but had a wide-ranging interest in science, horticulture and social studies. There is little doubt that he was initially encouraged to write his account by the patrons of his living, Corpus Christi College, Oxford, of which he was a Fellow, for their information, and as a guide to his successors, to answer 'queries worth considering and examining in relation to a Fellow's accepting of a living when void'. This was the stated purpose of another College parish 'Account', like that of Trent, to be found preserved in Corpus Christi College archives, which was compiled in 1730 for Stoke Charity in Hampshire, by its incumbent, Rev. Joshua Reynolds, uncle and namesake of the famous portrait painter.⁴

Both accounts detail the amenities of the parsonage house and church, the conformity or otherwise of parishioners, the numbers of communicants, and the income due to the incumbent from fees, glebe and tithes. Reynolds at Stoke Charity did not however have the same wide range of interests displayed by Smyth at Trent, whose 'Account' includes details such as graphs showing the precise times of sunrise and sunset at Trent throughout the year, the height of his church spire according to his mathematical calculations, the names of species of fruit trees that he planted in his garden, monumental inscriptions in his church, farming methods with numbers of livestock reared and quantities of produce grown, and also population studies of the inhabitants of Trent, for which he compiled two censuses, in 1740 and 1745.

Precise censuses of that date are particularly rare. Until recently it was believed these Trent ones only survived as statistics appearing in the first version of his 'Account'. But the privately-held one in the possession of J. Stevens-Cox gives names and some other details, including the ages of everybody in 1745. So far as is known, this 1745 census is the only

example in Britain to survive to provide such details in the whole of the first half of the eighteenth century. Illuminated by such a rarity as this, Smyth's population studies deserve to be examined in greater detail; and is the subject of this piece.

Smyth seems to have been particularly interested in the theories propounded by Graunt, Halley, and some others he mentions, that the population was expanding due to an increasing birthrate. In three principal ways he tried to produce his own evidence of this: by analysing his parish registers, comparing the numbers of baptisms, marriages and burials at different periods; by compiling the two censuses of his parishioners in 1740 and 1745; and, between these two dates, by greatly augmenting his parish registers with more details than were usual at that period. In particular it was the parish registers being augmented for this purpose, that came as a surprise to me, when first discovered, and would not be obvious to those who had only examined the *c.* 1747 Trent 'Account'. It also led me to investigate whether there were any other parishes for which population censuses are known to exist for the eighteenth century, and which also reveal parish register 'augmentations'. In Dorset I found that there is indeed one other – Tolpuddle. Between 1775 and 1804 the Rev. Bernard Hodgson compiled four censuses and one enumeration of his parish population, and was also found to have added occupations and ages to the burial entries in the Tolpuddle registers between 1788 and 1803, and ages from 1803 to his own death in 1806. Such 'augmentations' of details in parish registers elsewhere may not just be the whim of a clergyman: they could be the only evidence now surviving that he had some interest in social studies of the inhabitants.

Though Smyth based his enquiries on firm foundations, his assessment of them, in his Trent 'Account' show his exasperation that these were failing to reveal, as presumably as he had hoped, the trends of which he had read widely in published sources. He was discovering, as have many demographers since his day, that to pin down such trends in a single parish, in the records only of the established church, when unable to investigate very deeply nonconformity and migration patterns, is fraught with problems. It seems likely that he stopped his studies at that point, though he continued to 'augment' his registers with some additional information

up to his own death in 1760. Whether he communicated his findings to other researchers is unknown, since no correspondence from his has, so far, been located in other archives.

Of his analysis of the Trent registers, Smyth writes:

‘It may be a matter of curiosity, if not of use, to see how ye marriages, births and burials, have stood at different times for some years back: for wch reason I have inserted an account of them for 84 years, viz: from 1560 to 1721, extracted from ye register to wch I have added those from ye year 1733’.

He explains that, sensibly he excluded the period 1602 to 1679, when he thought the registers less accurately kept, particularly during a hiatus in the Commonwealth era when a civilian registrar was appointed: ‘his diligence I think is not much to be boasted of’. 1733 was the year Smyth was himself appointed rector and ‘I have taken all ye care I cd yt there shd be no omissions’.

Having assessed the accuracy of his source material, Smyth proceeded to puzzle at his findings:

‘From 1560 to 1601 there have been 96 marriages and 387 births, yt is, each marriage has produced 4 children one from another. But from 1680 to 1721 in ye same space of time there are only 57 marriages and yet ye births are 422, each marriage giving more than 7 children, wch is such a disproportion as cannot be admitted. The number of births is what might be expected but ye marriages are not near so many, wch I can account for no other way than by supposing ym not to have been entered so regularly as they ought to have been’.

Clearly he was unaware of the prevalence, in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, for couples marrying clandestinely some distance away from their homes, which was still continuing at the time he was writing this ‘Account’, but which came to a halt with the passing of Lord Hardwick’s Marriage Act in 1754.

Smyth then compared the numbers of baptisms to burials to try to deduce the rate of increase of the population, but clearly began to realise that migration into and out of the parish made such statistics of doubtful value:

‘In ye whole 91 years ye births have exceeded ye burials by 303, consequently in 120 years they wd exceed by near 400, yt is, in 120 years time ye inhabitants double. This wd be so if all who are born in ye parish livd and died in it and none else, or wch come to ye same, if ye outgoers and comers-in always equald one another, wch one wd think no very unreasonable supposition. But it appears in fact to be far otherwise; for comparing ye burials at ye end of ye years 1601 and 1721, ye encrease during that 120 years is no more than 138, wch is

something above one a year or about 8 in 7 years. From whence we must conclude, yt two at least every year go from hence to settle elsewhere, more than come hither from other places and ye abiding inhabitants will not double in less than 347 years'.

Many another researcher would have given up in consternation at that point; but not Barnabus Smyth. Rather than depending upon faulty statistics provided by others, as parish registers are, he decided to rely entirely on his own by compiling his 1740 and 1745 censuses of the inhabitants of Trent. The latter is exactly dated – 26 March 1745 – which he states was his tithe collection day. Unlike some other early censuses, he did not omit gentry or even himself and his own household. The latter appear as:

1740	1745	
Mr: Smyth	Mr: Smyth (aged)	53
Wife	Frances Smyth	46
Mrs: Wickham	Ths: Batson	32
3 Serv:	Mary Gillingham	22
Total: 6.	Anne Hammond	19

– which gives some idea of what is recorded for each household. Mrs. Wickham in 1740 was most probably Smyth's mother-in-law, whilst the three last people in 1745 could have been, though not stated, living-in servants.

'In ye year 1740 I took an account of ye inhabitants as exactly as I cd. The houses I found to be 79 and ye inhabitants 399 wch are five to a house. I found upon strict enquiry in 1745 yt ye houses were in all 82 and ye inhabitants but 375. These 375 there are marryd – 114; widowers – 11; widows – 21; unmarried – 229; women capable of bearing children reckoning ym such from 16 to 45 – 78; of ye age of 23 and under – 188; Above 23 – 187'.

The censuses giving names, the J. Stevens-Cox versions, do not give marital condition of named individuals in 1745, so his figures for these must have come solely from his personal recollections:

'Whence it appears yt there are in ye parish 238 communicants', again only his personal recollection, not stated in the census 'and yt as many dye before as survive ye age of 23'. Alas – this statement is a nonsense; Smyth confuses average age of all the inhabitants, with actual ages when each person died.

'It appears likewise yt allowing one birth to 7 childbearing women or to every 34 inhabitants, there will be in ye year 11 births, wch agrees very well with ye register'.

Clearly Smyth had thought that the 1745 census would reveal an increase in population over 1740, but was surprised to find

the reverse. As a result, he started to question the accuracy of his 1740 survey:

'They' – *ie. total population* – 'never I believe amounted to quite so many as 399, for when I took ye account first, some persons mistaking my meaning, reckond yr children, tho gone from them and plac'd abroad, as part of yr familys. This will bring ye number something lower' – *a plausible explanation; we can imagine how some of Smyth's parishioners could mistake his meaning, particularly when nobody had ever asked them such questions before* – 'But what chiefly contributed to make such a difference was ye death of a Gentleman in 1743 whose whole family, consisting of 12 or 13 persons, immediately after removd out of ye parish. Besides yt between ye years 1740 and 1745 there was a small encrease of ye burials above ye births. All wch together may easily reconcile ye two accounts'. *The Trent parish registers show that the only person who could be described as a gentleman dying in 1743, is given as 'Samuel Goodford, married, aged 26, buried at Yeovil, 26 January 1743/4'.*

Burials in other parishes are not usually recorded in parish registers, but the registers Smyth was compiling at Trent between 1740 and 1745 are quite extraordinary. In the burial registers he was giving ages and marital condition – either married, widowed or single – and continued to do this up to the entry before his own burial in 1760. He also recorded parishes of residence of those living elsewhere who were buried at Trent, and also places and dates of burial of Trent inhabitants whose corpses were taken elsewhere for burial. He recorded births at Trent of those not baptised there, just two children of nonconformists, whom sadly he declines to name. Two weddings of Trent inhabitants performed elsewhere are also recorded, as well as parishes of residence of those who came to Trent to marry.

Social studies of the type Rev. Barnabus Smyth was so diligently trying to pursue were in their infancy in the eighteenth century. But it was from the example of 'fieldworkers' such as he, that the present advanced knowledge of demographers has developed. Smyth's pioneer role in this development deserves to be better known.

1. Dorset County Record Office, PE/TNT: IN 1/2 and 3.
2. Archives of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, F/11/21/3.
3. In the private collection of J. Stevens-Cox, FSA, The Lindens, Bas Courtills, St. Sampson, Guernsey, Channel Islands, but photocopies of full text deposited at Somerset Record Office, in DD/X/JONES/1. Additionally photocopies of census data deposited at Dorset County Record Office in 'Photocopy 817'.
4. Archives of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, F/11/19/3/

MERVYN MEDLYCOTT

7. RURAL CONDITIONS IN GLASTONBURY IN 1845. The Street 'Village Album' is a collection of manuscript tracts written mainly by members of the Quaker community. This was founded in 1857 and continues today, the bound volumes of essays being housed by Messrs. C. & J. Clark. Among the early entries is an account by an anonymous author which paints a grim picture of rural life in the vicinity in 1845.

Our author writes that 'the farmers are so poor that they cannot afford to employ many labourers, but perform almost all the farm work themselves'. Sometimes there was work cutting and drying turf and in this boys could assist: 'when there is not this resource there is but little employment for children'.

An unnamed source is quoted as saying: 'three or four boys are employed by the farmers to 10 men. A few girls get employment at Glove sewing, but the remuneration is very small. Shoes also are made here for the Irish market; and gig mats from dressed sheepskins; but the wages from these employments are very low. A good hand can make about 14/- a week at shoe making; and 11/- a week at mat making'. Gardeners made 1s.6d. a day and unskilled labourers from 1s. to 1s.2d.

The informant's own carter 'who is an intelligent and partially educated man gets 9/- a week and 3d. or 6d. every journey which he is allowed for spending money when he baits his horses. If he were discharged there would be 40 applicants for his place'. Even joiners, carpenters and masons, he says, get only 14s. a week, while a farmer paying a rent of £200.0.0 a year had been able to spend only a pound a year on clothes for the previous five years; this was exclusive of shoes.

Farm labourers earned an average of 7s. a week to which a further 2s. might be added by family earnings. 'Such a family can afford to buy scarcely any clothing. Their diet is chiefly potatoes which are particularly good here (except those grown on the unreclaimed moor which have a turfy taste). Bread is now so cheap that it is part substituted for potatoes'. The farmers kept pigs and fed them whey left over from cheese making. Labourers were not allowed pigs because the farmers thought pig keeping would tempt them to steal. Gardens attached to cottages were very small and allotments uncommon. The usual rent of farms was £3-£4 an acre.

The housekeeping accounts of John Gifford, a Glastonbury labourer, are quoted. He earned 7s. a week and had five children aged 15, 12, 6, 4 and nine months. Two of the children brought in 3s. a week between them while Gifford's allotment was valued at 4s. a year.

Weekly expenditure:

Rent (two rooms 12ft. x 9ft.)	2s. 0d.
Coal and turf	0s. 7d.
Bread	3s. 6d.
Potatoes	3s. 0d.
Meat (offal for Sunday)	0s. 2d.
Tea	0s. 1d.
Soap	0s. 2d.
Candles	0s. 2d.
	9s. 8d.

During 1844, Gifford spent 19s. on clothes for the family made up as follows: smock frock 2s. 6d.; coat 1s. 6d.; waist coat 6d.; trousers 1s. 0d.; two shirts 2s. 0d.; one pair of stockings 6d.; two pairs of shoes 11s. 0d. = 19s. All other clothes were begged. To the groceries mentioned a little bacon was sometimes added. The average rent was 1s. 6d. a week.

Another case quoted is that of Ambrose Batson, a trenching labourer with five children. We are told that he used burnt crust as a substitute for tea or coffee, had eaten no butter for three years 'nor can ever look upon meat or bacon'. His earnings were 7s. a week with three pints of cider a day.

A covering letter with the notes, unsigned but dated 2 February 1845, declares that '5, 6, 7, and sometimes 8 children live together in one room and sleeping in the same room with their father and mother with scarcely a rag to cover them when laid down. And the whole of them to subsist on 5s. to 7s. weekly and often not that'. Finally, the case of James Tackwell is quoted. He was strong, able, honest and hard-working. He was unable to get work and did not like the idea of going to the Workhouse. So Tackwell stole two pigs and drove them some distance. Brought before a magistrate, he declared that he preferred transportation to the Workhouse.

MICHAEL MCGARVIE

8. THE PRINCES OF WIDCOMBE – A MOST UNUSUAL FAMILY. Nobody interested in the history of Somerset can fail to have heard of the Agapemone, the millenarian sect which existed at Spaxton from 1845 to 1960. This extraordinary group, more reminiscent of modern American cults than of traditional British non-conformity, has been the subject of numerous popular books and articles.¹

The Agapemone was founded by the Rev. Henry James Prince, a one-time doctor and Anglican curate, who came to believe that he had a divine mission equal in importance to that of Jesus. Prince's biography has featured both in histories of the Agapemone and in biographical collections, like the *D.N.B.: Missing Persons*. Very little interest has been shown in Prince's family, outside of the fact that he was brought up by his widowed mother in Bath. Nevertheless, several of the Princes are of some interest and deserve some record in their own right.

Henry James Prince was born in Bath on 13 January 1811² and baptised in Widcombe.³ He was the son of Thomas Prince, gentleman (1745-1816) and Mary Ann (1775-1847). Henry was the youngest son of a decidedly old father (about 66 when he was born), though he was neither the youngest child nor was he very much younger than his next oldest brother. The family lived at 5 Widcombe Crescent, across the Avon from the main city centre. The house, which still survives, is part of a three storey crescent which forms 'one of the most attractive minor ensembles in Bath'.⁴

Thomas Prince died in June 1816 aged 71³, when Henry was only 5. He was a man of substance and according to his will had interests in two Jamaican plantations, Norwich and Terra Nova, together with houses at 22 St. James' Square and 5 Widcombe Crescent in Bath and a warehouse in Love Lane in Liverpool.⁵ The two plantations, in the parish of Portland, were of some size having 170 and 50 slave workers. Thomas Prince had been a part owner of Norwich since 1777. To his wife he gave annuities worth £400 a year and a life interest in the Widcombe house. The other house and the warehouse passed to his business partners in Jamaica and Liverpool. According to the inventory of death duties the whole estate was worth at least £16,000.⁶

Thomas Prince had a sister, Sarah (1760-1833), who married

into the Dimella family and ended her days living near the Prince family in Walcot.³ One of Thomas's sons was born in a Liverpool suburb, where he had possessions in the city. A Thomas and Sarah Prince, baptised in 1745 and 1760 in St. George's church, were amongst the many children of John Prince of Liverpool, shoemaker, who was still on the Burgess Roll there in 1784. Thus, circumstantial evidence suggests that Thomas Prince originally came from Liverpool.

It is clear from the will that Mary Ann was not Thomas Prince's first wife. Two adult sons of a previous marriage (or marriages?) are mentioned: Thomas and John. A memorial at Portland, Jamaica, commemorates Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Prince of Norwich Estate, who died in 1792⁷ – unfortunately the parish records for this year appear to be lost. Elizabeth may well be Thomas' and John's mother and might be Elizabeth Bayms, widow, who married a Thomas Prince of Kingston in 1773. Thomas Prince, junior, had property in Jamaica gifted to him by his father before the latter's marriage to Mary Ann, which would suggest that he was already an adult by 1797. This Thomas, Henry Prince's half brother, became a Captain in the East Middlesex Militia in Dec. 1804, dropped ranks to become a Lieutenant in Nov. 1814⁸ and remained on the companies' strength until 1830. His pay records reveal that he was absent from the U.K. from Dec. 1816 until Sept. 1819: it is tempting to speculate that he was in Jamaica looking after the estate there. He may still have been alive in June 1842, when the missionary, John Clarke, met George Kinghorn Prince and 'his brother' in Jamaica.

John Prince was born on 13 March 1786 at Walton, Lancashire. He joined the navy at 15 in 1800 and rose to the rank of Lieutenant by 1807, a rank he kept until his last active posting in 1815.⁹ During this time he served on 16 different ships and distinguished himself in an expedition to the mouth of the Scheldt by his 'Bravery, his Zeal, his attention to his duty and the spirit of Enterprize he always manifested'.⁹ He remained on the half pay lists until 1855, rising eventually to the rank of Commander (Retired). Like his half brothers he appears to have had links with Edinburgh, where he possessed a library ticket to the University Library for the academic year, 1815-1816,⁹ having matriculated in medicine in that year. However, he only took one course and there is no evidence of

his having practised in any medical capacity. In the 1820s he became owner of Shincliffe Hall, co. Durham, and in 1830 married a Yorkshire heiress, Isabella Craddock. He died on 11 October 1867 leaving goods to the value of nearly £4000, including small sums of money to his father's second family. Thus, it would appear that the two families of Thomas Prince, senior, remained in contact half a century after his death.

Thomas Prince senior's second marriage was to Mary Ann Steven in Jamaica on 12 August 1797, when he was aged about 52 and his wife some 30 years his junior. There were at least 8 children of this marriage. Two sons died in infancy, Henry Croft Prince in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1798, and William Thompson Prince, who was buried in the family grave in Walcot in 1806.³ In Thomas' will of 1816 six further children are mentioned: George Kinghorn, William Croft, Henry James, Mary Ann, Sarah Eliza and Eleanor. Mary Ann (senior) lived on in her husband's house in Widcombe until her death in 1847. In her will, two of her children were excluded: Mary Ann, apparently dead by 1845, and Henry James, presumably left out because of his 'heretical' life at the Agapemone.

Four children benefited from Mary Ann's will: George Kinghorn (1800/1-1865) had, like his brother Henry, entered the medical profession. After apprenticeship to an Edinburgh apothecary in 1819 he received his Apothecary's licence in 1822. He also achieved a prestigious Edinburgh MD in the same year, dedicated, incidentally, to his father's partner, Charles Pallmer, who perhaps helped him pay his way through medical school. He married Susan Shaw in Jamaica in 1826, buried her in the same year,⁷ and married again in 1830 to Eliza Margaret Burgess (1797-1884). Two daughters, Marion (1831-1855) and Susan (1833-1906) were born in the next 5 years. The ages of Mrs. Prince and her 2 children are to be found on a tombstone in Cordova, Illinois. In 1837, when he became a Licentiate of the London Society of Apothecaries, he was still living in Jamaica. It appears that he then moved to Chesterfield, Derbyshire. He witnessed Henry's marriage to Martha Freeman in Bath on 10 July 1838.¹⁰ On 1 Oct. 1840 the London Baptist Missionary Society Committee appointed him to go with John Clarke of Jericho, Jamaica, to test the possibility of a West African Mission, based at Ferdinando Po. He was described as 'Dr. G. K. Prince who, for some years,

practised the healing art with great reputation and success in Jamaica and who, in that island, became a recipient of the grace of the Gospel, evincing his sincerity by the most costly sacrifices of a temporary kind'. He spent six years in all in the Cameroon and Ferdinando Po between 1840 and 1848, retiring when his daughter's health broke down, having contributed substantially to establishing the Baptist Mission there. By 1855 he and his family emigrated to Davenport, Iowa, where Marion died in the same year. He practised as a doctor¹¹ until he died of cancer of the stomach on 18 June 1865.¹² He still owned property in England and his wife was granted letters of administration of it in 1868.

William Croft Prince (1809-1877) was baptised at Widcombe on 20 July 1809³ and later became a travelling secretary for the Shipwrecked Mariners Society, according to his will. He had a wife, Susannah, and a daughter, Julia Henrietta.

Sarah Eliza Prince, born 31 Jan. 1805,³ married a retired army captain, John Wynn Webb on 1 July 1829.¹³ He had been invalided out of the army after a distinguished career in the Napoleonic wars. He was a widower, so the two sons mentioned in his will of 1867 may not have been Sarah's. He died in 1851 and his wife died in London in 1882.

Eleanor Prince (1813-1889) was baptised at Widcombe on 30 June 1813³ and married a college friend of Prince, Arthur Rees (1813-1884), in 1842.¹⁰ Rees, of a strong evangelical bent, was forced out of the Anglican Church and became a Baptist minister in Sunderland. They had six children.

What of Henry James Prince? His later life has been extensively discussed by writers on the Agapemone and needs no further comment. His earlier career is less well documented. He attended an (unidentified) school in Corsham.¹⁴ In Sept. 1825 he was apprenticed as an apothecary to John Nicholls, surgeon, of Market Place, Wells.¹⁵ After about 5 years there he moved to London and took a number of courses, apparently at Guy's Hospital, and served 12 months at the Surrey Dispensary in Union Street, Borough. On 16 Feb. 1832 he was awarded his Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries, a qualification entitling him to practise as a doctor.¹⁵ In May 1832 he became resident medical officer to the prestigious Bath General Hospital.¹⁶ After three years' ill health, however, a serious operation in April 1835 forced him to relinquish his medical

career.² The Hospital Committee recorded its regret at his resignation, so Prince, it appears, had done his job well.¹⁷

In 1834 'having suffered under the conviction of sin fifteen months, and during the last month with the utmost agony, it pleased God ... to reveal his Son Jesus Christ to me'.² During a long period of recuperation from the operation (which had nearly proved fatal), his thoughts turned to Christian evangelism. In the summer of 1835, while staying with his half brother, Captain John Prince, at Shincliffe Hall he decided to take the cloth.² In 1836 he began his studies at Lampeter, which were to lead first to fame as an evangelical Anglican and later to infamy as a millenarian sectarian.

1. C. Mander, *The Reverend Prince and His Abode of Love* (1976).
2. H. J. Prince, *Br. Prince's Journal; or an account of the destruction of the works of the devil in the human soul, by the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Gospel.* (1859).
3. Biographical details for the Prince family in Bath can be found in the parish registers for Widcombe and Walcot St. Swithin.
4. W. Ison, *The Georgian Buildings of Bath* (1980).
5. P.R.O., PROB 11/1583 ff. 334-336.
6. P.R.O., IR 27/158 Reg. 3 f. 755.
7. P. Wright, *Monumental Inscriptions of Jamaica* (Soc. of Gen., 1966).
8. *The Army List* (1805-1816).
9. Durham Record Office, D/Cr/ 206-209.
10. S.R.O. D/P/ ba. ja. 2/1/16, 18.
11. Information from B. Scott gathered from the Rock Island County Historical Society.
12. *Baptist Magazine* 1866, 264.
13. *Bath Chronicle*, 9 July 1829.
14. Lampeter College Archives.
15. Guildhall Library, London Apoth. 8241/5 735.
16. W. H. Dixon, *Spiritual Wives* (1868).
17. Hospital Committee, 1823-42, f. 78, no. 18.

JOSHUA J. SCHWIESO

9. BRIDPORT TEXTILE INDUSTRY. A FAMILY VIEW. The Bridport textile industry has been considered in two previous articles in *SDNQ* (Short, XXXI, Pt. 315, 205-209; Bone, XXXI, Pt. 314, 141-154). Bone covered the development of this industry through a listing of the firms engaged in textile manufacture, taken from a series of 32 directories for the period 1814 to 1945. Short extended this period by introducing manufacturers given in the *Universal Directory*, 1793 and other references to 1315. In fact, production of twine, rope, nets and sail cloth has continued in Bridport for some 800 years.

The present study adds more detail to the directory entries, particularly in the precise location of spinning ways and in the connections between apparently quite separate firms. Some of

the material presented here first appeared in *The Greenwood Tree*,¹ where a topographical code was explained. This article first describes the code and then follows on from the previous *SDNQ* articles.

The earliest recorded member of the family is John Seymour (1682-1767), a twinespinner. His will was drawn up on 19 Dec, 1763, being proved on 14 Sep, 1767. There were six legacies and those to his sons Peter, Edward and Richard provide clear descriptions of location. Each of these legacies refers to various properties and spinning ways in Bridport but all had a 'pit and well in common', so all the properties were on the same piece of land.

A river is mentioned in Peter's and Edward's legacies and East Street in Richard's, which suggests that the river is the Asker. The property of Stephen Stone was said to lie to the east of Edward's legacy and that of Joseph Stone to the west of Richard's. It is reasonable to suppose that the rates would have been paid by John Seymour up until the time of his death and by Peter, Edward and Richard after the will was proved.

Fortunately the Churchwardens Ratebooks of St. Mary's Bridport have survived for the years 1762-1793 and furthermore Basil Short has discovered that they contain a topographical code.² He found that the names of ratepayers occur in the same positions year after year in the rating list and that these positions correspond to the locations of their properties on the ground. The name of each of the larger inns and public houses is given next to the landlord's name which provides a very useful marker, particularly when the building is shown on later maps and when it still exists today. The amounts charged depended on the relative sizes and positions of the properties in the town.

Starting with the rating list for 27 Jul, 1767, before the will was drawn up, the first entry is for the *George* inn. I have called this number 1 and the next inn is the *Lyon* at no 11 in the list. The *George* was at 1-5 East Street and the *Lyon* (later the *Golden Lion*) was at 21 East Street, which agrees reasonably well with the numbering. Reading on we come to

	£	s	d
Joseph Stone for late Panchons	0	1	0
+ John Seymour for his house	0	2	0
William Stone for late Panfield's house	0	1	6

The meaning of the + is obscure but since John died on 4 Sep a possible explanation is that it indicates a terminal illness on 27 July. Joseph Stone is still present but Stephen Stone was replaced by William Stone by 1766.

John Seymour's position in the list is no 57 and at this stage it is useful to consult a contemporary map of Bridport, drawn up by Hutchins in 1774, which shows individual buildings without naming them. The rate collector started from the *George* and moved in an easterly direction along the north side of East Street. The map suggests that there were about 50 buildings to the end of East Street. At this point he would have headed along the south side of East Street, where going down the list corresponds to movement in a westerly direction. Thus Joseph Stone was to the east of John Seymour and before William Stone replaced him, Stephen Stone was to the west, as described in the will. On the Hutchins map the areas corresponding to these three properties lead down to the River Asker just to the east of Folly Mill.

The picture changes in the list of 11 Apr 1769, the next after John Seymour's will had been proved.

Joseph Stone for late Panchons	0	1	0
Richd. Seymour for late John Ollivers	0	1	0
Peter Seymour for late Jhon Seymour	0	1	0
Edwd. Seymour for late ffathers	0	1	0
Wm. Stone for his house	0	1	6

The spelling is curious but the Seymour brothers have now moved into their inheritance. From here on I shall call the youngest brother Richard I, as other Richards follow. When distance from the *Bull* inn is considered it seems highly likely that the land in John Seymour's will corresponds to Seymour Place, the former rope walk between 80 and 82 East Street in Bridport today. It contained land that belonged to Peter Seymour's grandmother, as mentioned in John Seymour's will, so this could put the origins of Seymour Place in the first half of the 18th century.

The first member of the Seymour family to appear in a directory is Seth (1757-1828). He was the eldest son of Richard I and replaced him in the rating lists from 1779 onwards. From 1779 to 1785 Seth appeared in the Seymour Place position along with his uncles Peter and Edward Seymour. However, in 1786 he appears not only there but also four names down

from the landlord of the *Lower Cross Keys*, who can in turn be positioned with respect to the landlord of the *Greyhound* coaching inn at the corner of East and South Streets. Moving down the list corresponds to moving south along South Street and the relevant 1786 entries read

(13)	Benjamin Galpin for the Lower Cross Keys	0	2	0
(15)	Joseph Chambers for late Father's	0	2	0
(17)	Joseph Hoskins for his House	0	2	6
(19)	Mary Kenway for her House	0	4	6
(21)	Seth Seymour for late Stoodleys	0	2	6

The present-day South Street numbers are suggested in brackets, as explained below.

Examination of Hutchins map shows a slight bend in the top part of the east side of South Street. This is even clearer on the O.S. 1:500 map of 1887 which indicates a public house just below the bend. Today that same building, at 13 South Street, bears the sign of the *Cross Keys*, although it is no longer a public house. Since the *Higher Cross Keys* was pulled down in 1838 to make way for the Methodist Chapel (now the Arts Centre) no 13 was the *Lower Cross Keys*, which thus provides a useful marker both in the lists and on the ground.

Between 19 and 21 South Street today there is an alleyway, useful for twine spinning, with quite a large open space beyond it where more spinning ways or other businesses could have been situated. The area is known as Morterhay or 'Field of the dead', which probably extended north to another alleyway between nos 15 and 17 South Street. Seth continued at, apparently, 21 South Street (just above the Bridport Museum) until the early lists end in 1793.

We can identify some of the entries in the earliest available directory, the *Universal British Directory* of about 1793. No location details are given and the two relevant entries read

Seymour Seth, Twine-merchant
Seymour & Co., Merchants

Evidently Seth was at Morterhay in South Street and it seems highly likely that Seymour & Co. was at Seymour Place in East Street. Here Seth had been replaced in the rating list by his brother Richard II and then by 1789 Peter had been replaced by his son Henry. In 1793 Seymour & Co. would have consisted of Edward, Richard II and Henry, maintaining the custom of handing down the family spinning ways from father to son.

The next Bridport directory in which Seymours are mentioned is Pigot's of 1823/24. Under 'Manufacturers of Line, Twine & Shoe Thread' we have

Seymour R. (& fishing nets), South st

Seymour S. (& fishing nets), South st

under 'Fire Office Agents'

COUNTY, Rd. Seymour, South-st

and under 'Grocers & Tea Dealers'

Seymour Edward, East-st

Seymour S. would be Seth at Morterhay but since Richard II had died in 1809 Seymour R. and Rd. must refer to his son Richard III (1787-1856), Seth's nephew.

Did Richard III share spinning ways with Seth or was he located elsewhere in South Street? This question can be answered through the next useful series of rating lists running from 1828-1855. The names of public houses are no longer given but they can be found in the directories with their landlords. In 1823/4 the landlord of the *Cross Keys* was Thomas Chambers but in the 1828-30 lists John Squires is in the correct position and this is confirmed by Pigot's 1830 entry.

Richard III is not in the Morterhay position with Seth but he is found 35 names below John Squires and with the entries above and below him we have

(85)	James Clarkson	Dwelling house	0	12	0
(86)	Richard Seymour	do	0	9	0
(87)	John Seymour	do	0	6	0

Today's street numbers are again suggested in brackets. In Pigot's 1830 directory we see 'Five Bells, James Clarkstone, South st and on the 1887 O.S. map the *Five Bells* is in a location corresponding to 85 South Street. No. 85 is not a public house today but still shows the *Five Bells* sign. Two doors away from the *Five Bells*, between 87a and 91 there is an alleyway leading to a Rope Walk on the O.S. map. This is close to Richard III's position in the lists and Richard III is also a Fire Office Agent. Seymour & Co. no longer appears and Edward, a cousin of Richard III, has diversified into groceries, although twine spinning probably continued at Seymour Place.

In the 1830 directory Seth has gone but Richard III has the same entries as before and is also called a 'gent. at Bradpole'. His last entry is in the July 1830 rating list which suggests that

he retired completely to Bradpole before Sep 1831, the date of the next list. There he lived with his wife Miriam until they both died in 1856. John Seymour remained in South Street after 1830 and he is described as a twinespinner in a Poll Book of 1820.

In 1785 Seth had married Elizabeth Stoodley, the landlady of another *Five Bells* in Morterhay from 1782 to 1785. Seth left his spinning ways to her on his death in 1828 but from 1829 she was replaced in the lists by John Golding. After her death in 1840 James Stoodley, her nephew, inherited these spinning ways.

Both men appear together in the rating lists from 1828, with John Golding being in the directories from 1823/4-42 and James Stoodley from 1840-48. A Corporation lease of 1831³ refers to both John Golding and Seth as being located in Morterhay. This is an example of the same location carrying the names of three different manufacturers, Seymour, Golding and Stoodley. Another firm named in the Morterhay lease is Russell & Co., London Carriers of East Street, clearly using a different entrance to the twinespinners. A Thomas Russell, Carrier first appears in the 1793 directory and again in the 1828-30 rating lists but in 1831 he is replaced by Robert Thomas, as described in the lease.

Finally, what further information is there about Seymour Place? Seymours are not mentioned in East Street until Kelly's 1855 directory although they appear in the Seymour Place position in the rating lists. Edwin Seymour is listed as a 'Rope and Twine Manufacturer' in East Street in 1855 but does not appear again. Edwin was the son of Henry Seymour, who was another cousin of Richard III, and was apparently the last of the family to be a twinespinner. He was still at Seymour Place in 1861 and at Gundry Lane in 1881. His death in 1890 ended nearly two centuries of Seymour participation in the Bridport textile industry.

1. *The Greenwood Tree*, Feb 1993, vol 18, no 1, p 26: May 1993, vol 18, no 2, p 60: May 1995, no 2, p 61.
2. Basil Short, *A Respectable Society*, Moonraker Press 1976.
3. Dorset County Record Office, DC/BTB S94.

JOHN SEYMOUR

10. PURBECK QUARRIES IN 1893. Among the manuscripts at the British Geological Survey at Keyworth, Nottingham, are four notebooks of a Victorian geologist, G. F. Harris, written in 1893-94. These notebooks (GSM/1/969) were intended perhaps as the basis of a book on quarrying in England. The second volume contains material on quarrying in Somerset and Dorset 100 years ago. The Dorset material is between pages 191-202 and is extracted here.

Harris began his visit to Dorset at the Halfway House quarry in Sherborne where he noted 'that the gunpowder was kept inside a lime-kiln, within a few feet of the furnace doors, to 'keep it dry' , ' as he was told. The trip proper began badly at West Bay where Harris 'had a terrible lunch at the hotel there, not fit to give a dog, meal bad – indifferent service'. He walked along the shore to Burton Bradstock where 'he sought in vain for a cup of tea or anything to eat. Awful district for food, etc.' The lack of refreshment perhaps engendered a low view of the Burton quarries which Harris says were celebrated only for fossils and were sometimes worked exclusively for ammonites.

On 4th Sept, 1893, Harris arrived in Swanage and called at the offices of Messrs. Burt & Burt, 'rather uncouth people', with a view to investigating the quarries of the Isle of Purbeck. Frank Burt told him: '... 200 men are employed in the 50 quarries ... of the Isle of Purbeck & in addition about 100 men employed as masons ... there are from 45 to 50 quarryowners in the Isle, mostly labouring men, or skilled artisans; thus a different owner to each quarry. They are all in a small way of business, employing two to three men in each quarry, but occasionally as many as eight. In some quarries there are only one man & one boy ...'.

Mr. Burt went on to tell Harris that all the Purbeck quarries were mines worked in much the same manner as those in Bath, a windlass worked by a horse drawing the stone up. He continued:

'In working the men underground have frequently to lie down & as the ground is always wet they easily contract rheumatism.' The unhealthy nature of the work was confirmed to Harris by George Burt, a small quarry owner, who told him: 'my health has been ruined by underground work in these quarries & made an old man of me before my time'. The men worked by candlelight underground. The quarry owners sold their stone

not to the consumer but to the stone merchants of Swanage, the chief of whom were Burt & Burt. Harris was struck by the fact that the Isle of Purbeck, like Portland, had 'many local peculiarities in regard to work and tenure. Thus I am informed that the men employed in the quarries must be natives of the 'Isle' – their fathers and themselves must be natives ...' He discovered that there were no Trades Unions and that quarrymen employed underground were paid day-work, the masons above piece-work.

After these interviews, Harris went out into the field to Cowleaze Quarry on a hill south of Swanage Station. This was worked by George Burt. He describes it as an 'inclined shaft about 100 feet in length; 60 feet vertical. This is about the largest quarry in the Purbecks. Four men are employed below in getting stone & 9 men above as masons ... The freestone is said to have a bed in it but ... I discovered that in this district they call a bed any plane along which the stone will readily split. It appears that the freestone is very refractory in the matter of being split parallel to the bedding & in fact it can easily be split along one point, where, however, there is no true bed'.

Harris found that the beds were not all worked in any one quarry and that generally the Purbeck stones were very hard. The freestone was said not to vegetate and to keep its colour for ever. The masons would as soon work it as Portland stone, although it was harder and more brittle and came off in larger flakes when tooled. The freestone was the principal building stone used in Bournemouth, Ryde, Cowes and Cardiff as well as locally, but not sent to London: 'the pavings & flags are used generally in the same places. The blue stone appears to be very hard'.

From Cowleaze, Harris made his way along the cliffs to see the Purbeck-Portland freestone quarries braving 'the dangerous coastguard path'. He descended to Dancing Ledge Quarry worked by James Webber: 'A boy prowling about told me that it was some months since any stone was raised but that 2 or 3 men used to be employed. The stone, as in all the other Purbeck-Portland quarries is dispatched mostly by sea; there being old-fashioned wooden cranes – old & rusty here – erected for dropping the stone alongside into barges, the ship standing out to sea a short distance'. Only two beds were worked.

Further along, and after noting Hadborough and Gallery

Quarries, neither of which was working, Harris came to Seacombe Quarry worked by Ambrose Bower. Bower said that he normally employed seven men but Harris 'only saw himself at work ... it is evident, however, from the appearance of the place, that when trade is brisk he has assistance. This quarry has been opened a very long time. Bower has had it in his family for over 100 years. The working is partly open; partly underground ...'. The quarry included an underground gallery. The custom was to blast off the cap, four to six feet thick; this was used to build sea-walls. Beneath was an eight foot depth of building stone, enormous blocks which had to be cut out and were sometimes sent to London.

Harris was 'very much impressed' by the freestone underground: 'In addition to it being in such a thick bed, & whilst vertical joints were few & far between, the stone looked uniform in grain & in tint. When one remembers that sea carriage is within a few yards, I must say I cannot understand why these quarries are not opened up more extensively, Bower, who seemed a hard - working man, & was making a stone pig-trough when I arrived ... told me he wanted more capital'. The stone outside was worked less extensively than that underground and there was another kind of stone known as 'Pond' freestone. This was the bottom foot of a five to six foot bed, the upper part not being used.

'The stone from the Seacombe quarry,' Harris continues, 'not only goes by ship alongside, but is also sent by road to Swanage & elsewhere. Mr. Bower told me the reason why the stone was so little known was because the high Purbeck ridge between his quarry & Swanage was a fearful precipitous road for horses to drag the stone up & that raised the expense considerably.' The visit finished satisfactorily: 'I climbed the steep hill behind Seacombe quarry & arrived at the platform, saw a large number of mines in the Purbecks with men very busy.'

Before leaving Harris noted 'two quarries going towards St. Alban's Head,' Halswell and Windspit, and 'there is a quarry called 'London Doors' a little way inland, but used only for estate purposes - private property.' The Tilly Whin caves at Durlston Head were in reality old quarries. Of six quarries in the vicinity (excluding London Doors and Tilly Whin), Seacombe was the only one in regular use.

The main tool mentioned by Harris is a three-quarter inch

steel bar called the paddle. This was used to drive in and loosen the beds in order to let the blocks down. These were driven in with hammers whose heads, weighing 14lbs, were rounded at each end. There were also wedges for forcing the stone asunder, shovels, bars, and pick-axes.

Stone sequences at Swanage with depths

- 30ft. Rubble stuff – no good.
 - 4ft. 'laning' vein.
Clay
 - 7ft. 'grey' bed-steps for cottages, etc.
Clay
 - 10ft. Thornback bed – for caps, kerbing, bed stone.
 - 2ft. Freestone – called 'Purbeck' freestone for general building, moulding, etc.
 - 7ft. Clay & bed stone.
 - 4ft. 'Down' vein for paving.
 - 1ft. 6ins. Clay.
 - 12ft. 'Cinder' stone – no good, blasted.
 - 1ft. 6ins. Clay.
 - 4ft. 'Cap & Feather' for kerbing.
 - 4ft. 'New vein' for steps, paving, square landings, etc. Stones 5 & 6 feet square & larger, obtained here. No workable beds below this.
- 'The above sequence holds good for Purbeck quarries generally; the 'laning' vein is missing towards Langton Matravers.'

MICHAEL MCGARVIE

CORRECTION: In vol XXXIII, Pt. 340, p. 333, the first line of the poem by Robert Gomersall should read 'Upon one that takes itt ill'. I apologise to the author of the article, and to readers, for this editorial oversight.

Dorset Ed.

NOTES & QUERIES Somerset & Dorset

Index to vols 23 - 32 1939/42 - 1986/90 Compiled by L. E. J. Brooke

This index consists mainly of titled articles, cross-referenced where necessary, and selectively expanded to include other subjects (e.g. armorial bearings). The style is similar to that of the index to volumes 1 - 22 which was published in 1942.

Copies are available from Hon. Secretary & Treasurer.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Desmond Hawkins (ed) *The Grove Diaries, The rise and fall of an English family, 1809-1925* (The Dovecote Press Ltd., 1995, Pp. 372, sketches, plan, numerous photographs, £25). In this splendidly produced volume, the editor, Desmond Hawkins, after twenty years of meticulous research, has produced four diaries written by various members of the Grove family who lived at Ferne House near Shaftesbury. Opening with the diary of Harriet, whose affaire d'amour with Shelley, the poet, ended in August 1810 when he eloped with another, Desmond Hawkins steers the reader adroitly through the persons and events mentioned in the diaries, until he progresses to the most dramatic diary of all, that of Thomas between 1855 and 1897, in which the depression in English agriculture brought about the financial ruin of the family. The book ends with the family's declining years chronicled by Agnes from 1882 to 1825.

Genealogical details of the Grove family and all relations and friends mentioned in the diaries are most carefully presented. Clearly, the editor's research has been most thorough, and he has anticipated the readers' questions with considerable skill. Notes of explanation are strategically placed throughout the text, and it is possible to follow the narrative of the family's fortunes without any difficulty. A comprehensive index completes the editorial work, and one cannot but feel that the diaries could not have been better produced, nor better edited, than with the combined efforts of the Dovecote Press, and that most experienced and talented of writers, Desmond Hawkins.

The Great Depression in agriculture after the 1870s largely took place because an excessively large share of net farm income was allocated to support the social and administrative institutions of the elite landowning class. These diaries, with their abundance of trivia and narrow family matters, amply illustrate the useless and unproductive lives that the landowners led. Even as the depression gripped, Walter Grove was fleetingly aware that his Sybaritic life was worthless, and commented to Agnes that his life was 'simply pleasure seeking with no particular aim'. Agnes, in turn, flattered herself that if she could be released from being a woman she would immediately create a fortune 'by some gigantic stroke of

genius'. They, like all their family, seemed not to have even the most elementary aptitude for business, and luxuriated in inherited wealth while ruin overtook them. The diary of Thomas Grove finally records the last days at Ferne House, where debts piled up but he continued to enjoy his leisured lifestyle. Financial ruin coincided with his death, and that left his family in dire straits, and his widow embittered.

Unfortunately, much editorial comment and interpretation of financial matters are based upon memoranda pages which are not reproduced for the readers. Thomas Grove, for example, suffered an abscess in early 1894, and the Bank refused him further credit. From the text, however, the reader is given nothing to indicate that these things occurred, and the entries, dealing principally with rents, give little support to the editor's comment that 'the financial outlook could hardly be more bleak'. Inevitably, one is led to reflect that perhaps the family matters of earlier diaries might have been published for those who delight in such things, but the more significant diary of Thomas Grove should have been the subject of a biography generous in quotation and footnote.

GJD

Hazel Eardley-Wilmot, *The Overland Way* (West Country Books, 1995. Pp. 31, 3 figs. £2.95). In this handy pocket-sized book, the author, who has this time gone beyond Exmoor's boundaries, suggests that there was an overland trade-route from Porlock to Weymouth Bay in existence in the Bronze Age. In support of this and backed up by her acknowledged mastery of pre-historic roads in the locality, she closely maps the entire way, giving reasons for her chosen route, marking the many barrows along the line and noting evidence of Bronze Age settlement. She couples the text with an Appendix, which usefully supplies grid references throughout, but in so doing irritatingly includes much already given in the main narrative.

Her study ('an investigation'), she admits, is speculative and, indeed, can describe a path as 'hypothetical'. Pending further discoveries, however, both route and purpose must be accounted 'not proven', but archaeologists and ramblers alike, armed with *The Overland Way*, can traverse this newest long-distance path with a fresh eye and added understanding.

DMMS

Ann Norbury, *Poole in old photographs* (Alan Sutton, 1995, Pp. 126, £7.99). Compilations of photographs to illustrate the past of any place are becoming increasingly popular. Perhaps this a painless way of learning something about the immediate past, of reviving old memories, or creating sources of wonder that familiar places did not always look as we know them today. Certainly, the appeal of such books depend not only upon the careful selection of photographs, but also upon the apt and well-informed captions which accompany the illustrations. This volume has a brief introduction to Poole, and the captions which follow are well-written and carefully composed so that they add information and invite closer examination of the photographs. Unfortunately, of course, the age of photography coincided, as Ann Norbury quite rightly points out, with the period of Poole's decline as a port and a centre of wealth, and little which the camera saw could evoke the glory of Poole's past. However, to those who know Poole well, this book will provide much to excite their memories, and to those who have never visited Poole it may well provoke curiosity and a wish to know more.

GJD

NOTES

Nonconformity in Tolpuddle, 1800 and 1868. From confidential reports on College livings relating to Tolpuddle, Dorset, in the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Christchurch, Oxford:

11 November 1800 (in Ms. Estates 23, fo. 284, also Treasury Books XIV b2).

The inhabitants (of Tolpuddle) are chiefly farmers and labourers. Of Dissenters, there is only one in the place, a woman, a new comer, just married to a man of the village.

July 1868 (in Ms. Estates 1/23 fo. 466).

Tolpuddle: 2009 acres and population of 401; agricultural and closely grouped round the church; fully employed; moral condition: very fair; Feeling towards the church is generally very good, and there is no bitterness among dissenters. About 40 are separated from the church and the chief tenant farmer is an Independant. A Wesleyan builder owns 2 acres in the parish on which stand 8 cottages and a Wesleyan chapel.

MERVYN MEDLYCOTT

Rev. C. W. Shickle, ed. and trans., *Ancient Deeds belonging to the Corporation of Bath, XIII-XVI Cent.* (Bath Records Society and Bath City Council, 1921. Cloth. 165 pp., 5 plates, 2 plans. £8 inc. p. & p. from The City Archivist, The Guildhall, Bath BA1 5AW).

This appeared in an edition of 500 numbered copies, of which a number of unsold examples have been found, thus its mention here. A total of 479 documents are translated or abstracted, and have a bearing not only on Bath but on families and places in Somerset and Dorset.

QUERIES

Susan O'Brien – Susannah Sarah Louise Fox-Strangways, daughter of the first Earl of Ilchester, was a close friend and correspondent of Sarah Napier. Lady Susannah caused an immense scandal when she eloped and married an impoverished Irish actor, William O'Brien, in 1764. After her father's anger had abated, one of the large houses at Stinsford (Dorset) became her home. She died in 1827. If any reader knows which house she lived in there, Mrs. S. Rands, Victoria Farm, Bradley Lane, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8LW, would be pleased to hear from them.

PERFORATED SPOON. I have a spoon, overall length 17 cm, bowl 4 x 5 cm, with double hook for hanging on the jar. It is chrome plate by F. W. Sheffield; I should think late Victorian, bought in Bridport about 1975. The bowl, slightly forward of centre, is pierced with a hole of about 5mm diameter, which appears to be part of the original design of the spoon. I haven't traced another specimen, or had its use explained, but suppose it is simply a device for lifting small solids, such as pearl onions, clear of a liquid: perhaps a modern 'spone to ete grene gynger with' (*SDNQ*, March, 95, 358).

J. H. P. PAFFORD

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