
NOTES & QUERIES

FOR
SOMERSET AND DORSET

EDITED BY

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

HERRICK

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61. FAIR DAYS IN SOMERSET IN 1840. Preceding papers on the fair and market days held in Somerset and Dorset covered the years up to 1815.¹ In 1840 the proprietors of the *Somerset County Gazette* newspaper presented gratuitously a 'General Directory for the County of Somerset' published by William Bragg of Taunton, to 'all persons ordering the *Somerset Gazette* for one year from the date of the order'. Two pages of the directory were devoted to listing the fairs that were held in Somerset.

Bragg's list follows with the original spelling: there are many differences between his list and Cooke's list for 1815. Three fairs were no longer advertised, but there are ten new fairs and an editorial note to this effect is placed in square brackets after Bragg's entry.

No commodities are now listed, except for the new fair at Berrow. The occasional entry has an indication of the day on which the weekly market was held.

The following are the
FAIRS IN SOMERSET.

Ashbrittle, Mon, before last Tues. in Feb.	Bridgwater, 2nd Thursday in Lent, June 24, October 2, 3, 4, Dec. 28, Thurs.
Ashcott, Jan. 9 [new]	Bristol, March 1, Sep. 1, ten days each. W. Th. F. S.
Ashill, Easter Wed.	Broadway, Wed. after Sep. 10.
Axbridge, Feb. 3, March 25. S.	Broomfield, Nov. 13.
Backwell, Sep. 21.	Bruton, April 23, Sep. 17, S.
Bagborough, May 23.	Buckland, Oct. 10.
Bagor-West, May 12.	Buckland St. Mary, Tuesday and Wed. after Sep. 20.
Banwell, Jan. 18, July 18, on Mon. if 18 be Sat.	Burnham, Trinity Monday.
Bath, Feb. 14, and July 10, W. S.	Burtle, 2nd. Monday in July [new]
Binegar, Whit. Mon. Tues. Wed. and Thurs.	Castle Carey, Tuesday before Palm Sunday, May 1, and Whit Tuesday, Tu.
Berrow, July 12 for cattle. [new]	Chard, 1st. Wed. in the months of May, Aug. and Nov. M.
Bishop's Lydiard, April 5.	Cheddar, May 1, Oct. 29.
Blagdon, last Friday in Aug.	
Bradford, Monday after the 3rd. Sun. in Sept. [new]	

- Chisselborough, last Thursday in October.
 Cock-Hill, Jan. 8.
 Congresbury, Sep. 14.
 Comb St. Nicholas, Wednesday after Dec. 10.
 Crewkerne, Sep 4.
 Crowcombe, 1st Friday in May, Monday after August 1, October 18.
 Curry Rivell, Monday after Lammass, August 3.
 Draycott, 2nd Mon in Sep. [*new*]
 Dulverton, July 10, Nov. 8. Sat.
 Dundry, Sep. 12.
 Dunster, Whit Mon. F.
 East Brent, last Tues. in Aug.
 Freshford, Sep. 6.
 Frome, Feb. 24, July 22, Sept. 14, Nov. 25. W.S.
 Glastonbury, Easter Wed.
 Tor Fair, Sep. 19, Oct. 11.
 Hinton St. George, April 3.
 Highbridge, 2nd Monday in April, Monday fortnight after Trinity Sun. 1st Monday in August [.] Monday before 30th Nov. 2nd Mon. in Dec. [*new*]
 Huntspill, June 29.
 Holloway, May 14.
 Ilminster, last Wednesday in Aug. S.
 Ilchester, Monday before Palm Sunday, July 2, August 2,.
 Keynsham, March 24, April 26, 27, Aug. 15. Th.
 Kilmington, Aug. 31.
 Kingsbrompton, May 6, October 22.
 Langeridge, August 2.
 Langport, 2nd Monday in Aug. last Monday but one in Sep. last Monday in Nov. and Mon. before Lent.
 Lansdown, August 10.
 Lidfordgreen, May 7, August, 12, Sep. 15.
 Limpsham, April 25.
 Lyng, 2nd Mon in Aug.
 Martock, 2nd Thurs, in Oct.
 Mark, Tues. before Whit.
 Sun. Monday before August 20 September 15,
 Mells, Monday fortnight after Whit Mon. Sep. 26.
 Milborneport, June 5, Oct. 28.
 Milverton, Oct. 10.
 Minehead, Whit Wed. W.
 Moorlinch, Aug. 10.
 Montacute, May 13.
 North Curry, 1st Tues. in Sep.
 North Petherton, May 1, Monday before Nov. 13.
 Nunny, Nov. 11
 Otterford, last Wed. in Oct.
 Pensford, May 6, Nov. 8
 Priddy, Aug. 21
 Phillips Norton, March 21, 27, May 1, August 30. Thurs.

Porlock, Thurs. before May 12, Oct. 9, Nov. 12.	Waterloo, June 18 [<i>new</i>]
Portbury, Whit Monday.	Watchet, Aug. 25. Sat
Queen Camel, Jun. 11, Oct. 25	Wedmore, Mon. before St James' day, 2nd Monday in Sep.
Redlinch, June 29	Wellington, Thurs. week bef. Easter
Road, Mon. aft. Aug. 28	Thurs., week before Whit. Sun. Thurs.
Shepton Mallett, Friday after Whit Mon, August 8, Fri.	Wellow, May 20, Oct. 17.
Shipham, Nov. 17 [<i>new</i>]	Wells, Jan. 4, May 14, July 6, Oct. 25, Nov. 30, Wed. Sat.
Somerton, last Monday in Jan.	Weston Zoyland, Sep. 9
Palm Tues. 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 9 weeks and 12 weeks after Palm Tues. Sep. 30, Nov. 8.	Williton, Trin. Mon.
Snowdon – Whit Thursday.	Whitedown, Whit Mon. and Tues
South Brent, 2nd Mon. in July, 2nd Mon. in Oct.	Wincanton, Easter Tues. Sept. 29
South Petherton, old Midsummer day.	Winsham, Whit Wed
Stoford, June 11, Sep. 28	Wiveliscombe, May 12, Sep. 25
Stogursey, May 14, Sep. 23	Woodbury Green, Monday before Whit Sun. [<i>new</i>]
Stogumber, May 6, Aug. 1	Woolavington, 1st Mon in Aug. Oct. 18
Stoke Under Hambden, Ap. 25	Yeovil, June 28, Nov. 17, but if Friday or Saturday then held on Mon. large Market every Friday
Stowey, Sep. 18, Tuesday	Yarlington – A[ug] 26
Street, Mon. se'nnight after St. Andrew's day [<i>new</i>]	
Sucklebridge, May 1, Oct. 14.	
Taunton, June 17, July 7, 8, 9 Great markets the last Sat. in every month	
Ubley, Oct. 4	

The fairs at Ruishton, St Decuman's and Wootton Courtney, listed by Cooke, are now omitted. New fairs were given for Ashcott, Berrow, Bradford, Burtle, Draycott, Highbridge, Shipham, Street, Waterloo and Woodbury Green.

A few instances of significant differences between Cooke's list of 1815 and Bragg's present list include:

Langport, Second Monday in Lent, fat cattle. June 29, black cattle and lambs; Oct. 5, cattle and colts; Nov. 22, cattle, hogs and sheep' became 'Langport, 2nd Monday in Aug. last Monday but one in Sep. last Monday in Nov. and Mon. before Lent.

The new entry in 1815 for 'Lansdown, Aug. 10, June 29, cattle and sundries; Oct. 5 and Nov. 22', was reduced to just 'Lansdown, August 10'; 'Milverton, Easter Tuesday, July 25, October 10, horses, cattle, cheese, &c' became just 'Oct. 10'; Otterford changed by a whole month from November 28 to the 'last Wednesday in Oct.'

South Petherton is now listed as 'old Midsummer day' instead of 'July 5' as it had been advertised from at least 1767 to 1815, which to the modern eye would seem to be a retrograde step in advertizing! The transition from the use of the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar in 1752 (88 years before) had resulted in eleven days being taken from September of that year. July 5 was derived from 24 June, the 'old Midsummer day', by adding eleven days; but the stick-in-the-mud proprietor of the South Petherton fair, who could have had no recollection of the 'Old Style' calendar, obviously wished the fair to be announced as if the calendar change had not happened – on 24 June. Had the date of the South Petherton fair been listed incorrectly for seven decades or more?

1. C.J.Brett, *SDNQ*, XXXV, Pt 359, 304-7; Pt 360, 358-62; Pt 362, 443-7; XXXVI, Pt 365, 124-32, Pt 367 188-92; Pt 369 pp. 308-313.

COLIN J. BRETT

62. SOME LIGHT ON THE PROVISIONAL CAVALRY. In *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries*, volume 33, September 1994, George Lanning gave an account of the raising of the Provisional Cavalry in Dorset, and asked if anything further was known on the subject. This article is an attempt to provide a partial answer to that question.

The function of the Provisional Cavalry was to supplement that of the Yeomanry. On 5th January 1798, the Secretary of War, Henry Dundas, wrote to Lord Grenville describing how he thought the different types of horsemen might be employed:

The regular cavalry should be reserved for regular attack on the enemy. The yeomanry cavalry should have their chief attention directed to preserve the internal quiet of the country. The provisional cavalry should be employed in driving the cattle, and such other business of a Hussar nature as may occur in each district.¹

The problem was that the Provisional Cavalry smacked of compulsion. The legislation introducing it² required those wealthy enough to supply

One Horseman clothed, and furnished as herein-after prescribed, and equipped, with One able and sufficient Mare or Gelding, fit for Military Duty, for and in respect of every Ten Horses, Mares, or Geldings, kept for the Purpose of Riding, or for drawing any Carriage ...

Owners of fewer horses were to be 'classed together and to provide a Horse and Horseman for every Ten [they possessed jointly]'. The cost of the Provisional Cavalry was to be met out of the tax on horses. To make matters worse, in 1796 there was a 10% increase in assessed taxes, while the tax on riding and carriage horses was doubled and a new tax imposed on working horses. This was a considerable burden in a rural county such as Dorset.

The selection of those who were actually to serve in the ranks was also resented – though by men of a different status. Provisional cavalymen were selected by ballot, which was why the Provisional Cavalry was sometimes referred to as the "horse militia". The men drawn were known as the 'principals' but, as with the Militia itself, they were entitled to find and pay for a substitute, which only served to fuel the sense of unfairness. No pay-lists survive for Dorset, but the Militia ballot lists⁴ afford a small sample (67 men) who can definitely be identified as having joined the Provisional Cavalry, and although far from complete, the occupations, where listed, are suggestive. Officers excepted, there were only three members of the gentry or professional classes: John Colson was a Wareham clergyman, 'Mr Worsley' was a doctor from Pimperne and there was 'Richard Thomas, Esquire' of Bloxworth. Unusually, these three all appear to have served in the ranks. Yeoman farmers might have been expected to be well represented, but only five are listed in the sample. There were several craftsmen such as a chair-maker, several cordwainers,

two carpenters and a mason. More than half (38) were agricultural labourers, the very class of persons whose services as substitutes it would have been easiest to obtain. There were also two servants, an under-butler, a groom and a carter, to whom the same would have applied.

In terms of organization it was intended that Provisional Cavalry units should have a minimum of 33 men and not more than 63 per troop. Each troop was to have a captain, one or two subalterns 'as they can be provided', a quartermaster sergeant, two other sergeants, two corporals and a trumpeter. The farrier was to be one of the privates. A regiment of four troops was to be commanded by a major, or by a lieutenant-colonel if of five or more troops. The Dorset regiment was to be four troops strong. There were to be 48 privates to a troop, and the total strength, including NCOs, was fixed at 214 men.

In fact, a return for the Dorset Provisional Cavalry for 16th February 1798 (by which time only about half the counties had managed to make a return) shows that the regiment had 223 men enrolled, and that 214 of them were present. In March, 222 men were mustered with the same number of horses. Another muster took place between September 3rd and 5th, and the return, signed by Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, shows that the major, one of the captains and one lieutenant, plus six men, were absent with leave, and that eight men were absent without leave. 210 men were present, so, including the 14 absent men, the regiment stood at 224, and still needed half a dozen men to raise the strength to the 230 then projected. There were 206 mares and geldings present, 18 having been rejected. From the information regarding other counties, it is clear that numbers of horses were rejected as unfit. The unpopularity of the horse tax and of the Provisional Cavalry itself probably led some people to pass off their least good animals.

It is not known where these musters took place. The 'provisional' quarters for assembly were to be at Blandford and Wareham while a 'supplementary' place of assembly was to be Wimborne, all, it will be noted, in the western part of the county. It was intended that the troopers should be armed with a sword and a long pistol with a dozen cartridges at Government expense. They were very much seen as irregular cavalry as these instructions made clear, '...they must understand they cannot be too lightly equipped or have too little baggage if called into the Field, as parade is no part

of their business.' They would need only a canteen, nosebag, small corn-sack, haversack, a billhook for every three men, a wallet for a spare shirt and a greatcoat or blanket behind them.⁵

Given that the act establishing the Provisional Cavalry was passed in November 1796, and that the meeting of the Dorset Lieutenancy to give effect to the act took place shortly afterwards, the county seems to have been somewhat dilatory in appointing officers to lead the new force. It was not until the first week of July 1797 that nine commissions were issued and as late as Tuesday, 17th September, that the *London Gazette* published the 'Commissions in the Provisional Cavalry for the County of Dorset, signed by the Lord Lieutenant [George, Lord Rivers] with the Approbation of His Majesty.' The officers were Robert Williams, Esquire, who was to be lieutenant-colonel commandant, and Frederick Thomas, Earl of Stafford, who was to be major. The three captains were Edmund Morton Pleydell, Esquire, John Bragg, Esquire, and Thomas Pickard, Esquire. There were four lieutenants, all denominated as Gentlemen: Charlton Byam Wollaston, Richard Comyns Cole, Richard Bridge and Thomas Fox.⁶

The presence of the Earl of Stafford is interesting, especially as he was not placed in command, since although the family owned land in Dorset, their chief estate was at Colston Basset in Nottinghamshire. Frederick Thomas was the 3rd Earl, and died without issue in August 1799, shortly after the Provisional Cavalry was disbanded. He was 65 at the time of his commission; a ripe age for service as an irregular cavalryman. After the disbandment Pleydell transferred to the volunteer infantry and commanded the 3rd Battalion Dorsetshire Volunteers. Wollaston and Pickard joined the Yeomanry and both Fox and Bragge joined the independent yeomanry unit known as the Sadborow Troop.

The officers of the Provisional Cavalry were required to sign a deposition stating that they were suitably qualified to hold their positions, which essentially consisted of a declaration that they were owners of land or property, that is to say held a stake in the country. Thomas Pickard for example stated that

I ... do hereby declare that I am seized or possessed either in Law or Equity to and for my own use and Benefit consisting of Lands Tenements, and Hereditaments as doth qualify me to Act as a Captain in the Provisional Cavalry of the said County of Dorset ... And that such Premises

are situate lying and being in the Parish of Bloxworth in the County of Dorset.⁷

The presence of some of the Somerset Provisional Cavalry in Bridport, when the false invasion alarm occurred on 1st April 1799, is accounted for by the fact that the Somerset unit had been embodied, that is to say mobilized as an organized regiment, in 1797. Somerset was one of only a few counties this applied to. (The others were Berkshire, Kent, Suffolk, Northumberland and Worcester). Since Somerset had also raised Yeomanry, the county must have been particularly well organized in terms of raising the men and horses, and the regiment must have attained a high level of efficiency.

The War Office quartering records show that as early as November 1798, eight troops of the Somerset regiment were stationed in Dorset. Four troops were in Weymouth, spread between the barracks and the inns of the town, two were in Wareham, and two in Bridport, again in both the barracks and the town. This arrangement went on until May 1799 (though in April a detachment was sent to Christchurch). In June the dispositions were changed. Two troops were left in Weymouth, two sent to Sherborne, with one each on Bridport and Wareham. The remaining troops were posted back into Somerset, at Yeovil and Crewkerne. By August, three troops were spread between Sherborne and Yeovil. Two were in Bridport, one at Wareham and another at Shaftesbury. The remaining troop seems also to have been in Dorset, but the name is illegible in the original document.⁸

It is from the surviving Somerset records⁹ that it is possible to tell the pay-rates for embodied Provisional Cavalry in 1800 (by which time the Dorset regiment had been disbanded):

Lieutenant- Colonels	£1	3s
Majors	19s	3d
Captains	14s	3d
Lieutenants	9s	
Cornets	8s	
Quarter-Master Sergeants	5s	6d
Sergeants	2s	11d
Corporals	2s	4½d
Trumpeters	2s	4d
Privates	2s	

The Provisional Cavalry was both short-lived and unpopular. Even William Windham, the Secretary at War, remarked in a speech that ‘The Provisional Cavalry passed over the country like a blight. It was a pleasant conceit to make every man mount another’s horse, till at length, when the men and horses were all brought together, no man knew how to mount, and so they all separated ...’¹⁰

It was also largely unnecessary. The Dorset Yeomanry came into being, originally as the Volunteer Rangers, in 1794. As a voluntary unit, there were no difficulties either in officering the regiment or filling its ranks, and it rapidly became a highly efficient body, charged amongst other things with ‘driving the country’ in the event of invasion, which had been seen as a provisional cavalry function.

From the lack of any mention in the War Office quartering records, it is probable that although the Dorset Provisional Cavalry was occasionally mustered, it was never actually embodied. It was stood down in May 1799. This was done by county subdivisions at musters in the presence of ‘the Deputy Lieutenants and Justices of the Peace then and there to be assembled’. On 13th April 1799, for example, Edward Boswell, the Clerk to the General Meetings of the Lieutenancy, issued an order for the final muster of the provisional cavalry in the Beaminster subdivision.¹¹ This took place at Beaminster on 7th May, a ceremony no doubt repeated in other towns across the county at about the same time.

The Provisional Cavalry remains a shadowy organization, and further information on the subject would be welcome.

1. Historical MSS Commission Report on the MSS of J. B. Fortescue, Esquire, preserved at Dropmore, volume 4 (1894), 48.
2. 37 Geo III c.6.
3. S. Dowell, *A History of Taxation and Taxes in England*, volume 2, 1883, 208.
4. *Index to the Militia Ballot Lists 1759 to 1799*, 2 volumes (Sherborne, 1999).
5. National Archives, WO 1/942, folios 13 – 681.
6. Bragge’s commission is located at Dorset History Centre, D/MHM/8740 and Pleydell’s commission at DHC/D/TRD/x1.
7. DHC/QDA (M) 2/2. Documents relating to officers in the Militia, Local Militia and Provisional Cavalry. Bragge’s and Pleydell’s declarations are also in this file.
8. NA, WO 17/2784, Quarters of Regular and Fencible Troops.
9. NA, WO 24/605. War Office Establishments for 1800.
10. Quoted in J. W. Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, volume 4, part 2, (1915), 891-2.
11. DHC, D1/11730/4.

DAVID CLAMMER

63. GLASTONBURY'S URTEXT. It has been said that the 'idea of an "old British Church" ... senior to and independent of Rome' is 'not supported by any document ... except one which is forged'.¹ Presumably this refers to what might be called Glastonbury's *urtext*, or rather to a misleading 19th century version of the 'certain royal island' passage from the *Vita Sancti Dunstani* (compiled by an anonymous 'Saxon priest', termed 'B'²) to which a bogus provenance had long been ascribed. For during the Reformation era, authorship by St Augustine of Canterbury was asserted and the claim that the passage was extracted from one of his 'lost' letters to Pope St Gregory the Great³ became generally accepted, even by Catholic writers.⁴

In translation, this description of '*Glaestonia*' dating back at least to the time when Dunstan was archbishop of Canterbury (960-88) runs: 'It was there that the first converts to the Christian religion discovered with God's guidance, an ancient church, **not built by human skill**, but divinely prepared for human salvation; later the Maker of Heaven proved by many miracles and sacred mysteries that He had consecrated it to Himself, and to Mary the Holy Mother of God'.⁵ In the view of the saint's latest biographer, his first 'biographer' ('B') is here 'recording a well-established Glastonbury oral tradition, possibly [heard] from Dunstan himself'.⁶

Described by one modern, media-celebrity historian as a 'haunting' and 'remarkable passage in which Glastonbury emerges from darkness into the light of history',⁷ this subsequently much reworked source- providing the earliest reflection on 'the mystery of the origin of the Old Church'⁸ and the wellspring of a number of theories⁹ - has been the victim not only of poor translation,¹⁰ but of misinterpretation,¹¹ misrepresentation,¹² and even of manipulation by myth-making authors with their own agendas, over the centuries.¹³

It is interesting to trace the stages by which the original foundation 'myth' transmitted by 'B' has undergone subtle changes. Firstly in *De Antiquitate*, the early 13th century (?) monastic scribe who expanded the work of William of Malmesbury recorded that it was the preachers Phagan and Deruvian (names derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth for the missionaries supposedly sent by Pope Eleutherius in 166) who 'came to the island of Avalon, where by God's guidance they found an old church (*ecclesia vetusta*) **built by the hands of the disciples of Christ** and prepared by God (a

Deo paratam cf. *coelitus paratam* in 'B') for man's salvation ...'.¹⁴ In the 14th century *Cronica* of John of Glastonbury this became: 'No other human hands made the church of Glastonbury, but **Christ's disciples founded and built it** by angelic doctrine' but 'the High Priest of the heavens himself, the maker and redeemer of humankind, our Lord Jesus Christ, in his true presence dedicated it to himself and his most holy mother';¹⁵ whilst in its somewhat later 'pre-prologue' we find the rather more ambiguous statement that 'Jesus here dedicated ground and church'.¹⁶ What exactly was meant, and what should be understood, by these claims is a matter of conjecture. However, G. Ashe has commented: 'What is morally certain is that if the belief' that Christ had visited this isle 'had existed in the Middle Ages ... Glastonbury's monks would have exploited such a stupendous claim. They never even hint at it'.¹⁷

Finally in the 19th century the text was doctored to read that the church was 'constructed by no human art but **by the Hands of Christ Himself**'. This version is first found in the work of a proponent of a distinctively British national Christianity, R.W. Morgan,¹⁸ and has been cited since in a succession of fundamentally flawed publications of this school of pseudo-history.¹⁹ As A. Smith has put it with reference to the evolution of the so-called 'holy legend' of a visit by Christ: 'the story once conceived gave a new [literal] meaning, hitherto quite unsuspected, to earlier material and thus created its own pedigree'.²⁰

The ecclesiastical archaeologist W. Rodwell has commented that 'each generation has added a little to the [foundation] story making it ever more self contradictory and fantastic ... until the ultimate was reached in relatively modern times when it was claimed that the first church at Glastonbury was built by Christ the carpenter ...'.²¹ More recently an even more incredible idea has been postulated in a work of apparently serious scholarship; that Jesus not only came to Glastonbury, and there 'constructed a house' - 'as a builder who was also "The Builder"' (the *Coelorum fabricator* of 'B', or rather of St Augustine's 'letter' as the author presumes) - but that he had 'had to return in his physical body to the land on whose green mountains he had walked in his etheric body aeons before'.²²

1. G. Ashe, *Avalonian Quest* (London, 1982), 105.

2. According to D. Dales (personal communication) his identity 'remains a mystery ... Lapidge is the best authority on textual and linguistic grounds'; see M. Lapidge, *B and the Vita S Dunstani*, in N. Ramsey *et al*, *St. Dunstan, his life, times and cult* (Woodbridge, 1992), 247 ff.

3. Described as 'this surely apocryphal document [which] filled what was early perceived to be an awkward gap in the story of [Augustine's] mission [i.e. a reference to the cradle of British Christianity] by A. Smith, 'And did those feet...?': the 'Legend' of Christ's Visit to Britain, in *Folklore* vol.100:1 919890, 76, though he then states incorrectly that 'William of Malmesbury knew the document'.
4. Seemingly first asserted by Matthew Parker in his *On the Antiquity of the British Church* (London, 1572), 3- but did he acquire this idea from the *Collectanea satis copiosa* compiled by E. Fox and T. Cranmer as royal propaganda in 1530?; see J. Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988), 128 for reference to this collection of anti-papal sources; cf. N Davis, *The Isles* (London, 1999), 220: 'If early Protestant historians were interested in anything relating to the origins of Christianity in the Isles, it was in the legends which hinted that the Gospel might have been imported direct from the Holy Land. The legend of Joseph of Arimathea coming to Glastonbury is a case in point. For Protestant polemicists, the idea that Rome was completely irrelevant ... was very attractive'. The attribution of the 'royal island' passage to St Augustine, 'the apostle of the English', was however accepted by the Catholic historian, Richard Broughton, *The ecclesiasticall historie of Great Britain* (Douai, 1633), vol. 1, 102, although he cites it in support of a Petrine mission to Britain prior to one by Joseph of Arimathea; and this line was followed by the Catholic antiquary, Charles Eyston, *Little Monument to the once famous abbey and borough of Glastonbury* (ms. 1716; published anonymously in T. Hearne, *History and Antiquities of Glastonbury*, Oxford, 1722) reprinted in R. Warner, *History of the Abbey of Glaston* (Bath, 1826) appendix 1, x: 'about the year 605 St Austin the monk ... came to the Abbey ... nor must we forget to acquaint the reader that St Austin, by his epistle, acquainted St Gregory with what hath been hitherto related as a tradition received in those days, as we are assured by Mr Cressy in the 2nd book of his Church History, cap.7- a reference to the Benedictine scholar, Dom Serenus Cressy (1605-74), a convert from Anglicanism [1646], author of a *Church History of Britany or England* [bk.1, 1668].
5. A slightly amended version of the translation found in D. Dales, *Dunstan, saint and statesman* (Cambridge, 1988), 10, which includes two interpolations found in William of Malmesbury, *De Antiquitate*. The original Latin runs 'in ea siquidem ipsius loca primi catholicae legis neophitae antiquam Deo dicante reppererunt aeccliesiam, nulla hominum arte constructam, immo humanae salutis coelitus paratam; quam postmodum Ipse coelorum fabricator multis miraculorum gestis multisque misteriorum virtutibus, hanc Sibi sanctaeque genetrici Suae Mariae consecratam fore demonstravit': see W Stubbs, ed., *Memorials of St Dunstan* (Rolls Series, LXIII, 1874) 6-7.
6. D. Dales, in a personal communication, which is gratefully acknowledged.
7. M. Wood, *Glastonbury, the Grail and the Isle of Avalon*, in *In search of England, journeys into the English past* (London, 2000) 56-61.
8. M. Wood, *ibid*.
9. E.g. P. Ashdown, *Dunstan, handbook for the millennium* (Glastonbury, 1987), 12: 'The earliest version of the legend connecting our Lord with Glastonbury, still familiar in Blake's *Jerusalem*, is provided by B'; cf. R. Bush, *Somerset, the complete guide* (Wimborne, 1994), 105: 'Tales of visits by Christ and the Virgin Mary date back little more than a century'. It would seem that it was L.S. Lewis who first made the connexion between 'Jerusalem' [the poem to Blake's great 1804 poetic epic, *Milton*] and Glastonbury, now a potent national myth, found in varying versions, e.g. *The Daily Telegraph* (10.04.08): 'The verses of one of the country's best loved hymns' are 'thought to have been based on a legend that Jesus came to England as a young boy and visited the town of Glastonbury, Somerset, where he established a second Jerusalem' [*sic*]. For a thorough examination of this persistent 'belief' see A. Smith, 'And did those feet...?', 63-81, which suggests 'the 1870s as the likeliest decade of [its] origin'.
10. E.g. J. Carley, *Glastonbury Abbey* (Woodbridge, 1988) 92, which states 'there was a tradition, first recorded c.1000 in the anonymous biography of St Dunstan, that the first preachers of Christ in Britain had found at Glastonbury a church built by no skill of man, and consecrated by Our Lord himself to the honour of his Virgin Mother'- a very imprecise précis which fails to do justice to the richness of the original text.
11. E.g. Wood, *Glastonbury*, 56-61 'Across a thousand years it has had an influence either directly or indirectly on writers from Geoffrey of Monmouth and Thomas Malory, to [William]

- Blake' – which is simply not the case! - 'as far as we know this text is the beginning of the Glastonbury myth ... the most potent one; the tale which became Blake's *Jerusalem* ... the legend that Jesus himself had set foot in Britain', based on the literalist argument that 'built by no human skill ... of course means by Christ himself'. Incidentally, Wood also suggests that 'the supposition must surely be that the main source' of this 'the first and greatest of the Glastonbury legends' [*sic*] was 'none other than Dunstan himself'.
12. E.g. A. Lewis, *Christ in Cornwall?* (1948) reprinted in J. Matthews, *A Glastonbury Reader* (Glastonbury, 1991), 191-2 which suggests that 'the writer is clearly copying an older ms' and that William of Malmesbury 'distinctly says here that this paragraph has already been quoted by St Edmund and St Augustine', whereas *De Antiquitate* - which runs '*unus Britonum historiographus, prout apud sanctum Edmundum itemque apud sanctum Augustinum apostolum vidimus, ita exorsus est ...*' ['In the church of St Edmund and also in the church of St Augustine, the apostle of the English, we have seen a work by ... an historian of the Britons, which begins thus ...'] is clearly a reference to the monastic libraries at St Edmundsbury and St Augustine's abbey, Canterbury; cf. the faulty rendering of '*apud ...*' as 'in the case of St Edmund and in the case of St Augustine' in F. Lomax, trans. *The Antiquities of Glastonbury by William of Malmesbury* (London, 1908; Llanerch, 1992), 5.
 13. E.g. G. Lewis, author of *Did Jesus come to Britain?* (2008), who in an interview on BBC Radio 4 (7/06/08) reiterated the myths that as St Augustine wrote of an ancient church consecrated by Jesus at Glastonbury this, *inter alia*, is evidence that He did come here! For a 'New Age' [albeit somewhat ambiguous] perspective see J. Michell, *New Light on the Ancient Mystery of Glastonbury* (Glastonbury, 1992), especially 88,90,95-96, which suggests that 'the tradition of Jesus' presence at Glastonbury is certainly implied in the earliest chronicles, beginning with the Life of St Dunstan', and that this 'estoric' foundation story of a church 'not built by any human hands ... approached more nearly to the heart of the mystery, whereas the later 'more rational story' about St Joseph, more suited to 'children and simple good souls who like religious history to be credible and personalised' is a 'pleasant parable; however Michell is also both critical of 'certain disagreeable writers' [amongst whom this writer must presumably be numbered!] who 'have asserted that the name of St Joseph was unknown at Glastonbury before he was arbitrarily written into the history of the Abbey by unscrupulous medieval monks', and of the view that the Joseph tradition is 'an allegory' pointing back to the 'secrets of the Celtic mysteries' that 'Celtic Christianity' incorporated.
 14. J. Scott, *The Early History of Glastonbury, an edition translation and study of William of Malmesbury's De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie* (Woodbridge, 1981), 49.
 15. J. Carley, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: an edition, translation and study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie* (Woodbridge, 1985), 9.
 16. *Ibid.*, 3.
 17. Ashe, *Avalonian Quest*, 96-7; cf. his *King Arthur's Avalon* (London, 1957; new edition Glastonbury, 2007), 284: 'no medieval Benedictine would have dared affirm such a thing'.
 18. R.W. Morgan, *St Paul in Britain, or the origins of British as opposed to papal Christianity* (London, 1860), *passim*, but especially 123; in is significant however that this makes no mention of the 'holy legend' of a visit by Jesus, and as A. Smith, '*And did those feet...?*' 81 observes: 'In his anxiety to establish the independent apostolic origins of the British Church, Morgan would certainly have used this story had he known it'.
 19. Notably L.S. Lewis, *St Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury, or the Apostolic Church of Britain* (London, 1922); see 4th ed (1927), 29-30, where his dubious scholarship is revealed in his convoluted argument that this 'remarkable testimony' of 'St Augustine, writing AD 600 to Pope Gregory (*Epistolae ad Gregorium Papam*) shows how the belief of the founding of the Church of St Mary at Glastonbury by the Disciples of Christ [i.e. Joseph and his companions] had grown into something more! Subsequently has been used as a proof text in G. Jowett, *The Drama of the Lost Disciples* (London, 1961) where Jesus is said to have built 'a wattle altar' (*sic*!) at Glastonbury; and more recently, via C. Dobson, *Did Our Lord visit Britain* (1936), 27, in G. Strachan, *Jesus the Master Builder: Druid Mysteries and the Dawn of Christianity* (1998) *passim* but especially 48, 282.
 20. Smith, '*And did those feet...?*', 77.
 21. W. Rodwell and G. Bentley, *Our Christian Heritage* (London, 1984), 10, although he then

continues: 'This in turn inspired William Blake (1757-1827) to write his rousing hymn, *Jerusalem*, in which the "mountains green" are the Mendips and Poldens, and "England's pleasant pastures" are the Somerset levels' [sic], perhaps misled by Dom David Knowles, OSB, who in *The Religious Orders in England*, vol.3 (Cambridge, 1959), 382, wrote over-romantically: 'No other landscape in all England carried so great a weight of legend ... on the pleasant pastures of Mendip had shone the countenance of the Child Jesus', cited in P. Rahtz and J. Watts, *Glastonbury, Myth and Archaeology* (Stroud, 2003), 49, where this passage is described as 'rather uncharacteristic of this great historian'.

22. Strachan, *Jesus, the Master Builder*, 48, 282.

M.J. PROTHEROE

64. TWO SMALL ECCLESIASTICAL ESTATES IN WELLS. PART I - INTRODUCTION AND THE PRECENTOR'S PROPERTIES.

Introduction

All the canons of Wells Cathedral were allocated prebends somewhere in the diocese to support them. In addition two had small estates in Wells itself. They were the two concerned with services and music in the cathedral, the precentor or chaunter and his deputy the succentor or sub-chaunter. Their status was different. The precentor was one of the five dignitaries who made up the inner circle of cathedral government. In fact he was second in status to the dean and they were the only two to have deputies drawn from amongst the canons. The role of succentor was far more variable in national terms. In some cathedrals such as Lichfield he was the principal vicar choral rather than a canon. Nevertheless, it was in some ways more logical for him to have local property as he and the sub-dean were required to be in residence at Wells so that the vital functions of the cathedral could continue even if the dean or precentor were away. But his estate extended well beyond Wells while that of the precentor was solely within the city.

After the Reformation services became simpler and music less elaborate so the need for a succentor faded. In 1548 the succentor John Goodman became dean and combined the posts. His successors continued the practice or, during the long 16th century periods of lay and absentee deans, the sub-dean was also nominally succentor. Eventually the office was suppressed and the properties became a perquisite of the dean under the name of the Sub-Chantry Manor.

Origins

Unfortunately, these are unclear. There were incremental adjustments as the grants of a minority of property survive. The succentor's holding was in place at least in part by the mid-13th century. In contrast the earliest record of the precentor's holdings is of 1370. Holders of both posts and other canons acquired Wells houses as individuals. So some may have left such holdings for their successors.

Sources

These are slightest for the precentor and our knowledge is based on two main documents, the Commonwealth government's survey of confiscated church property of 1649¹ and an estate survey with individual plans of 1828.² The cathedral archives do contain a document of c.1690 described as Dr Healey's terrior of the chaunter's lands in Wells. Unfortunately, this merely repeats the information of 1649 with the addition of 'late of' before the name of the 1649 tenant.³ These lists are supplemented by a handful of individual transactions in the county record office.

Rather more survives for the succentor. The grant of the succentor's house and transactions involving another property paying a rent to the cathedral escheator were held in the cathedral collection and published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission.⁴ In 1539 John Goodman, when only succentor, leased his lands to Thomas Fulwell, yeoman, for 90 years at £8 17s.⁵ It should be stressed that this sum was not just from the Wells properties but the whole estate which comprised between forty and fifty items spread around Somerset but with concentrations for example at North Wootton. Fulwell was also to pay 12s 6d p.a. to the cathedral escheator, 4s for the Lady Chapel service and £4 for the morning mass priest.

Such arrangements (known as farming) were not uncommon at the time. The chapter then farmed the New Works and a set of properties left it by John Oram. The owner should have security of income without worries on vacancies, repairs, etc while the farmer looked to extract a good profit from the tenants. However, the arrangements did not always work smoothly. There was litigation on the succentor's estate in 1559 and 1660. The chapter abandoned such arrangements by 1587/8⁶ but they continued for what became the Sub-Chantry Manor. Leases of the whole manor survive for 1539, 1629⁷, 1680⁸, 1707⁹, 1719¹⁰ and 1833.¹¹

There are also a list of tenants of c.1660,¹² the particulars of the sale of the farm in 1770¹³ and a surrender of 1809.¹⁴ Finally in 1854 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners sold the manor to John D. Sherston. Sherston papers include an estate book of 1806 and the actual sale that includes a series of detailed plans.¹⁵ The main bundles of county record office papers for the manor also include various letters concerning the renewal of leases and rentals.¹⁶ Unfortunately the latter are either partial or damaged. Similarly, the actual leases of the estate are written in general terms. Prior to 1806 only the sales particulars of 1770 provide individual details. They also mention a missing lease of 1750. So details on Wells properties are limited. However, a list of estate lessees after Fulwell can be given. They comprise John Hunt and John Nicholas in 1629, William Coward in 1660, William Coward, junior, in 1707, his son-in-law George Hamilton in 1719, Edward Hippisley in 1750 and George Tucson (or Tuxon) in 1771. By 1784 his interest had passed to Peter Sherston as his rental of that year survives.¹⁷ Thereafter the Sherstons controlled it until the final sale. Peter D. Sherston and John D. Sherston were successively in control. For a brief time one of their Doddington cousins was also involved.

The Precentor's Properties

These were 10 in number and located in the best streets in Wells. By 1649 rents were well behind market value. The Commonwealth surveyors suggested that the total yield of £7 7s could be increased to £51 7s, an increase of 598%. The properties will now be considered in turn.

9 Chamberlain Street (approximately)

In 1649 this was described as a tenement and garden held by John Taylor *alias* Buxton on a lease to Agnes his wife. The lease was for three lives at 1s 8d p.a. which the surveyors thought should be increased to £3 0s 4d. In 1828 it was the gighouse and stables to Mrs Woollam's premises the freehold portion of which adjoined them on the east. The dimensions were a breadth of 31ft on the frontage narrowing to 26ft at the rear and a depth of 83ft.

10 Chamberlain Street.

This was always let for three lives at 16s p.a. In 1649 William Baron held it and the suggested improved rent was £4. The 1828 survey reveals a site similar to the modern extent. Maria Whithers held it on a lease of 1823. In 1848 the Ecclesiastical

Commissioners leased it to Peter Lewis Parfitt.¹⁸ In 1862 Eliza Parfitt mortgaged her interest in this and nos. 6 and 8 adjoining to William Dove.¹⁹ Dove actually occupied this house.

12 Chamberlain Street.

This was always leased for three lives at 12s. In 1649 William Bayley held it and the suggested rent was £4. The 1828 survey again reveals the same extent as today. George Rich held it.

14 Chamberlain Street but originally with a rear garden extending further west.

In 1649, Arthur Alderley, vicar choral, held it for three lives at 4s p.a. The suggested rent was £3. In 1727 Robert Creyghton, the then precentor, leased a garden plot 137 ft by 25ft to Hon. George Hamilton²⁰ (see next below). The main house must then have been in poor state as it is described as a tenement or cottage. The 1828 survey shows the modern plot (although with a note on the detached portion). George Rich also held it on a lease of 1800 that was for three lives at an increased rent of 15s 6d.

Detached garden from last.

As stated this was leased separately from 1727. The reason was the desire of the Hon. George Hamilton to open up a view of the Mendips from his mansion across the street. To this end he acquired freehold or leasehold interests in three frontage properties and two gardens to their rears. He then cleared and planted the area. He paid 6d p.a. for a three life lease of this portion. In 1770 he was forced to sell. This parcel with his house and the rest of the cleared vista passed to Zachary Bayly and then Robert Tudway.²¹ Then in 1810 it was leased to Thomas Eyre and soon after his widow bought the freehold. Unfortunately, a note on the 1828 survey says in 1812 while a deed of 1840 says in 1815. Thereafter it remained part of the grounds of the mansion at 11 Chamberlain Street.²²

21 High Street but with larger plot

This group of properties was probably in place by 1550. Certainly the precentor had an interest in the shambles and was paying the town for a gutter (probably a water supply). In 1649 no. 21 was leased to Robert Rowley, esq., as part of a unit described as three tenements with three shambles (stalls) adjacent. In other words he leased 21, 23 and 25 plus adjoining stalls in the middle of the street. He had a three life lease and paid £2 13s 4d which the

surveyors considered should be £20. In 1747 it was still leased with 23 but 25 had been separated. The description to convey this is cumbersome still being based on the early form. So it is three tenements, three shambles and a void place formerly a shambles but excepting a tenement where John Bathe, tailor, lives. The accommodation for this last is then detailed (see 25 below). The tenant was John Moss acting as trustee of the will of Jacob Worrall, apothecary. The rent for the two properties was £2 6s. Then in 1752 John Moss, son and heir of the trustee, and Joshua Cousell, apothecary of Gloucester and Worrall's great grandson, assigned the lease to William Rood, goldsmith. Counsell receives £6 and Moss 5s. In c.1756 the corporation cleared the middle row in High Street and the shambles vanished. In 1828 John Lax held the two properties and a note records that he took a further lease in 1833. The rent of this property only was now £2 6s 8d. The plan shows that the property extended across the rears of 23 and 25 to the west and 19 plus a part of 17 to the east. The old western boundary is lost and 17 and 19 have encroached on part of the eastern extension although the old limits could still be traced on the 1886 Ordnance Survey.²³

23 High Street

In 1649 this was leased with both its neighbours and later it was leased with 21 (see above). It was only in 1828 that a separate rent is stated. It was then 9s 4d p.a.

25 High Street but with a plot only 56ft deep

This was let with 21 and 23 in 1649. It was separated at some time prior to 1747 when Robert Creighton, precentor, leased it to Maria Gallington, spinster. Leases were for three lives at 7s p.a. In 1747 it was described as four lower rooms, two chambers and two cocklofts. John Bathe, tailor, occupied it. In 1828 T. Robins leased it with James Oxley as his subtenant.²⁴

48 High Street but with a larger plot extending behind 46; formerly the Goat's Head Inn.

Abutments of town owned 46 show that the precentor owned this by 1427. In 1649 it was described as a messuage or cottage and backside (yard). It was leased to John Wookey for three lives at 13s 4d. The suggested rent was £6 6s 8d. From 1689-1700 the parish rate book regularly lists Widow Walker at the Goat's Head. Formerly, 42 also had a larger garden adjoining this. From 1740-1778 its descriptions have a variation on the inn's name calling

it the Three Goats' Heads. In 1828 Thomas Young held it on a lease of 1814.²⁵

12 and 14 Sadler Street

The origins of these properties were in the 14th century. When the cathedral precinct was walled a strip of land was left between the wall and the east side of the street. This was gradually used for small buildings, some shops but also the bishop's guildhall and lock-up. In 1369/70 the cathedral escheator first records these premises. They are described as newly built and intended to yield 6s 8d for the obit of Robert Bugleygh. By 1372/3 the precentor held them and paid 6s 8d. In 1380-2 they were let to Dom Walter Cammel (then precentor) for only 1d. By 1502 they seem to have been accepted as part of the precentor's estate. In that year Thomas Cornish, Bishop of Tino and precentor of Wells, followed Bishop Bekynton's example. The latter had already straddled the wall and encroached on the churchyard for his developments. Cornish and his successors were now granted a lease on a vacant piece of land east of the churchyard wall. In 1504/5 the communar received a rent of 1s 4d for 'an empty spot in the west of the churchyard at the back of his (the precentor's) tenement in Sadler Street'.²⁶ The two roof ridges seen in the side elevation reflect this origin. This extension created the present plot size and by 1649 two separately leased properties occupied the site. They are covered in turn below.

12 Sadler Street

This was leased for three lives at £1 6s 8d p.a. In 1649 it was described as two tenements held by Robert Hill and late of Hugh Erbury. The suggested rent was £6. In 1699/1700 Robert Creighton leased it to Edmund Frith, woollen-draper. In 1701 Frith mortgaged it to Mary Warmall, widow. In 1701 they agreed to assign the lease to Samuel Walter, goldsmith. He paid Mary Warmall £92 7s to discharge the mortgage and Frith £17 13s. By this time the property was a single tenement or house. In 1828 Mr Backhouse held it but notes add two later leases, in 1828 to Mr W. Dorvell and 1834 to J.C. Parsons.²⁷

14 Sadler Street

This was leased for three lives at £1 p.a. In 1649 William Davison held it and the suggested rent was £5. In 1828 J.E. Lewis held it and a note adds that he renewed his lease in 1834. In 1860 Lewis' interests in this, 1 Market Place and land at Wookey were

put up for auction. This is described as held for two lives aged 41 and 43.²⁸

1. Somerset Record Office (SRO), DD/CC 114096.
2. Ibid, DD/CC 5060.
3. Wells Cathedral Archives, ADD 2677.
4. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells* (London) 1907 & 1914, i 106; ii ch.101 568, ch.104 568-9.
5. SRO, DD/SAS SE127.
6. L.S. Colchester (ed.), *Wells Cathedral Communal Accounts 1327-1600* (Wells) 1984 182-3, and contrast 290-1; for litigation SRO DD/SAS SE 127.
7. SRO, DD/SAS SE127.
8. Ibid, DD/CC 19790.
9. Ibid, DD/CC 19793.
10. Ibid, DD/CC 19795.
11. Ibid, DD/CC 19797.
12. Ibid, DD/WM 1/280.
13. Ibid, DD/CC 30915.
14. Ibid, DD/CC 19796.
15. Ibid, DD/CB Bundle 1, DD/CB 33.
16. Ibid, DD/CC 19790-6 and 30913-24.
17. Ibid, DD/CC 30918.
18. Ibid, DD/CC 5058.
19. Ibid, DD/WM 55.
20. Ibid, DD/SAS c/151.
21. Ibid, DD/SAS c/151, DD/TD Box 40/76.
22. Ibid, DD/BR mt1.
23. A.J. Scrase and J. Hasler (eds.), *Wells Corporation Properties*, SRS 87 (Taunton, 2002), 40, 71; SRO, DD/SAS SE24.
24. SRO, DD/SAS SE24.
25. Scrase and Hasler, *Wells Corporation Properties*, 32; Wells Town Hall Archives, 1007/14, 10007/34, 1011/7.
26. L.S. Colchester (ed.), *Wells Cathedral Escheator's Accounts 1369-1600* (Wells) 1988, 6-7, 17, 23, 26; Colchester, *Communal Accounts*, 172; *Calendar*, ii 170, 182 (this last has the rent wrongly stated to be 16s rather than 16d).
27. SRO, DD/SAS c/151.
28. Ibid, DD/FS Box 27.

TONY SCRASE

65. WILLIAM BARNES'S 'RIDDLES'. When did you last have to cope with a riddle – discounting the printed ones you reluctantly extracted from your Christmas cracker? Probably when still a schoolchild, or when challenged by your own children or grandchildren all agog to test you with, say, ‘What goes up a tree with its head turned downwards?’¹ Even in his day, some eight decades ago, Udall found it perfectly appropriate to allocate riddles to the chapter entitled ‘Children’s Games and Rhymes’ in his *Dorsetshire Folk-Lore*.² This does not mean, though, that riddles and riddling have always been considered fit only for juvenile consumption. Until well into the nineteenth century they were still to some extent at least an accepted part of the

adult scene, featuring in harvest-supper celebrations for instance. Thus in Herefordshire each man present had to contribute to the amusement of the company by giving a toast, singing a song, or asking a *riddles*.³ Such *ridlesses* also helped pass the time during long winter evenings. Witness a citation from Shropshire: 'We ... begun to tell ridlesses, an' whad twix puzzlin' to fine 'em out, an' then cryin' the weds ['forfeits'], we gotten to three o'clock i' the mornin'.'⁴

Since folklorists' collectanea often contain riddles, but seldom provide information about their social role, such thumbnail sketches are invaluable, and anything that can be added to them must be welcomed. Extending our search to Dorset, we light upon Barnes's poem 'Riddles'.⁵ In this, two young people, Anne and Joey, are busy milking out in the fields and, while thus occupied, engage in banter that develops into a riddling contest.

One of the riddles Anne asks Joey is

Down under water an' o' top o't
I went, an' didden touch a drop o't.

This in fact corresponds to Udal's 'Under the water, over the water, and never touches the water', his answer to which is 'A woman crossing a stream with a pail of water on her head'.⁶ Anne's answer is essentially the same, but takes the following form:

When I athirt the brudge did bring
Zum water on my head vrom spring,
Then under water an' o' top o't,
Wer I an' didden touch a drop o't.

Seen in the context of a dialogue salted with various witticisms and pleasantries and embedded in a genuine rustic scene, this is a piece of living history, while Udal's item, valuable though it is, rather resembles a museum piece that lacks true life of its own.

While there is much in all this for the social and cultural historian, there is also much for the comparativist. Noting in passing that our first riddle, 'What goes up a tree with its head turned downwards?' (Answer: 'A nail in your boot'), can be traced back to 1629 and occurs from Russia and Scandinavia to Nova Scotia,⁷ we shall do well to ask also about the history and distribution of the water-carrier riddle just mentioned. In fact it occurs well beyond the confines of Dorset, with many counterparts in the New World, and one in Shropshire. Wherever it occurs, the

protagonist, as in Barnes, is always female, and the wording never much strays from that of an English antecedent predating Barnes by the best part of three centuries. Joey thus has poetic truth on his side when he remarks:

O Lauk! What thik wold riddle still,
Why that's as wold as Dunccliffe Hill!

Certainly one of Joey's riddles is itself, to adopt his turn of phrase, hardly younger than Dunccliffe Hill. It runs:

On dree-lags, two lags, by the zide
O' vower-lags, woonce did zit wi' pride,
When vower-lags, that velt a prick
Vrom zix-lags, het two lags a kick,
An' two an' dree-lags vell, all vive,
Slap down, zome dead an' zome alive.

Riddles of this type have been said to be North German or Scandinavian in origin, but Taylor calls for a re-examination of the evidence.⁸ Adopting a diachronic perspective, we find an analogous English riddle dated 1629, in which the protagonist is a woman ('two-legs'), who sits on a stool ('three-legs') holding a leg of mutton ('one-leg'), which a dog ('four-legs') steals. 'Two-legs' then throws 'three-legs' at 'four-legs', hitting her mark and thus successfully retrieving 'one leg'. In the sub-type to which Barnes's version belongs, 'two-legs' is a milker and 'four-legs' is a cow.⁹ This basic pattern is then developed in different ways, but Barnes is unique in introducing 'six-legs', that is, a *stout* or gadfly, which stings the cow, making her kick both milkmaid and stool and send them flying.

The question we have to ask and cannot, I fear, answer with absolute certainty is whether the addition here is Barnes's, or whether it was already present in the local tradition he drew on. My surmise is that it was. There is a similar problem with another of Joey's riddles, which starts with the now familiar idea of 'two-legs', but then moves in a completely different direction:

A two-lagg'd thing do run avore
An' run behind a man,
An' never run upon his lags
Though on his lags do stan'.

What seems to be the one and only analogue, a rather distant

one to be sure, may be found in an eighteenth-century collection called *A New Riddle Book*:

No mouth, no eyes,
Nor yet a nose,
Two arms, two feet,
And as it goes,
The feet don't touch the ground,
But all the way,
The head runs round.

Here, as in Joey's riddle, the answer is 'A wheelbarrow'.¹⁰

Clearly further study is called for, as with our last example, which, delivered by Anne, apparently lacks any counterparts at all. Here it is:

There's *horn* vor Goodman's eye-zight seäke;
There's *horn* vor Goodman's mouth to teäke;
There's *horn* vor Goodman's ears, as well
As *horn* vor Goodman's nose to smell –
What horns be they, then?

To this composite riddle the answers are in turn: 'A horn lantern', 'a cup made of horn', 'a hunting horn', and 'hartshorn', that is, smelling salts, formerly made from the shredded horn or antlers of a hart. It may be added that *goodman*, here treated as a proper noun, is an old word for 'master of a house', 'head of a family'.

Of course this last riddle would be particularly difficult for a modern audience, because most of the items described are obsolete. The same observation applies elsewhere. Even hobnails are obsolescent, and in the circumstances most of us enjoy it is certainly no longer necessary for water to be carried. Here, though, there is more meat for the historian. In such riddles, for instance, water-carriers are always female. Note too that they carry the water on their head.¹¹ Did they in doing so need some sort of support for their receptacle? Certainly a woman carrying a milk pail on her head did, for elsewhere Barnes tell us about the *wease*, 'A wreath or crown of wool put on the head to take the milk pail'. Though not strictly relevant, what he says next must not be omitted here. It is that he himself has often seen 'a milkwoman walk on with the pail unstayed on her head, knitting with her hands'.²³ One can hardly deny that much remains to be learnt.

In conclusion, though, we must ask whether the obsolescence of many items described in riddles has led to the obsolescence of the riddle itself. Probably not, since imaginative users can adapt existing forms to new circumstances. There is for instance the riddle-type that has been labelled 'Insatiable Red Cow', the traditional answer to which is 'Fire'. Admittedly there is nothing obsolete about fire. Nevertheless, this riddle has been brought up to date by means of slight changes that make possible, in still relatively unsophisticated rural communities, interpretations along the lines of 'Threshing machine' or 'Mowing machine'.¹² One might conclude that it is not so much changes in the material world as changes in social attitudes that have led to the obsolescence of the riddle. Its main and still flourishing heir is the joke, a closely related form which, however, requires lightning responses from its generally passive audience, whereas the riddle calls for careful, active deliberation more suited to a slower pace of life that most of us today have left behind.¹³

1. I. Opie and P. Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, 1967, 74.
2. J.S. Udall and W. Barnes, *Dorsetshire Folk-Lore*, 2nd edition, reprinted from the original edition of 1922, 1970, 394-7.
3. E.M. Leather, *The Folk-Lore of Herefordshire*, 1992, 105.
4. C.S. Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, part 2, 1974, 409.
5. B. Jones (ed.) *The Poems of William Barnes*, 1962, volume 1, 239-43.
6. Udall, *Dorsetshire Folk-Lore*, 395.
7. A. Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition*, 1977, 66-7.
8. Taylor, *English Riddles*, 162.
9. *Ibid*, 163-4.
10. *Ibid*, 205.
11. *Ibid*, 60-61.
12. W. Barnes, *A Glossary of the Dorset Dialect*, 1970, 118; J. B. Smith, 'What is a Wease?', *The William Barnes Society Newsletter*, 47, November 2003, 18-19.
13. Taylor, *English Riddles*, 135-6.
14. H. Bausinger, *Formen der 'Volkspoesie'*, 2nd edition, 1980, 137-8.

J.B. SMITH

BOOK REVIEW

R. & P. Malcolmson (eds), *Dorset in Wartime : the Diary of Phyllis Walther, 1941-1942*, pp. 153, illustrated. Dorset Record Society, volume 15 (2009), £12.50. (Copies available from Dorset County Museum, Dorset History Centre, & Hon Sec., Dorset Record Society, County Museum, High West Street, Dorchester.)

Phyllis Walther, like many women of the time, resolutely faced the demands of a war torn England. There was, in 1941, a desperate need for voluntary civilian workers to fill the gaps left as men were drafted into the Forces. Many women worked in factories, while

others served in the armed forces and took on the work that had been done by men now transferred to the front-line. Those like Phyllis Walther, with family responsibilities, devoted themselves to voluntary work, and she joined the Women's Volunteer Service (W.V.S.). The tasks facing those voluntary workers would, today, need a veritable army of highly trained specialists, but during the war years England relied upon volunteers to provide support for a disrupted and frightened population whose homes and possessions had been destroyed, and to their children, suddenly evacuated to the countryside. New homes had to be found ; clothes had to be provided ; furniture, bedding, and extra food was needed, for entire families arrived with nothing, save, perhaps, the clothes that they were wearing. Most tragic of all, the evacuation of children of school age from areas in danger of bombing had begun and thousands of children were suddenly taken from their homes and moved into rural areas. Blandford became one of the centres of such voluntary work, and the plight of evacuees, and sometimes entire families, became a major concern for voluntary workers.

The diaries reveal as much about her, as about England at that time. She was one of those strong, resolute women – a combination, perhaps, of Margaret Thatcher and Margaret Rutherford - that England desperately needs at times. There was little outside assistance given to those volunteers, though some clothing and second-hand shoes arrived from America, and English families donated other clothes. Insufficient though it was, it had to be distributed to people whose needs were the greatest. It was an unenviable task, for the entire population was suffering from acute shortages of everything that they usually took for granted.

In 1941, when the diaries begin, the entire population was subject to rationing of foodstuffs. Everyone was entitled to 4 ounces of ham or bacon each week, 4oz of butter, 2 oz of tea, 3 oz of cheese, 2oz of cooking fat, and 1 pound of meat. Other foods were available only when 'points' (coupons) were surrendered. Every person was allocated 24 points every 4 weeks but those were soon used up because a large tin of salmon needed 32 points, while tinned beans or tinned peas used up to 4 points per tin. Many foods, of course, were not always available, and shortages were such that it was common enough for people to join a queue, and only afterwards to ask 'what is the queue for?' The result was that nothing was wasted : when a sack of sugar burst open

in the street, people rushed out to gather up what they could. The shortages led to thieving, and Phyllis records some theft of food, especially from allotments, with one man she knew losing thirty broccolis in one night. Everything was in short supply, and the diaries reveal her frustration at trying to find soap, wool, nails cotton, coal, coke, buttons, and almost every household item that usually seemed so plentiful. All that, and the inability of some people to manage their affairs under such conditions, led to some serious cases of neglect. Phyllis was aware of this and records with some desperation that some feckless people 'must starve on their rations if they manage their housekeeping as badly as they manage their lives'. Unfortunately, the entire burden fell on the voluntary workers, for they were in the front line for help. For Phyllis, the problems of feeding her own family, supplementing their inadequate supply of vitamins with rose-hips and wild fruit, and keeping up with her voluntary work, occupied all her time and energy. The civilian war was being fought on a different front, and there is little mention of the war waged by soldiers. Civilians felt a profound sense of relief when Hitler invaded Russia, for then the dark shadow of imminent invasion was lifted. Dunkirk, Singapore, and other setbacks, made little impact, for Phyllis, like every civilian, felt that they were all fighting a desperate war, and they 'must expect awful news'.

Serving soldiers could not keep diaries, for they were forbidden, and offenders could be court martialled. Civilian diaries should have been plentiful, but they, unfortunately, are not, and it is interesting to read one of the few accounts available. One senses from her diaries the urgency of the work she did, the suffering that took place throughout the country, and the desperate frustration of not being able to provide the help that people needed. One could quote many entries, but one tiny fact sticks in my mind as I finished reading : the little boy who, in wartime, with uncertain train services, and a shortage of food, was taken from his home at Winchester, sent to Scotland, then uprooted from there and transferred to Blandford. What, I wonder, happened to him?

G.J.D.

NOTES

PRIZES TAKEN AT BLACKDOWN. In the court book for the infaring division of the Manor of Taunton Deane covering the Three Weeken Courts between 1584 and 1601 is an undated list of prizes taken at Blackdown.¹ These were stray animals which had been captured and then valued, in order for the owners to come and reclaim them once they had paid any outstanding fines. The handwriting would suggest that the document is a contemporary of the court book and of those men listed as owners of the animals five appear on the 1581/2 subsidy roll within the hundred of Taunton Deane.² They are John Colles esquire of Corfe tithing, Hugh Murdon of Southtrentle tithing (in Trull), Thomas Brodebere of Leigh tithing (in Pitminster), Robert Hurman of Pitminster tithing and William Parsons of South Fulford tithing (in Pitminster). Colles was a man of some power who lived at Barton Grange (which lay in the parishes of Corfe and Pitminster), and his main landed interests lay in Orchard Portman, Trull, Pitminster, Corfe, West Buckland and Stogursey. He also served (at various times) as escheator for Somerset and Dorset, feodary for Somerset, M.P. for Minehead, commissioner for musters, sheriff and deputy lieutenant for Somerset.

All the prize taken at Blackdowne this iiijth daie of August by James Acklond Woodford and John Theine deputeie ...liff: praysors Bawden Knight and John Poll.

Imprimis one black graye mare with a spade mark under boeth eares in the keping [*sic*] of John Colles esquier pric xxs.

Item one bay nagge spade mark under the further eare, pric xiijs. iiijd.³

Item one graye mare spad mark under the nere eare in the keping of Henrie Parkes pric viijs. Jacobi Ackland.⁴

Item one little baye mare tapp cutt in the further eare with a crosse in the nere buttock with a sucking colte pair xjs. viijd., in the keping of Henry Parkes.⁵

Item one baie mare colt with a white snappe in the fore hedd pric vjs. in the keping of John Poll.

Item one black mare colte duell marked in the nere eare and a halpeney under pric vs. in the keping of Hughe Murden.

Item one litell graie mare colte, a hulpeny uppon the nere eare pric iijs. in the keping of William Nurton.⁶

Item one baie mare colte with a white mane and a white taile and a halpenye under everie eare, pric vs. in the keping of Thomas Bradbere.

Item one sorell mare with a suckling colt tapp cutt in the nere eare burned with a ringe in the nere buttock pric xiijs. iiijd. in the keping of Robert Hurman.⁷

Item one sorell mare colte burned with a crosse in the nere shoulder and one horse colt of the same mark price iijs. iiijd. a pece in the keping of John Polle.

Item one sorell mare colt burned with a crosse in the nere shoulder pric iijjs. in the keping of Thomas Bradberi.

Item one baie mare colt of ij yeres old with cut mark and owed [*sic*] by John Warde seized by the bayliff as a forfiyt unto the lord.

Item one baie mare tapp cutt in the nere eare with a lock about his legg pric xs. in the keping of William Parsons of Trull.⁸

On the reverse of the document is a similar, but much shorter list, for Otterford (which has not been transcribed here) and another note of pray taken in 1620 is in the same collection.⁹ Examples of this type of document amongst the Sheppard collection are thus very uncommon and the survival of the above list, loose amongst the pages of a court book, is a fortunate survival.

1. SRO, DD/SP 9.

2. *Ibid*, DD/SF 3948 and 4008.

3. This entry has been crossed through.

4. This entry has been crossed through but marked *stet*.

5. This entry has been crossed through.

6. The last two entries have been crossed through.

7. This entry has been crossed through.

8. The last two entries have been crossed through.

9. SRO, DD/SP 32.

ADRIAN J. WEBB

SARAH HAZELWOOD, BRICKMAKER. Despite the arduous character of pre-mechanized brickmaking women (and children) are known to have taken part in the trade. Evidence of a female brickmaker, working in Dorset in the mid 19th century, is to be found in the 1861 census for Canford Magna. Listed under

‘Creekmore’ (Creekmoor, west of Poole) is Sarah Hazelwood, an unmarried woman of ‘26’ whose birthplace is given as ‘Staffordshire’.¹ Sarah is described as a ‘Brickmaker’, and as a lodger in the household of Melville Charles Hodges, aged 25, a ‘Labourer in a Brick Yard’, who had been born at ‘Longfleet, Poole’.² A one year-old child, Tom Charles Hazelwood, completed the household and the census enumerator noted that Tom Charles was Melville Hodges’ son. Hodges is recorded as the head of the household but it is likely that Sarah Hazelwood’s skills as a brickmaker meant that she was the major breadwinner for her family. As a labourer in a brickyard Melville would have undertaken tasks such as moving clay and stacking bricks. Sarah would almost certainly have been skilled, not only at moulding bricks (in a single or multiple hardwood mould) but also at mixing clay with other products to produce the desired consistency and in loading, firing (and possibly building) the kiln.³ From an early date the ‘level of skill or effort involved in each aspect of the [brick-making process] was reflected in levels of pay’.⁴

Brickmakers often led an itinerant life, taking their skills to different localities as demand arose.⁵ It is not clear when Sarah Hazelwood left Staffordshire, or how she came to settle in Dorset, but her native county was well-known, by the mid 19th century, for brickmaking. By the 1860s commercial links between Staffordshire and Dorset were well established; white burning clays had been sent from Dorset to the Staffordshire potteries from about 1720 (the Staffordshire clays fired red and white burning clay was needed to produce, for example, the ‘Queen’s Ware’ for which the area became famous).⁶ It is possible that Sarah Hazelwood travelled to Dorset on one of the Poole vessels that delivered clay to Liverpool for transportation to the Staffordshire potteries via the Trent and Mersey canal.⁷ Although many brickmakers worked in small, family units Sarah and Melville may have been employed by one of the growing number of brick manufacturers in the Poole area, such as Elias Sharland of Broadstone. Sharland is recorded in the 1861 census, with just seven households separating his own from that of Melville Hodges and Sarah Hazelwood. In 1861 Sharwood, described, like Sarah, as a ‘Brickmaker’, was recorded as being an employer of 12 men and 3 boys (perhaps Sarah was one of his ‘men’).⁸ Sharland’s brickyard was not mechanized until 1875.⁹

By 1871 Melville and Sarah had married, produced four more

children, and had moved from Creekmoor to Kinson.¹⁰ Hodges is described in the 1871 census simply as an 'Agricultural Labourer' and no occupation is recorded for Sarah. It is possible, however, that employment in the brickmaking trade had been the reason for the couple's move (at some point after the birth of their son George, who is noted in the census as having been born at Creekmoor, and who was baptised at Longfleet in December 1866). Sarah's birthplace in the 1871 census is given as 'Brierley Hill, Staffordshire', a locality described in 1872 (together with neighbouring Stourbridge) as one in which 'a very extensive business [was] carried on in the manufacture of fire-bricks of all kinds'.¹¹ By the time Melville and Sarah moved to Kinson, brickyards in that area were manufacturing refractory chimney-flue bricks for use in the developing oil-refining industry in Canada.¹² The proprietors of the Kinson Clayfields and Fired Pottery Company, incorporated in 1856, were established manufacturers of firegoods in Stourbridge.¹³ In the 1860s 'Kinson Clayfields' had twelve kilns, a boiler, engine house, drying sheds, stables and offices.¹⁴ It is not clear when Sarah stopped brickmaking; by the time the 1871 census was taken, her health might have already begun to decline. Sarah Hodges died at Longfleet on the 3rd October 1872, aged 36. The cause of her death is recorded as being 'Phthisis Exhaustion' (Tuberculosis).¹⁵

1. 1861 census for Canford Magna, fo. 24, 11.

2. 1861 census for Canford Magna, fo. 23, 10.

3. K. Gurcke, *Bricks and Brickmaking: A Handbook for Historical Archaeology*, 1987, 17; J. Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, 1998, 102-4.

4. Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, 103. In the early 18th century, for example, clay diggers and brick moulders were paid 6d for every thousand bricks produced (by the team) and 'Bearers' and individuals who tempered the clay were paid 4d per thousand.

5. Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, 102.

6. H.S.L. Dewar, 'Josiah Wedgewood and Dorset Clay', *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries*, volume 27, 275-7; The Purbeck Mineral and Mining Museum website includes a section on the history of ball clay, www.pmmmg.org.

7. www.exploringthepotteries.org.uk; P.W. Scott and C. M. Bristow (eds), *Industrial Minerals and Extractive Industry Geology*, 2002, 27.

8. 1861 census for Canford Magna, fo. 23, 9.

9. M. Roebuck and J. Wenham, *A New History of Broadstone*, 2006, 8.

10. 1871 census for Kinson, fo. 78, 39. Sarah and Melville's links with the latter's native parish of Longfleet were strong. Their youngest child, Clara Jane, was born at Longfleet in 1872 (Longfleet parish, register of baptisms 1833-1885, DHC/PE/LOF/RE 1/1).

11. S. Griffiths, *Guide to the Iron Trade of Great Britain*, 1872, 49.

12. S.J. Lands, *Old Kinson*, 1972, 47-9.

13. V. Stout, *Around Kinson Pottery*, 1992, 18.

14. Lands, *Old Kinson*, 48.

15. General Register Office, Register of Deaths in October, November and December 1872, volume 5a, 173.

BELGIAN GLASS AT LULLINGTON. An old deed box retrieved from a bank revealed a bill for two panels of stained glass. These were inserted in one of the choir windows at All Saints, Lullington, when being restored by the Duckworth family in 1862. They are by the Belgian glazier J.L. Vanderpooten, of Brussels. They remain there and bear his signature. Pevsner remarked on his 'painterly technique'.¹ The windows must have been admired locally as in 1870 the Sheppard family commissioned an east window from Vanderpooten for the nearby church at Berkley.² The colours there are harsher but have faded with time. I am indebted to Mr R. Wallis of Frome for his translation from the French. Thomas Henry Wyatt was the architect employed to restore Lullington church and had already designed Orchardleigh House for the Duckworth family.

Bruxelles, Molenbeek St. Jean, 13 February 1863

Monsieur T.H. Wyatt architect, London

I have the honour to advise you that I have recently forwarded a case marked H.W. No. 160 containing the two figures and other castings which make up the small stained glass window for Mrs Duckworth's church. In assembling the pieces you will need to have iron rods affixed to the points where you see fastenings on the outside and to close the fastenings around the aforesaid iron rods. There is one which will have to be bent. It's the one underneath the Virgin Mary's veil. I have marked the shape on the lead with a red line in any case. I have no doubt that you have some very capable workmen and that all the recommendations that I'm making here are quite unnecessary. The little window has turned out perfectly and I hope that you will be satisfied with it and that you will not take it amiss that for this first small item of business I take the liberty of sending it cash on delivery.

Hoping to be of future service to you I remain your obedient servant

J. Vanderpooten



Vanderpooten's 'small window representing St. Mary and St. John', All Saints', Lullington.

Monsieur T.H. Wyatt of London owes to J.L. Vanderpooten,
artist in stained glass, of Molenbeek St. Jean, Bruxelles

A small window representing the Virgin Mary and
St John

Agreed price	240.00 frs
Packing	6.00 frs
	246.00 frs

Molenbeek St. Jean 13 February 1863

1. N. Pevsner, *Buildings of England: North Somerset and Bristol* (London, 1958), 223.
2. M. McGarvie, *St Mary's Berkley* (Frome, 1992), 6.

MICHAEL MCGARVIE

WILLIAM BUCKLAND AT STINSFORD HOUSE. William Buckland (1784-1856) visited Lady Susan O'Brien at Stinsford House on 20 April 1820. Lady Susan's journal records that 'A friend of William's Mr Buckland, Geological Professor from Oxford came and stayed a day, a cheerful man and I suppose very knowing in this new and fashionable study'.¹ Buckland had been appointed to the newly created Chair of Geology only two years before. Since at least 1815 he had been friendly with Susan O'Brien's niece, Mary Cole, and her daughters, who collected rock specimens for him. In one of his letters he wrote that Jane Talbot (one of Mary Cole's daughters) 'would afford an invaluable acquisition to the Society of Botany and Geology and acquire immortal reputation in both departments by selecting a series of the most perfect fossil vegetables of the Welsh coal strata'.² His friendship with Mary Cole, to whom he wrote at length about the progress of his collections, appears to have been close and he certainly visited her at Penrice Castle, where she lived.

On 29 October 1819 Buckland wrote to Mary Cole that, 'My treasure in Geology continues more than ever to accumulate. I have just heard from town that three large Russian boxes from Mr Strangways are sent off to Oxford and in his last I received a diploma from Moscow for which I am indebted to his kindness'.³ 'Mr Strangways' was Mary Cole's half-brother (and Lady Susan O'Brien's nephew), William Henry Horner Fox Strangways, son of the second Earl of Ilchester by his second wife Maria Digby; he later became the fourth Earl of Ilchester. He and Buckland had been contemporaries at Oxford; he became a career diplomat

but was also ‘a considerable botanist and geologist, being elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1821 at the age of 26. He was a prolific writer of letters and was characterized by Caroline Fielding (his niece) as one who likes flowers better than men and stones better than flowers’.⁴

William Buckland had frequently spent his vacations from Oxford at Lyme Regis with Mary Anning (1800-1847), the geological celebrity who in 1811 discovered the complete fossil of ichthyosaurus, and ‘in whose company he was to be seen wading up to his knees in search of fossils’.⁵ It is more than possible that his Oxford friend William Strangways sometimes joined him on these excursions. By 1820, when Strangways brought Buckland to visit his Aunt Susan, she was 77 years old but still of lively mind, and her house at Stinsford had always been open to her numerous nephews and nieces. Buckland and Strangways evidently stayed the night, for the next day Susan O’Brien wrote of Buckland, ‘We had a cheerful breakfast – conversation amusing and instructive – he has given us a new cast of ideas which I like as I think a new idea is a blessing’.⁶

1. Journal of Susan O’Brien, British Library Additional Manuscript 51360, 20 April 1820.
2. E.O. Gordon, *Life and Correspondence of William Buckland*, 1894, 16. Jane Talbot was one of Mary Cole’s daughters by her first husband, Thomas Mansel Talbot.
3. Gordon, *Life and Correspondence of William Murray*, 43.
4. H.J.P. Arnold, *William Henry Fox Talbot*, 1977, 48.
5. Gordon, *Life and Correspondence of William Buckland*, 7-8.
6. Journal of Susan O’Brien, 21 April 1820.

SUSAN RANDS

QUERIES

A REAL MURDER, OR A HOAX? On 12 April 1862 an unusual query appeared in the *West Somerset Free Press*, it read as follows:

Was it a real murder, or a hoax?

A curious story has been in circulation during the last few days, which ventilation may, perhaps throw some light upon. It appears that Mr Stone, baker, at Wyke, has an old bedstead which he slept on when a boy. When it came into the possession of his father, how or where it came from he has no knowledge. A short time since he determined to cut the bedstead smaller for his son, and in sawing through the

tester found a hole made by a gimlet, and in which was a small piece of paper rolled up and sealed. On taking out the paper he found it to contain the following:- “Mr Thomas Miles, from Dorchester was murdered here July 4th 1773”. Perhaps some of our readers can inform us if there is a tradition of a person named Miles, residing in Dorchester 89 years ago, having been murdered.

It appears that the query was never answered. I wonder if anyone can throw any light on this subject some 236 years later. It would be interesting to know whether the Dorchester burial records make any reference to Mr Thomas Miles.

PAUL MANSFIELD

HOME REMEDIES, 1820. Written at the end of a survey and valuation of Norton St. Philip of 1820 are the following two recipes:

Dinner Pills. Aloes one ounce & half. Mastic half ounce. Powder these ingredients separately, incorporate them with a proper quantity of syrup of wormwood to make a mess – three grains is a pill. Great care must be taken to prepare the aloes properly either with the Juice of Violets – or a strong tincture of Liquorice, the latter is generally used. A sixth part make 50 Pills.

Pills for Cholera. 2 Grs of black pepper, assafoetida and opium of which never more than two are necessary for an effectual cure.¹

Have any readers also come across home remedies jotted down in unexpected places?

1. SRO, D/PC/n.ph 7/1/1.

COLIN J BRETT

PILL FERRIES. During the 1950s there were several vessels operating as ferries from Pill (in Easton-in-Gordano) to Shirehampton. Do any subscribers know when multiple vessels started being used on this service and what are the origins of the ferry prior to the 1600s?

A.J.W.

CROSSES ON DOOR JAMBS. The church of St Peter at South Barrow, Somerset, has an inscribed cross (possibly medieval) on the jamb of the south door. At first I thought it was a consecration cross, however, Stephen Friar's *The English parish church* (Alan Sutton, 1998) states that crosses were inscribed on door jambs to ward off the devil. The cross at South Barrow is some 76cms high from the ground, measuring 11cms high and 4cms across. It would be interesting to know of other Somerset churches where similar examples may be found.

THELMA MUNCKTON



*Inscribed cross, south door,
St. Peter's, South Barrow.*

Editor's note: The Dorset editor regrets that, in Number 370, Item 55 'Parallel Generations and a Possible Descent for Thomas Hardy' was set out in portrait rather than landscape form. This caused a lack of clarity in the material that was not the fault of the author of the item. A digital version of Item 55, in landscape form, is available from the Dorset editor at judith_ford@hotmail.com.