
NOTES & QUERIES

FOR
SOMERSET AND DORSET

EDITED BY

J. A. FORD, B.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.

*15 Sandon House, 643 Blandford Road, Upton,
Dorset BH16 5ED*

AND

A. J. WEBB, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.B.Cart.S., M.R.Hist.S.

'Staverton', 19 Kirke Grove, Taunton, Somerset TA2 8SB

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

HERRICK

No	CONTENTS	Page No
32.	MONUMENT TO THE EARL OF BRISTOL IN SHERBORNE ABBEY	185
33.	THE HERON MANUSCRIPTS.....	189
34.	THE WOAD TRADE IN SOMERSET AND DORSET.	194
35.	WELLS CORPORATION PROPERTIES AND THE ALTARS OF ST CUTHBERT'S.	200
36.	LEWESDON HILL AND CHARMOUTH.	207
37.	THE DISCOVERY OF AN EARLY FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MANORIAL COURT ROLL.	210
38.	MEASURING THE DORSET VIRGATE.	216
39.	A BROAD SYDLING SURVEY.	221
	Note.....	224
	Query	226
	Correction	226
	Notice.....	226
	Obituary: Lord Rees-Mogg.....	227

ISSN 0049 1306

Annual Subscription £8 (U.S.A. 30 dollars or £12 if paid in
Sterling) payable in advance. Two parts annually, post free.

BRIDPORT

Creeds the Printers, Broadoak, Bridport

Chairman: R. N. R. Peers, M.A., F.S.A., F.M.A.

Editorial Committee:

Revd. Dom Aidan Bellenger, OSB, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.	D. M. Burnett T. W. Mayberry, M.A., F.S.A.
J. H. Bettey, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.	Sir M. Medlycott, Bt., F.S.G. Ann Smith, B.Ed., Dip A.A.
R. W. Dunning, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.	Lady Gass, M.A. G. M. Smith
A. J. Webb, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.B.Cart.S., M.R.Hist.S.	Judith Ford, B.A., PhD, F.S.A.

Hon. Membership Secretary

Mr G. M. Smith, 2 Wellbridge Close, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2BJ
Tel: 01305 264259

Hon. Treasurer and Secretary

Treasurer: Mr G. Smith **Secretary:** Mrs Ann Smith, B.Ed., Dip A.A.
smith_wellbridge@btinternet.com

Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset

has been published in unbroken sequence since 1888, and now issues two parts annually. Editors are prepared to consider typed or e-mailed contributions on the history, archaeology, genealogy, literature & folklore of the two counties. Authors requiring additional copies of the issue in which their contribution appears should inform the appropriate editor at the time of acceptance.

Subscriptions

Annual subscription £8 (U.S.A. 30 dollars or £12 if paid in Sterling).
If not paid by standing order, please send to the Hon. Membership Secretary.

Somerset Editor: aj.webb@virgin.net
Dorset Editor: judith_ford@hotmail.com

Advertisements:

Half page £12; quarter page £8; payable in advance.
Back numbers: £2.50 each plus postage.

© **Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset**

32. MONUMENT TO THE EARL OF BRISTOL IN SHERBORNE ABBEY. John Digby, 3rd Earl of Bristol, died on 12th September 1698 and following his funeral he was interred in the Digby family vault in Sherborne Abbey. His magnificent monument, depicting him and his two wives, by John Nost, is in the south transept, above the vault. His widow, Rachel (née Wyndham) survived him by eleven years, and it would be logical to assume that she commissioned the monument after her husband's death. Nost executed a similar monument to her father, Sir Hugh Wyndham, who died in 1684, which dominates the small nave of Silton church.¹ This is the earliest known example of Nost's church monuments, and one would expect it to be earlier than the one in Sherborne. However, the sequence of events does not seem to have been quite so straightforward.

John Nost (or Van Ost) was a native of Mechelen (Malines) in Belgium. Nothing is known of his origin or training, but he arrived in England in 1686 where he joined the established sculptor Arnold Quellin, another immigrant artist, who worked as a partner with Grinling Gibbons. Quellin died later in 1686 and shortly after Nost married his widow. By the mid 1690s Nost's reputation was established, and he had set up yards in both Haymarket and Portugal Row (Hyde Park Corner). His reputation rests mainly on his cast lead ornaments for gardens, which he supplied for Hampton Court, Melbourne in Derbyshire and many other places. His work as a marble carver is less well known but he supplied, for example, chimneypieces for Hampton Court and other houses. Only a few church monuments are documented as by him, but there are several firm attributions, the earliest of which is the monument at Silton. Nost died in 1710 when the business was successfully carried on till 1729 by his cousin of the same name.²

The Earl of Bristol made his will in December 1681, at the age of fifty.³ Although he married twice, the earl was childless, and his will directs (despite hopeful and poignant references to 'the heirs of my own body begotten') that Sherborne Castle and its estates shall pass to his cousin, Simon, 4th Lord Digby. The earl deals crisply with the matter of his burial;

Item I give my body to the earth from whence it was taken, desiring that it may be decently interred in the great Church at Sherborne according to my quality and condition and according to the ceremonies of the Church of England of which I profess myself a member.

In April 1687, the earl added a long codicil to his will. Two things had happened in the intervening six years. Firstly, Simon, 4th Lord Digby died in 1686, and his brother, William, succeeded him as 5th Lord; it was William who would inherit Sherborne on the earl's death. The other event was the death of the earl's father-in-law in 1684. Perhaps this started a train of thought, for, in the codicil, the earl gives more specific instructions for his burial and memorial;

Item, I give, devise and appoint that the sum of one thousand pounds to be laid out and expended in my funerals and in building of a vault and monument for me and my wives in the parish church of Sherborne aforesaid under the great south window of the great aisle in the said church, and I appoint my dear wife dame Rachel, Countess of Bristol and the before named William, Lord Digby, John Digby of Mansfield Woodhouse, John Digby son and heir of Simon Digby, William Strode and Jonathan Styles my chaplain or any two of them to be the trustees for the building of the said vault and monument and to see my funeral solemnized and my said vault and monument decently and nobly finished. And I further will and appoint that if in case the said one thousand pounds will not bear the charges of my said funeral and building of the said vault and monument, that then two hundred pounds more shall be laid out and expended therein that all things in it may be done for my honour and according to my quality.⁴

It is clear that the vault and monument are part of the same project. As built, the vault is only partly underground, the floor of the south transept being raised up several feet. The monument is built up from this raised floor, and fills the west wall of the transept (there is no room under the south window, as the will dictates, because of the raised floor). That the earl was involved with the planning and building of the monument is demonstrated by the final part of the clause in the codicil;

And I further will and appoint that if in case I shall build and finish

my said vault and monument or any part thereof in my life time, that then so much as I shall lay out therein shall be abated by my said trustees out of this my appointment that I have herein above given, appointed and directed for the building, finishing and beautifying thereof.

On 18 October 1687, the Earl entered into an agreement with the Churchwardens of Sherborne for 'a void plott or space of Ground scytuate and being under the great South Window near to the Consistory (Room) in the South side of the said Church' in which he is to 'Digg a Vault and Erect a Monument or Monuments,' at a yearly rent of 12d, for the use of him and his heirs, 'and for every dead corpse which shall be buried there, 6s 8d towards the better mainteynance of the said Church.' The agreement is careful to acquit the parish from 'any reparacions hereafter to be needfull in or about or touching the said Intended Vault, Monument or Monuments.' In 1688 the following entry appears in the churchwardens' accounts for Sherborne;

Item, received of the Right Honorable John, Earle of Bristoll for the plott of ground under the greate South window for the Erecting of a vault and Monument, payable at Michaelmas last, 1s.⁵

The monument depicts the earl with his two wives⁶ on either side of him, carved in lifelike poses in white marble, with inscriptions to each of them. The figures are slightly larger than life, and the monument is complete with urns, weeping cherubs, skulls and other appropriate symbols. The whole composition is under an arched canopy surmounted with the Earl of Bristol's coat of arms.

The poet, Alexander Pope, saw this monument when he visited Sherborne in 1724; 'Going to see the cathedral in the town hard by, I took notice as the finest things of a noble monument and a beautiful altar-piece of architecture.'⁷ In 1710, an agreement is recorded between Lord Digby and Mr Richard Warman for cleaning 'my Late Lord Bristol and his Lady's Monument in Sherborne' and 'to keep the same Monument and Isle clean' at 10s per annum. Two years later this was increased to 15s per annum.⁸ Thus began a long catalogue of maintenance

by successive owners, which is still carried on today.

The first and second Earls of Bristol were not buried in Sherborne; the first died in exile in Paris in 1652, and his son was buried in 1676 in his wife's family vault at Chenies. As the inscription on his monument tells us, the third earl was 'inclined to avoid the hurry of a public life' and spent more time at Sherborne than his father and grandfather. His provision of a family vault in the Abbey served successive generations of Digbys until the burial of the last Earl Digby in 1856, after which the vault was sealed according to the provisions of the Intramural Interments Act.

The monument at Silton was set up by Nost in 1692, eight years after Sir Hugh Wyndham's death and some five years after work started on the monument at Sherborne. Like the one in Sherborne, it depicts the deceased as a figure slightly larger than life, but it is more baroque, having barley-twist columns supporting the canopy. It originally stood in the chancel, but was moved to its present position in the nave in 1868.⁹ It was completed during the Earl of Bristol's lifetime, but how closely he was involved with it is unclear. Sir Hugh left his estates in Dorset and Somerset to his two daughters, Blanche (who married Sir Nathaniel Napier), and Rachel, so it may have been financed from their legacy.¹⁰ By this time, Nost was described as 'one of the best hands in England', but his selection for her father's monument could be also attributed to Rachel, who had witnessed at first hand his work for her husband in Sherborne.¹¹

There is another Dorset monument attributed to Nost, in Beaminster church. Thomas and George Strode were Sergeants at Law and executors of Sir Hugh Wyndham's will. Thomas died in 1698, the same year as Bristol, and his monument resembles that at Sherborne in several respects; the position of the figure, the swags behind him, the two putti, and the arched canopy supported by Corinthian columns.¹²

It seems therefore, that it was John Digby, 3rd Earl of Bristol, who first began the association with John Nost, not long after the sculptor's arrival in England. This probably led on to the monuments at Silton and Beaminster. How he came across Nost and his work is at present a matter for speculation.

1. N. Pevsner and J. Newman, *Buildings of England, Dorset* (1972), 392.

2. I. Roscoe, *Bibliographical dictionary of British sculptors* (2009). I am grateful to Bruce Bailey for help with this reference.
3. D/SH:KG2716.
4. The monument is said to have cost £1,500; L.M. Portman, *Catalogue of the pictures at Sherborne Castle* (1862), 216.
5. D/SHC: KG 1282; PE/SH:CW1/159. The payment of a shilling to the churchwardens continues each year until the earl's death, after which it is paid by the dowager countess.
6. His first wife was Alice Bourne (d.1658).
7. Quoted in Portman, *Catalogue of pictures*, 36-37. She gives the date erroneously as 1722. The 'beautiful altar-piece' does not survive.
8. Book of contracts with lifeholders 1709-1806, Sherborne Castle archive.
9. Pevsner and Newman, *Buildings of England*; The coffins of the Judge and his two wives were found at the same time and the Judge's brass coffin-plate inserted into the north wall of the chancel; *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*, vol. XL (1919), 93.
10. The manor of Silton passed to the eldest daughter, Blanch Napier; J. Hutchins, *History and antiquities of the county of Dorset*, 3rd edition 1861-1870, vol. IV, 104.
11. Rachel may have had direct involvement with the design of the Sherborne monument, if a tradition in the Digby family is true; the first wife was prettier than the second, but Rachel ordered both statues on the monument to be made equally attractive. Rachel may also be depicted on the monument at Silton; Hutchins suggests that the two 'weepers' are the judge's two daughters. *History and Antiquities*, vol. IV, 104; he also points out the similarity between the Silton and Sherborne monuments.
12. C.J. Easter, *The monument to Thomas Strode at Beaminster, Dorset*, Church Monuments Society (2011), 4. www.churchmonumentsociety.org Anne Wyndham, sister of Sir Hugh was the mother of the Strode brothers. Dr. Easter attributes this monument to Nost on grounds of similarity with the Sherborne and Silton monuments; R. Longridge, *Silton Parish Guide* (1959), also attributes Thomas Strode's monument to Nost. The monument at Sherborne is the only one signed by Nost.

ANN SMITH

33. THE HERON MANUSCRIPTS. In 2010, the final retiring partner of the solicitors Perham & Sons, Angus Heron, passed a bundle of manuscript documents to Julia Elton of Clevedon Court, Clevedon. Perham & Sons had offices in North Somerset and Bristol from the 19th century, and the manuscripts had been in the firm for many years. The manuscripts all relate to the ownership or occupation of land. Nine of the manuscripts concern land in Bristol or nearby, the earliest dating to 1564. The other nineteen all relate to one farm in Clevedon, and this is the clue to their origin. They collectively provided, for successive owners in the days before the land registry, proof of ownership of what, from here on, is called "Hort's farm" and

this article outlines their content.

A pile of dusty legal documents relating to a parcel of lands might seem unpromising, but it embodies facts and clues about landowners, land tenure and conveyancing practices across two centuries. The indentures offer glimpses of the lives and times of some of the individuals named. They include several signatures, including those of the first four Elton baronets (of Bristol and Clevedon Court) and they have helped extend our existing knowledge of the fortunes and misfortunes of the Elton family during the mid 18th century. Other documents, previously known, enable a more complete picture to be drawn.

For the most part, the documents¹ include the names of land owners and their financial backers. Together with the Wake survey² they reveal that three generations of Horts tenanted the farm between 1630 and 1710 and although the farm probably continued to be worked by its tenants rather than its owners throughout the next two centuries, no other tenants' names are included until the final manuscript of the series. The farm lay just over a mile to the southeast of Clevedon and close to the parish boundary with Kenn.

The first document, of 1695, is a tenancy agreement for Joseph Hort, son of John. John's tenancy had started in May 1660. The date is curious because other evidence³ indicates that the second Earl of Bristol did not recover his Clevedon Estate, following Parliamentary sequestration, until the August of that year. The 1695 tenancy suggests that the manorial system was still very much in evidence in Clevedon. The size of the landholding was recorded but not its location. Conditions included the payment of heriots, performance of customary duties (not specified but probably only a requirement to attend the court leet), maintenance of some 100ft of sea wall and the compulsion to grind all grain at the lord's mill. The Earl of Bristol also reserved the right to hawk, hunt, fish or fowl over the premises.

In 1698 the third Earl of Bristol died, and in the following year his widow sold the whole of the manor of Clevedon to Gabriel Oddingsells and others; Oddingsells appears to have been, in modern parlance, some sort of property speculator. It is believed that the Earl of Bristol was deeply in debt and had

mortgaged much of his Clevedon estate during the later 17th century.

In 1700 Walter Greene of Walton Park, of whom nothing else is known, purchased about 500 acres in Clevedon including a holding of 30 acres in the possession of Joseph Hort. Greene's purchase⁴ establishes the location and identity of Hort's 30 acre tenement, and the wording describing that location was used *verbatim* in all subsequent transactions until 1851. In 1709, almost all of Greene's land was bought by Abraham Elton but, for some reason, not Hort's farm.⁵ In 1710, it was bought by William Hedges subject to mortgages from various individuals, but as the years passed it seems that Abraham Elton (later 1st baronet) became the sole mortgage provider. At the same time, Hedges bought more land and became deeper in debt. Several of the deeds from this period have the handwriting of Hedges himself on the outside.

In 1727, Sir Abraham (I) died and it appears that Hort's farm passed to his widow Mary, as in 1828 she gave it to her son, Sir Abraham (II). The indenture records rather quaintly that it was, '... for the natural love and affection that [she] beareth to Sir Abraham, and for the consideration of 5s ...'. She may have passed-on the lands in anticipation of Hedges' default, because in 1729 his considerable debts were written off by Sir Abraham (II) in return for the surrender of the lands and the payment, to Hedges, of a guinea. Little or no interest had ever been paid and it is doubtful that the land was worth as much as the debt.

Hort's farm then belonged to the Eltons, but the death of Sir Abraham (II) in 1742, followed by the bankruptcy of Sir Abraham (III) and the death of Captain Jacob Elton his brother (in a naval action against the French), both in 1744, introduced a period of which little known. So the document of 1757 is a rare find. It reveals that in 1749 a ruling in Chancery required the sale of Elton-owned lands held in trust, to meet the outstanding debts of Sir Abraham (II). It is a surprise to learn that his affairs were not settled seven years after his death and of the extent of the debts. The 1757 document reveals that Captain Jacob's widow had remarried; the Elton trust (in which she may have had a one-third share) was probably of great

significance to her. It also referred to an advertisement in the *London Gazette*.

The *Gazette*⁶ shows that Elton land in Bristol and Somerset including the manor of Midsummer Norton, having a total value of perhaps £10,000, was being marketed by the Lord Chancellor. Hort's farm was the smallest holding on the list and it was sold to Thomas Lewis in 1756, fourteen years after the death of Sir Abraham (II). The Elton creditors had a long wait for their money.

The next documents relate to the sale of the estate (including Hort's farm) of Betty Culliford who died in 1846 and they hint at her connection with Thomas Lewis. A Betty Lewis, spinster, is named as being in some way connected to a sale in of lands to John Culliford in 1815. Perhaps Betty was a daughter or granddaughter of Thomas Lewis. It seems that she had married John Culliford, and that he had died in 1828. Since there are no other conveyance documents in the period 1757-1846 it is probable that the farm was passed-on within their family during that period, without the legal niceties that marked its transfer from mother to son in 1727.

The manor of Clevedon had been sold and broken up before 1700. While a great deal of its land was thereafter owned by successive Elton baronets, not all of the manorial practices mentioned in the document of 1695 survived. Hunting and hawking rights across tenanted land were apparently of little interest to the Eltons and do not appear in tenancies after 1714. The stricture on milling necessarily ended when the mill fell into ruin, probably before 1704, by which time the mill was 'decayed'.⁷ Heriots, on the other hand, sometimes as a money payment, sometimes best beast or best household implement, survived until 1882,⁸ and rights to timber remained until at least 1858.⁹ The last reference to the ancient customary duty of owing suit at court (requiring attendance at the court leet) occurred in 1872.¹⁰ No court leet records have survived but courts were still held annually between 1818 and 1845.¹¹ While the last known record is in 1899¹² it is probable that during the 19th century the event became only a tenants supper that followed the payment of half a year's rent at Michaelmas. By 1899 it had moved closer to the Christmas season and it is likely

that in the 20th century the gathering was transformed further, becoming the tenants' ball, last held in 1972.¹³

Hort's tenancy of 1695, like many later ones, referred to responsibilities for maintaining the sea wall, but conveyance documents, which confer legal ownership, contain no references to sea walls in until 1846, calling into question the demarcations relating to sea wall work after the demise of the manorial system *i.e.* between landowner, tenant, parish, and bodies such as the Commissioners for Sewers. The topic is undoubtedly beyond the scope of this article!

A manuscript document of 1846 records the purchase of Hort's farm by Jacob Sturge. It recited the description of the land in the same way as every document since 1700 and it related the fields to the tithe award¹⁴ of 1841. For the first time the land was identified in a map. Subsequently, in 1851, Samuel Stevens of Nelson in New Zealand identified himself as the true owner of the lands; Sturge had merely been acting for him and was holding the lands in trust. There is nothing to explain why Stevens himself was not named on the 1846 documents, and as suddenly as Stevens had emerged, he disappeared again because the last document in the series, dated 1894, included no reference to him and recorded a purchase of the land by Henry Bennett of Wyke Regis in Dorset. Unlike all previous manuscripts, it located the land only by reference to a map, and for the first time since the manor of Clevedon was sold in 1698 not even the mortgage was provided by someone from Bristol or Somerset. Given the continuity of ownership that the other documents witness, it is surprising that there is nothing to link Bennett (1894) with Stevens (1851). At least the last document in the series, like the first, recorded the name of the then tenant (Walter Stukey).

1. The Heron manuscripts have now been deposited with the Somerset Heritage Centre (S.H.C.), group code A\DNA and accession number M/3794.
2. S.H.C., DD/EN/102 Wake Survey of 1629.
3. *House of Lords Journal*, volume 11.
4. S.H.C., DD/EN/5 Greene purchase of 1700.
5. S.H.C., DD/EN/1 Elton purchase of 1709.
6. *London Gazette*, 17 Mar 1755.
7. S.H.C., DD/EN/108 Robert Bryant's lease of 1704.
8. S.H.C., DD/EN/93.
9. S.H.C., DD/EN/90 Durbin's lease.

10. S.H.C., DD/EN/93 Memo of agreement Elton/Tiley.
11. Clevedon Court Estate Accounts, Elton private collection.
12. *Bristol Mercury*, 12 Dec 1899.
13. Julia Elton, personal observation.
14. Clevedon tithe apportionment of 1841 in S.H.C., D/P/clevd/3/2/1 and map of 1839 S.H.C., DD/X/LLY/27.

DAVID FOGDEN AND JANE LILLY

34. THE WOAD TRADE IN SOMERSET AND DORSET.

Large quantities of woad were imported into the west of England during the later Middle Ages for use in the cloth industry. The processed leaves of the woad plant (*istatis tinctoria*) produced a rich blue dye and when combined with madder or weld could also be used as the basis of blacks, greens and other dark or 'sad' colours.¹ The woad was extensively grown in the regions of Toulouse, Albi, Montauban and the valley of the Garonne, and was exported through the ports of Bordeaux and Bayonne. During the 15th century large quantities were also imported from Genoa. This was brought by Italian ships to Southampton, whereas French woad came to Bristol. Much woad also came in to Bristol from the Azores.

Demand greatly increased during the 16th century as more dyed wool cloth was produced in the west country; previously most cloth had been exported undyed to be finished abroad. Much evidence of the trade is to be found in the Port Books of Southampton and Bristol, and a remarkably detailed record of the woad trade is contained in the account book or ledger of the Bristol merchant, John Smyth (or Smythe). This covers the years 1538-1550 and includes many references to large shipments of woad which were distributed to clothiers and dyers in Somerset and Wiltshire.² John Smyth also imported alum which was an essential mordant in the dyeing process, and olive oil which was used to dress cloth. Clothiers regularly supplied with woad included John Yerbury of Bruton, Thomas Ashe of Batcombe, William Butcher of Coley near West Harptree and James Bisse of Stoke Lane near Leigh-on-Mendip. Much of the woad was supplied in exchange for cloth which was exported in Smyth's ships. Cloth was the principal export, but Smyth's ships also carried leather, lead, tin and fish to France and Spain, returning with wine, iron, oil, fruit and alum, as well as woad and other

dyestuffs. In 1540 Smyth became a major shareholder in a company of a dozen Bristol merchants whose purpose was to import woad and wine from the Azores ('the Yles of Surrys'). Examples of the many references to woad in Smyth's *Ledger* include 14cwt. of woad sold to John Mayo, dyer, of Bradford-on-Avon in 1538, 26 cwt. sold to Thomas Ashe, clothier, of Batcombe for £22 13s 10d in 1539 and several consignments of woad from Toulouse ('Tullus') sent to John Yerbury, clothier, of Bruton in 1539 in exchange for '12 clothes penny hewes called Truckers'. In 1540 Smyth imported cargoes of woad worth £251 11s 3½d, some in his own ship *The Trinity* and some in a ship called *The Maiden of the Passage*.

The trade in woad continued to figure prominently in Smyth's *Ledger* throughout the 1540s. He supplied woad to dyers and clothiers in Coventry, Shepton Mallet, Wells, Bruton, Batcombe, Beckington, Bridgwater, Corston, West Harptree, Litton, Cumsbery (Congresbury) and to many other people whose residence is not specified.³

Later in the 16th century religious wars in southern France interrupted the supply of woad from the Toulouse region and Bristol merchants turned increasingly to the Azores, keeping their own factors on the islands. The trade continued to be profitable and woad purchased for £12 could be sold in Somerset and Wiltshire for £20. Wine, sugar and alum were also imported from the Azores.⁴ By the early 17th century the Bristol Port Books continued to record large shipments of woad, and, for example during the years 1612-13 114 tons of woad passed through the port.⁵

The increasing emphasis on the production of coloured cloth and the consequent demand for woad from dyers provided an impetus for the cultivation of the plant in the west country. This coincided with the late 16th-century increase in corn production and the conversion to arable of much chalkland grazing and pastures. Such land was often unsuitable for immediate sowing with wheat and barley, since it was frequently so fertile from centuries of sheep grazing that it was too rich for corn. Moreover, it was likely to be infected with wireworm, eelworm, leatherjackets and other soil pests. It was, however, ideal for the growing of woad. The deep ploughing, thorough cultivation and

frequent hoeing required by the hungry woad plants provided a useful and profitable method of preparing the ground for corn. Because of its demands, woad could not be grown on the same land for more than three or four years. Some landowners believed that it exhausted the land and prohibited their tenants from growing it. As it was grown for only short periods on the same ground, often by contractors or itinerant woadmen, there are few references to woad in the manorial surveys or court rolls. Even the mills required to process the leaves and the sheds for storing it were temporary structures, only rarely appearing in written records.

There is no doubt, however, of the rapid development of woad-growing during the late 16th century. In 1585 a government survey revealed for the first time the extent of its cultivation. In Wiltshire 59 growers are listed and 575 acres were said to be growing woad. Mostly this was in small plots, although John Bayliss had 43 acres of woad near Salisbury. In Dorset 1039 acres were listed, the largest extent of any of the 13 counties surveyed. Only 10 of the Dorset growers are named, all in the west or central area of the county, but it is likely that many more people were cultivating woad in east Dorset, especially on Cranborne Chase. The Dorset growers listed are as follows:

Christopher Pawlett of Cruxton in Maiden Newton	11	acres
John Hassard of Lyme Regis	21	acres
John Hassard's woad in Bradpole	6	acres
Zacheraie Bethel & Robert Powell of Crumpton in Maiden Newton	42	acres
Also at Lillington near Sherborne	17	acres
Roger Kite of Fordington	½	acre
Roger Mill of Cadlands, Hampshire at Bridport	11	acres
at Allington	2	acres
at Bradpole	3	acres
at Lillington	17	acres
William Powlett of Melplash	20	acres
Richard Davy of Lyme Regis	2	acres
Thomas Howard of Puddletowne	7	acres

In Somerset 605 acres of woad were said to be under cultivation in 1585-6.⁶ The reason for the survey of growers in 1585 was

because of government concern that its cultivation would diminish the production of corn crops and that its processing would divert labour from the cloth industry. Processing of the woad produced a strong, unpleasant smell which provoked many complaints from people living nearby. Queen Elizabeth found it particularly offensive, and a royal proclamation prohibited its cultivation near any town or royal palace, and the Queen begged that 'when she cometh in progress to see you in the country, she may not be driven out of your towns by suffering it [*i.e.* the woad] to infect the air'.⁷

Much evidence concerning the large-scale cultivation of woad is found in the records of George Bedford, a Salisbury clothier. In 1594 Bedford leased 200 acres of former rabbit warren at Ashcombe on Cranborne Chase for three years to grow woad. In 1599 he formed a partnership with another Salisbury clothier, Robert Eyre, to lease 60 acres of land at Canford and another 40 acres at Sturminster Marshall, and the agreement specified the expenses of cultivation and of 'sowinge, weedinge, dressinge, working and making of the same oade'.⁸ Woad required a great deal of labour both in its cultivation and processing. The leaves had to be picked, crushed in a mill, allowed to ferment and then to be rolled into balls and dried before being sold to dyers and clothiers. People engaged in the preparation were stained blue during the operation. George Bedford was obviously grateful to the workers he employed on Cranborne Chase, and in his will of 1607 he made bequests to the poor in the parishes of Damerham, Martin, Pentridge and Cranborne 'in remembrance of my good will for their labours and worke bestowed on my business'. At the time of his death he possessed 18 tons of woad 'already grained and in balls' worth £400; also 'an olde woade house and fower woad mylles' worth £10.⁹

The deep ploughing and thorough cultivation required before woad was sown on previously uncultivated ground is shown in numerous agreements which George Bedford made with local husbandmen for the preparation of his woad ground. To cite just two examples, in April 1602 Henry Whittyer of Boveridge agreed that for £6 he would 'plowe, eare, harrowe and till in good and husbandlike order and sorte' ten acres of

nearby Blagdon Parke for the sowing of woad. A year later Edmund Sweetapple, husbandman, of West Martin, agreed with George Bedford that in return for £6 he would 'plowe, eare, harrowe and sorte in good husbandlike order. . . 20 acres of land lyinge in Blagdon Parke in the countie of Dorset'.¹⁰ Such cultivation, coupled with the manuring and careful weeding required during the nurture of the woad plants made it an excellent and beneficial preparation for succeeding crops of corn.

The prominent Salisbury lawyer, Henry Sherfield, who married George Bedford's widow, was also deeply involved in woad production. He farmed land of his own and acted as steward for the large estate of the Earl of Salisbury at Cranborne. During the period 1610-20 Sherfield leased many acres of downland pasture and rabbit warren in order to plough the land and sow crops of woad. This included 120 acres at Boveridge and 11 acres in the former deer park at Blagdon and 22 acres in the parish of Martin. Sherfield's papers contain references to the sale of his woad to numerous clothiers in Wiltshire and Somerset. He was also involved in the cultivation of madder and oil-seed rape for use in the cloth industry.¹¹

During the later 17th century woad began to be partially replaced by new and exotic dyes such as indigo, cochineal, fustic and others made from various woods imported from Africa and the New World. Such woods were collectively known as logwood, and included barwood, brazilwood, sandalwood, ebony, peachwood and shumack. These were ground in logwood mills and used according to complex and carefully-guarded recipes with various mordants such as alum, copperas, chromium, iron, aluminium and copper. Some indication of the range of new dyes available by the early 18th century can be seen in the probate inventory of William Pike, a clothier of Lyme Regis, who died in 1731. His stock included large quantities of wool and numerous pieces of finished cloth. He also possessed spinning, weaving and finishing equipment and a furnace for dyeing. Among his dye-stuffs were logwood, redwood, dyewood and shumack. The shumack was used to produce a dense black cloth.¹²

Woad continued to be used, both as a basic dye and as an

agent to produce fermentation in the dye-vats. Its cultivation seems to have died out in Dorset, but it was extensively grown in north Somerset during the 18th century. It was a popular and profitable crop, particularly around Keynsham and the Chew Valley area. In 1784 a mill at Chewton Keynsham which was advertised for sale was said to be capable of processing 200 tons of woad a year.¹³ Interestingly, the next mill downstream was a large logwood mill; this was Albert Mill on the river Chew where production of dyestuffs from imported timber continued until 1964.¹⁴ Writing of the Keynsham district in 1797, the agricultural reporter, John Billingsley, estimated that on the rich soils of north Somerset woad would yield 1½ tons to the acre. He added that the crop was so profitable that few farmers who tried it ever gave up its cultivation. Billingsley gives details of the method of processing the woad whereby a fermentation was produced which incidentally created such a strong and unpleasant smell

When the green crops are carted home, the plant is thrown into a mill, conducted with a heavy iron ribbed roller . . . By this process it is cut and bruised to a pulp. It is then laid in small heaps, pressed close and smooth . . . After lying about a fortnight in this state, the heaps are broken up, the outside worked into the mass, and the whole formed by hand and sometimes by wooden moulds into oval balls which are dried on hurdles under a shed exposed to the sun . . . The woad was then ready to be sold to dyers.¹⁵

The late eighteenth-century agricultural reports on Wiltshire and Dorset make no reference to woad, and it seems that it was no longer grown in those counties where it had been so profitable.

1. The cultivation, processing and use of woad is described in detail in J.B. Hurry, *The Woad plant and its dye* (1930); see also J. Thirsk, *Alternative husbandry* (1997), 79-95.
2. J. Vanes (ed.), *The ledger of John Smythe 1538-1550*, Bristol Record Society, XXVIII (1974).
3. *Ibid.*, 9, 82, 85, 142, 191.
4. J. Vanes, ed., *The overseas trade of Bristol in the 16th century*, Bristol Record Society, XXXI (1979), 19, 24, 89-94.
5. The National Archives (T.N.A.), E190/1134/3.
6. British Library, MSS Lansdowne 49/57; TNA, E163/14/9; E163/15/1.
7. F.A. Youngs (ed.), *Proclamations of the Tudor Queens* (1976), 152.
8. Hampshire Record Office (H.R.O.), 44/M69/XLIV/2; TNA SP38/249 8 July

- 1594; E112/12 Dorset 45.
9. H.R.O., 44M69/XLIV/18. I am grateful to the Jervoise-Herriard estate for permission to quote from these papers.
 10. For these and other examples see J.H. Bettey, ed., *Wiltshire farming in the 17th century*, Wiltshire Record Society, 57 (2005), 276-91.
 11. H.R.O., 4469/XXVIII/2; XXVIII/3; XLIII/50. For further details of Sherfield's activities see J.H. Bettey, 'The Cultivation of Woad in the Salisbury Area', *Textile History*, 9 (1978), 112-17.
 12. Wiltshire Archives Service (W.A.S.), P5/1731/71.
 13. K.H. Rogers, *Warp & weft: the story of the Somerset & Wiltshire woollen industry* (1986), 47.
 14. R.A. Buchanan & Neil Cossons, *Industrial archaeology of the Bristol region* (1969), 69-73.
 15. J. Billingsley, *General view of the agriculture of Somerset* (1797), 113-115.

J. BETTEY

35. WELLS CORPORATION PROPERTIES AND THE ALTARS OF ST CUTHBERT'S.

Introduction

This piece is intended to supplement *Wells Corporation Properties*¹ and the writer's article on the Godwyn family of Wells.² The former identified origins for much of what became the property holdings of Wells Corporation demonstrating that most were not granted to the Corporation or its predecessor, the town guild, but to St Cuthbert's or one of its medieval altars. However, a number of houses could not be clearly identified. This is an attempt to suggest likely answers for some. It also uses the material to try to say more about the religious fraternities and altars of St Cuthbert's.

A High Street mansion

In 1423 Richard Milers alias Settere and Christian his wife granted a group of burgesses a property described as all their mansion where they now dwelt and all the buildings there together with two cottages in New Street.³ The deed is clear that Christian inherited the properties from John Blithe her former husband and the recipients were John Pedewell, Richard Halle, John Godwyne, John Cutte (senior), Simon Bailly and John Rocke. This writer did not include such an interest in his list of Godwyn's property holdings. The reason becomes clear when one examines these burgesses. Pedewell was serving his sole

term as master of the town guild when the transfer took place. Godwyn followed him as master for his first term of seven later that year. In turn Rocke succeeded him in 1424 for his first term of three. Richard Settere followed in 1425 and he had already served two terms in 1417 and 1418. Bailly served in 1426. Halle had already been master in 1419 and served again in 1429. Of the group only Cutte never became master, but he was both guild rent collector and constable, the pool from which masters were drawn. In fact the Cuttes only achieved one term as master in four generations.⁴ Perhaps their wealth was insufficient leaving them on the elite's fringe.

So the recipients were a parade of the great and good of the guild, what people then referred to as the 'better sort' or *majores*. This impression of the elite acting together is strengthened when it is noted that the first two witnesses were guild constables for the year. In contrast to Cutte one of these constables became master in 1428 and the other in 1435. So it is probable that the group were not new owners but trustees for a transfer to the guild possibly for its own purposes but probably to benefit St Cuthbert's. This transaction smoothed the way for a final conveyance clearing dower rights and avoiding the need for a mortmain license. The original benefactor was obviously Christian Settere's first husband, John Blithe, who had been heavily involved in the cloth trade and had been master seven times, an eminence achieved only by the wealthiest and longest-lived members of the elite. Presumably he left the properties to Christian for life with, perhaps, a clause terminating the grant if she remarried.

Where was the property? The description is vague describing it as between High Street and the ground of the Prior of St John's (*i.e.* belonging to the Hospital of St John the Baptist). It lacks the usual information describing which side of the street it was on and who were its neighbours. Fortunately, the origins of most of the Corporation estate in High Street are known. The only sites large enough for a house worth describing as a mansion and not accounted for are first what are now small properties comprising the western part of no.4 and nos. 6, 8 and 10, secondly nos. 73 and 75 and, finally, no. 81. Numbers 73 and 75 would seem best able to accommodate

something grand enough, but it and 81 back on to Market Street so they do not fit the description. In contrast the small properties nos. 4-10 do back on to what was Hospital property; we know this from abutments of nos. 7 and 9 Sadler Street from their Corporation owned neighbours and a stray deed of 1426 that survives.⁵ This supposition is supported by the 1427/8 rental, although the wording is somewhat puzzling. In this area its entry is for 'tenement which Richard Settere holds of the commonalty in various places'. The rent was 20s reduced from 48s 8d, a sum appropriate for a major property.⁶

Probably, the property had the hall of the large house set back from the road behind a row of small shops. This was a common medieval form. The surviving roofs support the idea of shops as they have gable ends to the road. Some at least contain medieval timbers. At sometime between 1428 and 1550 the hall must have become dilapidated, or too cramped for appropriate tenants and the shop units were extended (unequally) into its site.⁷

The Corporation's New Street properties

The New Street cottages are more difficult to locate as they have no description to help identify them. In addition the situation in that street is particularly complicated. In the high Middle Ages it had many cottages. Then when population collapsed after the Black Death many were abandoned.⁸ Some at the north end of the street were never reoccupied, whereas others were merged to create larger units as the area became fashionable.

So it is easiest to start by briefly describing the town estate here as it was from 1427 to after 1800. On the west there were two adjoining properties that comprise the majority of modern no. 19. On the east there was a cottage that now forms the southern bay of no. 10; its frontage was 8.23m (27ft). There was a somewhat larger property at no. 12. In addition there was an annual rent from the larger part of no. 10 and there were two parcels of land in what are now the grounds of the Cathedral School. One of these was substantial stretching east to College Street. To confuse matters further these parcels are listed with the freehold estate initially but by c.1800 were assumed to be an

annual rent, presumably because of their small yield and lack of any formal lease.⁹

One can next eliminate properties the town controlled before 1423, which accounts for the western properties. In 1380 the wardens of Holy Trinity in St Cuthbert's leased a tenement here to John Fitzpayn knight and Eleanor his wife. The description states that Nicholas Hethe held the property to the north from the wardens.¹⁰ Similarly the town guild leased the southern part of no. 10 to Thomas Jone in 1406¹¹ (and he still held it in 1427). So this is probably the property that John le Roper gave to the Keepers of the goods of Holy Trinity in 1367.¹² That leaves no. 12 and the two plots. The former may have accommodated both. It held a cottage and a dovecot in 1427 but it is possible that the two parcels were involved wholly or in part.

A Southover property

This is more straightforward. In 1498 Richard Vowell left the guild three adjoining cottages in Southover to obtain obits in St Cuthbert's for his soul and those of his family.¹³ These must have been in the area of nos. 3 and 5 as the remainder of the town estate in Southover was in place by 1427. However, the cottages do not seem to have been all of the later property, as they are described as being bounded on the west by a way leading to a garden the town already owned and leased to Joan Smith for her life. This dual origin may explain why leases from 1604 to 1763 always mention two tenements (that the frontage had then become) and one garden.¹⁴

The guilds and altars of St Cuthbert's

The records discussed throw indirect light on the development of the Wells town guild. It is believed that the guild developed out of a fraternity of the Holy Trinity in St Cuthbert's. Certainly, that chapel was certainly special for the guild. The 1437 ordinances aimed to govern its organisation and officers were said to be done in honour of St Cuthbert and with the 'ayde of the Trinitie' in whose name 'the sayde Burgesses and Fraternitie' were founded.¹⁵

The above account shows that Holy Trinity originally received an appreciable part of what became the town estate.

Three New Street properties have been mentioned. In addition they controlled a property at the west end of High Street when they leased it to Fitzpayn and his wife in 1356. The rent of 2s suggests it was no. 81 rather than nos. 73 and 75.¹⁶ Then in 1363 Walter de Compton left the Fraternities of the Blessed Mary and Holy Trinity the croft where Bubwith's Almshouse was later built.¹⁷ In 1373 John le Ropere made Holy Trinity a second gift, of a 2s rent from a Tucker Street tenement.¹⁸

The fraternity wardens were significant figures. On every occasion they are named members of the long-running Churchstyle family, indeed William Churchstyle always features. This family were leaders of the middling sort and regularly served as churchwardens, but never as master. The wardens when granting leases are always said to have acted with the agreement of the chaplain, conservator and all the brethren of the fraternity; a 1380 lease names the chaplain, William Lullok, and the conservator, Henry Bouedych (then also master).

The town guild gradually took over the Holy Trinity estate. By 1406 they, rather than the wardens, were leasing the southern part of no. 10 New Street. But the wardens were still special. They, the churchwardens and the wardens of Our Lady's Altar, had to administer the oaths the 1437 ordinances prescribed for guild officers. Their full incorporation took time. Churchwardens were appointed by the guild from the earliest surviving *Convocation Book* of 1377. It did not appoint the Holy Trinity wardens until the 1473. One wonders how they were nominated before? Rather surprisingly the guild reappears as a recipient of property in 1487 with a quitclaim concerning an acre at Walcombe.¹⁹

There is another conveyance that looks like a trust for an altar in St Cuthbert's. In 1383 Walter Power, burgess of Bristol, and Alice Palton his wife conveyed to Henry Bouedych, Nicholas Cristesham, Thomas Tannere and Richard Troweye, chaplain, a shop with an upper chamber on the north side of High Street.²⁰ At that time Bouedych, Cristesham and Tannere were the three richest members of the elite. Together they held at least 16 terms as master and probably several more, as all were flourishing before continuous records begin in 1377. They

and the relevant chaplain would be obvious trustees for an altar. But which altar is unclear. It might be Holy Trinity but that would depend on William Lullok having died or left in the previous three years. The property was probably no. 46 High Street that was a shallow unit with the precentor's no. 48 on both its west and north.²¹ The benefactor was probably Alice. Both Serel and Holmes cited the Palton family as benefactors of St Cuthbert's and mention the family's coats of arms on the fabric.²²

Troweye features with another chaplain, William Plumstoke called Clothier, in 1396. He was again acting as, in effect, a trustee. In this case it was part of the build up to Nicholas Cristesham's gift of properties to the town guild. Cristesham and Maud his wife granted properties to the chaplains who then returned them a life interest. This extinguished dower rights. In the intervening years Thomas Tannere used similar tactics when creating his chantry. He employed another chaplain, John Nevyll, but also the vicar, John Tintenhull, who was a chapter nominee and must have spent much time on cathedral duties where he was successively escheator and communar.²³

Treweye, Plumstoke and Nevyll could have been employed at a range of altars. Shaw calculated that in 1377 St Cuthbert's had a staff of 14 clerics compared with 77 at the cathedral and 10 brothers at the hospital. However, it is probable that the 14 included at least one who tended the chapel in Southover that also had more than one altar.²⁴ They may also have had duties at various chapels in the out-parish. Through the 15th century the town guild appointed more and more pairs of wardens for altars in the parish church. This peaked around 1515 when seven altars (and their wardens) are named. But there were more. Holmes, by studying inventories and wills, was able to name 15 (disregarding his mention of St Ethelred that pertains to the Southover chapel).²⁵ In addition the Tannere chantry paid the stipend of another priest from c.1404.

Apart from the vicar, the priests serving in St Cuthbert's were mainly housed by the town guild in what had been regarded as the eastern arm of St Cuthbert Street, but was called Priest Row from c.1444.²⁶ On the eve of the Reformation the town had 12 small properties here. The churchwardens used one

and another was the town exchequer. Many of the others were let to priests. As a result a convocation book gives us some names. Interestingly, most relate to the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, perhaps reflecting the growing popularity of the cult of Our Lady, but it may also indicate the Holy Trinity fraternity kept some separate identity as suggested by the 1487 grant.²⁷ However, a detailed account will need a further article.

Conclusions

This article shows the difficulties of compiling plot histories when relevant documents are missing. This compounds the general problem that deeds were written for local contemporaries not to inform historians. Nevertheless, it is hoped that some more gaps have been closed. Further progress is unlikely unless more material comes to light. In addition it has demonstrated how plot histories can contribute information that will build up to help us understand other wider matters, in this case, the fraternities and altars of St Cuthbert and their relationship with the town guild.

However, plot histories can illuminate many matters. One example will be given concerning an individual. In 1367 William Churchstyles' colleague as warden was Adam de Carleton; this shows that Adam had made his peace with his fellow burgesses. Earlier, in 1351, he had erected a 'cooking house' in the middle of High Street. His fellow burgesses had to take him to the royal courts to make him remove the obstruction.²⁸ Once again knowledge triggers more questions. Was Adam's rehabilitation (and perhaps his initial presumption) due to kinship with Dean John de Carleton (1350-61)? Sadly we are unlikely to ever know. However, the author will be grateful for any other information on this or other issues discussed.

1. A.J. Scrase and J. Hasler (eds), *Wells Corporation properties*, Somerset Record Society (S.R.S.) 87 (2002).
2. A.J. Scrase, 'Godwyn or Lynge – a Wells problem c.1406-1560' *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset* (Sep 2012), 159-66.
3. D. Shilton and R. Holworthy (eds), *Wells City charters*, S.R.S. vol. 46 (1932), 105-6.
4. D.G. Shaw, *The creation of a community* (1993), 174-5.
5. For an abuttal see Scrase and Hasler, *Wells Corporation properties* p30; for the deed Wells Cathedral Archives (W.C.A.), AH147.
6. Scrase and Hasler, *Wells Corporation properties*, 30.

7. See map Scrase and Hasler, *Wells Corporation properties*, 163.
8. W.C.A., AH70-4.
9. Scrase and Hasler, *Wells Corporation properties*, 29-30, 45-6, 161, 171-3.
10. Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 90-1.
11. Wells Town Hall Archives (W.T.H.A.), *Convocation book I*, 168.
12. Somerset Record Office (S.R.O.), DD/SAS PR256.
13. F.W. Weaver (ed.), *Somerset Medieval wills 1385-1500*, S.R.S. 16 (1901), 69.
14. Scrase and Hasler, *Wells Corporation properties*, 64; W.T.H.A. leases 1022/2-3, 1022/7, 1032/9.
15. T. Serel, *Historical notes on the church of St Cuthbert in Wells* (1875), 36-41.
16. Serel, *Church of St Cuthbert*, 29.
17. Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 75-80.
18. *Ibid*, 86-7.
19. *Ibid*, 108-9.
20. *Ibid*, 94.
21. See the Precentor's survey of 1828 (S.H.C., DD/CC 5060).
22. Serel, *Church of St Cuthbert*, 11-3; T.S. Holmes, *Wells and Glastonbury* (1908), 125.
23. Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 80, 85, 96-8, 101-3.
24. Shaw, *The creation of a community* p44; A.J. Scrase, 'The Medieval chapel at Southover in Wells' *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society* 126 (1982), 107-10.
25. Holmes, *Wells and Glastonbury*, 132-3.
26. Scrase and Hasler, *Wells city properties*, 224-5.
27. For example see Serel, *Church of St Cuthbert*, 55-6; Holmes, *Wells and Glastonbury*, 129.
28. C.T. Flower (ed.), *Public works in Medieval law vol. ii* Selden Society 40 (1923), 135-6; A.J. Scrase, *Streets and market places in towns of Southwest England: encroachments and improvements* (1999), 48.

TONY SCRASE

36. LEWESDON HILL AND CHARMOUTH. William Crowe, whose poem *Lewesdon Hill* was admired by Coleridge¹ and Wordsworth,² was rector of Stoke Abbott in Dorset only from the end of 1782 to the end of 1787, the year before his poem about the neighbouring hill was published. He only appears once in the parish registers, conducting a marriage a couple of months before his resignation, but he did appoint a curate who served the parish well for another thirty years, and with New College, Oxford, patrons of the living, he bought 'two closes of meadowland (about 5 acres) for accommodation to the parsonage, there being no Glebe near the house.' (Typically, he added, 'After my death the College may do with the land as they please.')

³ His poem also suggests a clear understanding of the local geography, and a detailed grasp of some county history, but the overall impression is that his new

(and important) appointment as Public Orator to the University of Oxford in 1784 was likely to have mattered more to him than his duties in west Dorset. He certainly moved nearer to Oxford when he exchanged Stoke Abbott for Alton Barnes in Wiltshire, where he continued as rector until his death in 1829.

It is therefore of some interest to discover a connection with Charmouth, which seems to be echoed in *Lewesdon Hill* itself.

It is perhaps useful, first, to try to make sense of Crowe's marriage and children. No record of his marriage has come to light. In 1818 Tom Moore, who met him on several occasions, says, 'He married a fruit-woman's daughter at Oxford; had children by her, yet still continued to hold his fellowship'.⁴ There is no reason to disbelieve this, or that she was not the Elizabeth who outlived him by thirteen years and who is buried at Alton Barnes as 'The Late Rector's Wife', despite a bald statement in 1906 that Moore's evidence 'is not credited by the present members of the family'.⁵ Baptisms of their children are almost equally elusive, and there are steady discrepancies of about four years between the ages of the older children as given in the Alton Barnes burial register and as given in the censuses they survived to see.

It is therefore refreshing to discover that the Charmouth parish register for 29 June 1788 gives the baptism of Frederic, son of William and Elizabeth Crowe. This is a correction of the original entry ('inserted through mistake on the other page') which gave the father's name as George. The alteration suggests that the information is now correct, and that the family may not have been long established in Charmouth. Frederic's memorial at Alton Barnes says he died after fighting in Burma on 9 July 1826, age 38, which fits this baptism. Another son, Henry, who matriculated at Wadham College, Oxford, in 1810, was then described as the son of William Crowe of Charmouth, so it looks likely that the family lived in Charmouth at some time, and possible that William walked, as he was famously fond of doing, to reach Stoke Abbott, making minimal use there of the old rectory, his 'reed-roof'd cottage' weather-fended by the friendly mount of Lewesdon.

There is another entry for a Crowe in Charmouth⁶. On 8 April 1787 (the year before the publication of *Lewesdon Hill*)

Frances Alice Crowe was buried there. No age is given.

Crowe wrote and published a beautiful Latin elegy (*Inscriptio in Horto auctoris apud Alton in com Wilt.*) to commemorate the death of his youngest son William at the age of 20 in 1815 at the battle of New Orleans. Perhaps unusually for the period it seems that he may not have been averse to quietly including his family in other verse. His oldest child was Louisa Elizabeth. Early in *Lewesdon Hill*, published when she would have been nine (or possibly five) he decries those who delight in the decaying colours of autumn:

Should I praise
Such false complexions, and for beauty take
A look consumption-bred? As soon, if gray
Were mixt in young Louisa's tresses brown,
I'd call it beautiful variety,
And therefore doat on her.

A little later in the poem Crowe describes Marshwood Vale, where the 'nameless Rivulet'⁷ is surely the one known to us as the Char, whose course is still as obscure as Crowe describes it, missing 'the noisy haunts of men' (except for the occasional caravan and the A35 bridge). The vale, he says, is

water'd well
By many a rill; but chief with thy clear stream,
Thou nameless Rivulet, who from the side
Of Lewesdon softly welling forth, dost trip
Adown the valley, wandering sportively.
Alas, how soon thy little course will end!
How soon thy infant stream shall lose itself
In the salt mass of waters, ere it grow
To name or greatness! Yet it flows along
Untainted with the commerce of the world,
Nor passing by the noisy haunts of men;
But through sequester'd meads, a little space,
Winds secretly, and in its wanton path
May cheer some drooping flower, or minister
Of its cool water to the thirsty lamb:
Then falls into the ravenous sea, as pure
As when it issued from its native hill.

So to thine early grave didst thou run on,
 Spotless Francesca, so, after short course,
 Thine innocent and playful infancy
 Was swallowed up in death, and thy pure spirit
 In that illimitable gulph which bounds
 Our mortal continent.

Having failed to find any suitable reference for a 'spotless Francesca', I find it hard to resist the notion that Crowe was here moved to record his feelings about the life and death of his young daughter Frances Alice, buried near the mouth of the Char in 1787.

1. C.G. Martin, 'Coleridge and William Crowe's "Lewesdon Hill"', *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 1967), 400-406.
2. J. Wordsworth, *Lewesdon Hill* (facsimile of 1st edition, 1989), introduction.
3. J.G. Sewell's notebook about New College property and livings (New College Archives).
4. J. Russell (ed.), *Memoirs, journal, & correspondence of Thomas Moore*, 2 (1853), 180.
5. A.L. Reade, *The Reades of Blackwood Hill* (1906), 70.
6. There is also Robert Crow, widower of Dalwood, who married a Charmouth woman on 16 July 1772, but these are the only Crowe-like entries 1700-1837.
7. Interestingly, Coleridge also had a 'nameless rivulet' in *To the Author of Poems* [Joseph Cottle], published 1795. Jonathan Wordsworth, *Lewesdon Hill*, even suggests that 'However incongruously, the *Lewesdon* stream must be numbered among the sources of the sacred River Alph in *Kubla Khan*'.

JOHN ROBERTS

37. THE DISCOVERY OF AN EARLY FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MANORIAL COURT ROLL.

The court roll

Within the binding of a volume of 17th-century Books of Fines for the Hundred of Taunton Deane (1635-1641) there was recently discovered a large fragment of a 15th-century manuscript manorial court roll.¹ It had been used, more than two hundred years after its original production, as part of the binding, as a spine-wrapper, roughly sewn to hold together the paper gatherings of the Books of Fines, beneath the volume's parchment wrapper. The court roll fragment is now quite badly damaged, with large holes at the head and foot, probably produced after it was re-used as a spine-wrapper, the surface abraded and often faint to read. When discovered, it was no

longer attached by sewing threads but displaced and partially stuck to the volume's parchment wrapper in a manuscript volume which had suffered some wear.² The single membrane had been cleanly cut on three sides, measured *c.*35 x 23cms,³ and carried a professionally written and ordered text.

The court roll survives as a single membrane fragment containing the materials from two courts, and does not specify its manorial origins. The second of the two courts, however, has a dated heading,⁴ against which is written in the margin 'Enemere', and it seems likely that this is the principal manorial tithing and that the court is that of the manor of Enmore, at that time in the possession of Baldwin Malet, kt.⁵ Written in the margin beside other presentments are the names of the other tithings which comprise the manorial unit of jurisdiction. They indicate that the manor was made up of contiguous tithings from three adjacent parishes: from Enmore ('Enemere') and Lexworthy ('Leykesworth') in Enmore, from Blaxhold ('Blakesole') in Broomfield, and from Pightley ('Pigthlegh') in Spaxton.⁶ No other court rolls have so far been discovered for the medieval manor of Enmore, though such records do survive for Broomfield and Spaxton manors, and for Ivyton, Rooks Castle, and Radlet, in the 15th century.⁷

This court roll fragment is a fair copy with no surviving corrections though some insertions. It is very likely that it was formerly one of a bundle of such membranes, since the *recto* begins a little way into the court preceding that of 13th May 1401. There is no indication of sewing at the head or foot of the membrane, but other membranes may have been attached by parchment tie to the centre of the head, though it is impossible to determine this because of the damage done to that part of the manuscript. The legal form and content of the document is not unusual. Representatives of the various tithings make their presentments, feudal requirements are enforced, matters of nuisance and trespass are recorded and fines and amercements levied, distrains are imposed for defaults of customary obligations, and land transactions are entered. Entries were sometimes made sequentially according to tithing but also copied in more randomly. Notes of fines were made in the left hand margins and were totalled at the end of the court. The

document speaks, as all such documents do, to an administrative practice, both literate and numerate, and, in this case, part of a system of estate management widely employed by the aristocracy in early 15th century England.

The discovery of even a fragment of new evidence, especially where little or none existed before, may sometimes result in a quantum leap of understanding. The value of this discovery may be more modest but it is nonetheless significant, and all the more so for being the all too rare evidence of the small manor of a lay lord. Thanks to the fragments of information still legible on this roll it is now possible for the first time to comprehend the extent of Baldwin Malet's manor of Enmore and the tithings of which it was composed. Perhaps more important, however, is the indirect evidence it supplies of peasant life on the eastern edge of the Quantocks, among the wooded valleys, scattered hamlets and farmsteads, under the lay jurisdiction of the gentry family of Malet, not far from the busy port and town of Bridgwater.

In addition to occasional references to the arable, pasture and meadow holdings of lord and tenants, and the vital maintenance of spring ditches, there are a few indications of economic assets and activities otherwise unknown on the manor at this time. William Touker of 'Toukershilne' may betray in his name his occupation as a fuller, the tithing of 'Blakesole' presented those guilty of digging without licence for tilestone in the lord's quarry, and Nicholas Hestercombe (perhaps a millwright) was amerced for failing to fulfill a contract to repair the millhouse and mill-pond. A scattered handful of placenames confirms the impression of a landscape of wooded combs and clearings, of meadows, streams and ponds.⁸ And most suggestive of all, and perhaps most elusive, tenant surnames speak of families and kin over generations, here intimately concerned with small, local places and communities, but revealing little apparent connection with those more distant.⁹

The fine book

The book of fines is a composite volume containing individually bound volumes for each of the twice yearly courts, or tourns, held for the Bishop of Winchester's manor of

Taunton Deane. There is one volume for each court and each individual court's fines are bound in a unique way. The majority of bindings are on clean pieces of parchment but two, like the binding described above, are what can be best described as recycled manuscripts. The two courts in question are for the Turn of Hock of 1618 and Turn of St Martin of 1619.

The fines for the Turn of Hock of 1618 are bound up in two different manuscripts. The top of the front cover is part of an indenture of 1616 mentioning two daughters of John Crosse of Burlescombe, Devon. This has been sewn together with what looks like a slightly earlier list of questions concerning the lands of Walter Cyble, possibly of Taunton, which mentions a Robert Elliot. Both are in different hands. The questions would have been prepared as part of the court's business when resolving a dispute brought before them, and are similar to the format of questions found in Exchequer inquisitions. Although there are dozens of court books and hundreds of petitions, documents of this kind are not common in the manorial papers for the Hundred of Taunton Deane held at the Somerset Heritage Centre or Hampshire County Record Office.

The fines for the Turn of St Martin of 1619 are bound in an incomplete indenture, dated 1619, between the feofees¹⁰ of the 'Towne of Taunton' and Laurence Whillier and William Scorrier. It appears that this transaction concerned a property in Taunton. The dates of the court, and the indenture, suggest that when the latter was discarded it could only then have been sewn with the paper for the book of fines for the Turn of St Martin of 1619. Therefore the paper and the cover were sewn together shortly afterwards. Whether this was common practice in the exchequer at Taunton Castle needs further investigation.¹¹

The discovery of the court roll fragment (binding all of the individual volumes of court fines), combined with the use of other recycled manuscripts, has raised many questions, two of which are examined here. First, how did a court roll from the beginning of the 15th century relating to Enmore end up as part of a binding of a Taunton Deane fine book? The ownership of the manors covered by the court roll is well documented following the death of Baldwin Malet in 1416. The manor of Enmore remained in the ownership of members of the same

family throughout the period under examination (*i.e.* upto 1641), with a small exception when the Hull family obtained possession. But through Eleanor Malet, wife of Sir John Hull, it returned to the Malet family. Therefore by 1641 Enmore had changed hands twice but ended up in the possession of the same family who owned the manor at the time the court roll was compiled in 1401.¹²

There is a connection between the administration of the hundred of Taunton Deane and the Malet family, but it is a distant one to the family who owned Enmore. Thomas Malet esquire (*c.*1582X1586-1665), son and heir of Malachi Malet of Luxilian, Cornwall, gentleman, jointly held the patent for the office of clerk of the Castle of Taunton from 1618.¹³ Although patent holders did not always undertake the physical duties of a clerk there is a possibility that he may have visited the castle. Whether he was involved with leaving surplus pieces of vellum in the Castle is not known. What is known is his connection to Enmore, which is through his great grandfather, Baldwin Malet (*c.*1481-1533) who was born at Enmore, son of Thomas (*c.*1440-1501) and Isabella Courtney.

There is another connection between Enmore and the hundred of Taunton Deane. This was through residents of Enmore who entered into property transactions within the hundred of Taunton Deane. Whether one of these individuals came into the possession of the Enmore court roll and then passed it on to the person who bound the volume is something else which is unknown.

Secondly, who in Taunton was responsible for arranging the binding and keeping the court papers for the Bishop of Winchester's manors in Somerset? The clerk of Taunton castle is an obvious candidate but this was an office of some standing within the administration of the Bishop of Winchester's estate in Somerset. The patent for the office was not always held by a local man, as in 1618 it was jointly granted to Sir Henry Portman baronet (died 24 February 1620/1) of Orchard Portman, John Browne esquire (*c.*1581-1659) of Frampton, Dorset and Thomas Malet esquire.¹⁴ Portman and Browne were first cousins, being descended from Sir Henry Portman (*c.*1530-1591) of Orchard Portman, but when Portman died in 1621 the

patent remained predominantly with the Browne family until 1679.¹⁵ In 1641, during the period the fine book was bound together, Robert Browne armiger (1608-1648) and John Browne (c.1608-1670/1) the younger, described as esquire and gentleman, both held the patent.¹⁶

It is highly unlikely that the holder of the patent would have dealt with a trivial and hands on matter like the binding of court records. This would have been left to his deputy, who in this instance was John Porter, who served as both deputy clerk and clerk under the Brownes from 1626 up until 1662. He also served as both deputy steward and (intermittently as) steward,¹⁷ but as a man with legal training it is unclear whether this is the same man who matriculated from Christ's College, Cambridge in December 1616 and obtained his B.A. in 1620.¹⁸ Porter's role is worth expanding on.

Due to the nature of appointing substitutes to hold manorial courts on the bishopric's manor, Porter found himself serving as steward in 1641¹⁹ and signed the audit book for the hundred in 1642,²⁰ effectively approving all the financial transactions within the hundred. He also compiled in his distinctive hand the fine book under examination in this paper, so it is highly likely he was involved with having the volume bound some time in or after 1641. However, when the clerk gathered the individual tourn books together to be bound into one volume it is highly likely that he incorrectly arranged them. On the front of the volume for the Tourn of Hock, 1639, is a note by Porter, stating 'This should stand in the year after being misplaced'.²¹ Whether he, his deputy, or the binder misplaced it is not known, but documentary evidence for bookbinders in Taunton at this time is not common. There were booksellers in Taunton who might have offered bookbinding, such as George Treagle who was in business in 1646.²²

The nature of the binding is such that it would not have taken someone with a great deal of skill to undertake its construction. A reasonable ability to sew, access to some glue and spare pieces of vellum, along with a modicum of training would have been enough to complete the binding in a relatively short time. Nevertheless, the discovery of this recycling activity has left us with a hitherto unknown view of a small area of

medieval Somerset and a further insight into the administration of Taunton Castle.

Note: The first section, headed 'The court roll' was written by Dr Andrew Butcher and the second section, headed 'The fine book' was written by the Somerset Editor.

1. Somerset Heritage Centre (afterwards S.H.C.), DD/SP 95. The discovery was made by Dr Adrian Webb. A transcript of this court roll, by Andrew Butcher, is kept with the original document at the S.H.C..
2. The court roll fragment was extracted from its present binding for the purposes of inspection by Mervyn Richens, Senior Conservator, Somerset Heritage Centre.
3. The head of the manuscript is missing, and may partially have been so when used as the spine-wrapper.
4. 13th May 1401.
5. R.W. Dunning, ed., *A history of the county of Somerset*, vol. VI (1992), 37 (hereafter cited as *VCH Somerset*, Vol. VI).
6. For parish maps see *VCH Somerset*, Vol. VI, 6, 36, 111
7. *VCH Somerset*, Vol. VI, 14, 42, and 121.
8. Placenames: 'Hethcomb', 'Brademed', 'Gelampton', 'Purye', 'Toukershilne', 'Leykesworth', 'Rakesworth', 'Blakesole', 'Enmere', and 'Pightley'.
9. Surnames: 'Brodemed', 'Cary', 'Clyvedon', 'Cole', 'Cosyn', 'Fichet', 'Grobham', 'Hestercomb', '(atte) Lane', 'Langtrow', 'Marke', 'Oke' (Oake?, Ogg?), 'Rakesworth', 'Togge', 'Touker', 'Towgand', 'Turnet'.
10. The names of the feofees that are visible are Richard Wo...,combe esquire, John Symes of Pundisforde esquire, John Coles of Barton esquire, John Goodwin [?] Doctor of Divinity, Andrewe Hendley esquire, Roger, William Leachland gentleman, Lewes Pope, William Dare, John Boone, Hugh Godsall merchant, John Davidge and Phillipp Lissant mercers.
11. S.H.C., DD/SP 95.
12. *VCH Somerset*, Vol. VI, 37.
13. Hampshire Record Office (afterwards H.R.O.), 11M59/E2/155655.
14. H.R.O., 11M59/E2/155655.
15. H.R.O., 21M65/A1/32; S.H.C., DD/DP 43/4/13.
16. H.R.O., 11M59/E2/155655.
17. For his description as clerk and deputy clerk see the will of Robert Browne, dated 1637 (T.N.A., PROB 11/204).
18. J. and J.A. Venn (eds), *Alumni Cantabrigiensis part 1 volume iii* (1924), 382.
19. S.H.C., DD/SP 12.
20. S.H.C., DD/SP 328/1.
21. S.H.C., DD/SP 95.
22. H.R. Plomer, *A dictionary of the booksellers and printers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667* (1907).

ANDREW BUTCHER & A.J.W.

38. MEASURING THE DORSET VIRGATE. Medieval land measurements are frequently obscure and problematic. England had a range of administrative terms for large family landholdings: the *oxgang* and *bovate*, the English and Latin

terms for the area based on what could be worked by a plough team in a year, and the *yardland* and *virgate*, the English and Latin terms for measured land worked by a wealthier peasant. The *virgate* is the most common term used throughout Dorset and other counties in southern England. It was the amount of land that would have supported a large, possibly extended, family with servants, providing food for the year and perhaps a small surplus. Less wealthy tenants might hold a half *virgate* or a quarter *virgate* often known as a 'ferendell'.¹

The size of the *virgate* could vary from one manor to another depending upon the quality of the land. Unfortunately, the officers of the manor court did not usually provide the acreages when they described the tenants' holdings in court rolls, rentals and surveys. At Broad Sydling in Sydling St Nicholas the *virgate* was 20 acres.² At Loders John Waryn took on a *virgate* of 30 acres at Michaelmas 1495 in the manor court.³ But court roll evidence should be used with caution as the size of the *virgate* might vary even within a manor. At Fleet in 1270 there were 3 tenants who held half *virgates* of 15 acres while 6 held half *virgates* of 16 acres, while at Puddletown there were 3 half *virgates* of 15 acres, 22 of 15½ acres, 1 of 16 acres, 1 of 17 acres and 1 of 17½ acres.⁴ It is uncommon for a survey to provide the acreages of all the *virgates*, crofts, cottages and tenements in a manor. Establishing the composition of a *virgate* is extremely unusual.

At Gillingham manor a survey compiled around 1300 contains 27 *virgates* held by tenants who were relatively wealthy and probably employed servants, 16 half-*virgates* held by families who were comfortable and had a small cushion against poor harvests, 29 *ferendells* and 6 half-*ferendells* held by poorer tenants who might struggle in lean times or by artisans who supplemented their income with small landholdings.⁵ Additionally, there were a hundred holdings described as 'tenements' of uncertain acreage, some of which had the same rental value as the *virgates*, and numerous *purprestures*, crofts, cottages, parcels and measured acreages which frequently changed hands between tenants to supplement the main holdings as families expanded and contracted. Even at this early date in the recorded history of Dorset landholding the

virgate structure was ancient and supplemented by alternative holdings that were easy to transfer in small units.

The following document from Moreton is a very rare example. It is undated, but the handwriting strongly suggests that it was produced in the final quarter of the 13th century. The survey is simply headed 'Peter de Moreton' suggesting that Peter might be living in or originating from the parish of Moreton, but the appearance of variants of the surnames Benegar, Hussey, Raul, Baltyngton and Bret in the Lay Subsidy assessment of 1332 for Moreton confirm that Peter was a resident. This document describes the strips in the fields that would not appear on maps for another four hundred years. They were marked by boundary stones and balks built up by generations of ploughing, regularly inspected by the tenants and the steward of the manor and frequently the subject of neighbourly disputes.

Transcript of the survey of the land of Peter de Moreton:⁶

Arable land

East Field

In an area called Byestelake half an acre less four feet between the land of Walter Bret and the land of William Benegar.

In the same Byestelake one acre between the land of Pydelmere and the *exiccat* part.

In Wothehurn half an acre between the land of John Raul and Henry Palmere.

In the same Wothehurn half an acre less four feet between the lands of Pydelmere and Topen.

In the same a Knol of half an acre between the land of Husey and Henry Palmere.

In the same a Knol of half an acre less four feet between the land of Husey and Pydelmere.

In the same Overmul Wey half an acre between the land of the widow Agnes and Pydelmere

In Gatelond half an acre less four feet between the land of William Benegar and William Duet

In Gatelond half an acre and one and a half perches lying together on the boundary of the lord's land

In Maynefurlong one and a half perches lying between the lands of Husey and the boundary

In Byesteknoldych one acre between the land of Peter Saltere and

the widow Agnes

In Flexlonde one and a half perches lying between the land of
Husey and Henry Palmere

In Flexlonde half an acre lying between the land of Pydelmere and
Walter Bret

In Flexlonde one and a half perches lying between the land of
Husey and Walter Bret

At Wyserde half an acre less four feet between the lands of the
parson and Henry Palmere

At Sondidich one perch and a half between the lands of Husey
and Henry Pasmere

At Bromulle half an acre between the land of Henry Palmere and
John Trappe

At Beckeberthre half an acre less four feet between the land of
Husey and Pydelmere

In Bytweneknol half an acre between the land of John Raul and
William Bret

Sum 10 acres

South Field

In an area called Forlak one acre less half a perch between the land
of Husey and Henry Palmere

In the same area one perch between the land of Pydelmere and
John Raul

In the same area half an acre less four feet between the land of
Pydelmere and Baltyngton

In Bonelake one acre between the ditch and the land of William de
Bret

In Bonelake one acre between the lands of Pydelmere and William
de Bret

In Bonelake one acre between the lands of Pydelmere and the
parson

In Bonelake half an acre and half a perch between the land of
Husey and the widow Agnes

In Middelferde one and a half perches between the land of
Pydelmere and the boundary

In Braylonde one and a half perches between the land of Husey and
Henry Palmere

In Wothelond one acre between the land of Pydelmere and
Baltyngton

In Wothelond one acre between the land of Pydelmere and John
Raul

In Wythibed one perch between the lands of Pydelmere and Henry
Palmere

In Rodelak half an acre and one and a half perches lying together

between the lands of Husey and the boundary
 Extracted from the curtillage of William Benegar half an acre of
 land between Pydelmere and Baltyngtone

Sum 9 and a half acres and 4 feet

West Field

In the area called Rodelak one acre less half a perch lying between
 the lands of Husey and Henry Palmere

In Rodelak one perch between the lands of Pydelmere and Henry
 Palmere

At Hethweldich half an acre between the lands of Husey and the
 parson

At Berthe half an acre between the lands of John Raul and Henry
 Palmere

At Merre one acre between the land of Walter Bret and William
 Hayward

At Merre one and a half perches between the lands of Husey and
 Pydelmere

Up Hankeshulle one and a half perches between the lands of
 William Bret and William Bucks

In Hetlond one acre and three and a half perches lying together
 between the lands of Husey and John Raul

From Kene's curtillage half an acre lying between the lands of
 Oliver and Mabil of Hurste

At Gatdich half an acre lying between the lands of Oliver and
 Henry of Hurst

In the same one and a half perches between the land of William
 Prelate and Henry of Hurste

Up Langlond half an acre less four feet between the lands of Husey
 and Pydelmere

Up Langlond half an acre between the lands of John Raul and
 William Bret

Up Langlond one and a half perches between the lands of Husey
 and William Bucks

At Brigge one and a half acres of headland (*terra capitalis*)

At Lak half an acre between the land of Baltyngton and Henry
 Palmere

In Stoklond half an acre between the land of Husey and John Raul

Up Hulle one acre and one and a half perches between the lands of
 Husey and William Bucks

In Stoklond half an acre between Palmere and Baltintone

Sum 11 and a half acres, half a perch and four feet

Sum of all the arable 31 acres

Pasture

One strip lying beside Bromulle containing three perches

East of Potre Hamme to the stream one and a half acres

At Potre Hamme as far as atte Lynche three and a half acres

At Westmede one and a half acres and half a perch in four locations

One hamma called Hursteham next to the curtillage of Mabil of Urste

In yemiche half an acre between the lord and the parson

In the same one perch between William Tope and the widow

In the same half an acre and one perch }

In the same one and a half acres }

In the same half an acre } lying together between
John Bret and Matilda

Half an acre between Pidelmere and Baltintone

In Huppe hurste one acre and one perch lying together

1. The ferendell was a common holding on many manors (Anglo-Saxon '*feorþan dael*' the fourth deal / fourth part).
2. Winchester College Archive, 18383.
3. The National Archives, SC 2/170/22.
4. K.A. Hanna (ed.), *The Christchurch Priory cartulary*, Hampshire Record Series XVIII (2007), 479-80 and 484-9. The reference to the sixteen acre virgate at Puddletown must be a scribal error for a half virgate.
5. Dorset History Centre (D.H.C.), D/GIM/M/1.
6. D.H.C., D.303/1.

MARK FORREST

39. A BROAD SYDLING SURVEY. On 27 April 1527 an estate steward produced a written survey of Milton Abbey's manor of Broad Sydling in Sydling St Nicholas.¹ Unusually in his heading he listed seven individuals who he called to offer evidence of the holdings and rights of the tenants: Thomas Atwell alias Smythe, aged 90; William Helyer, aged 72; Richard Goveyr, aged 60; Richard Bayly, aged 60; John Gybbe, aged 70; William Wylls, aged 66; and Richard Crode, aged 80.

The anonymous steward gave no indication of how he had selected these seven men other than recording their ages. Taking evidence from older tenants about the customs of a manor was a common medieval and early modern method of ensuring popular acceptance as well as ascertaining genuine traditions. Presumably they were resident within the manor although they did not all hold land at the time of the survey. Thomas Atwell, Richard Goveyr and William Wylls are not

listed among the tenants; presumably they lived with their children, grand-children or other tenants. William Helyer held a virgate of twenty acres and a close of one and a half acres in Egliston and a close in Estover. Richard Bayley held a virgate and a close in Westover. John Gybbe held three cottages in Westover. Richard Crode held half a virgate in Estover and two cottages in Westover. These four landholders were relatively wealthy by Broad Sydling standards, but they were not the wealthiest and nor did they all hold particular types of land that was the criteria for selection. Perhaps most significant is that they held land in different parts of the manor.

That the steward could acquire evidence from seven tenants aged in their sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties indicates that the Tudor population of Sydling might achieve a long life if they escaped childhood illness, the sporadic outbreaks of plague that punctuated the 15th century and for women death in childbirth. Establishing the age structure of the population in the early sixteenth century is extremely difficult; Wrigley and Schofield tentatively suggest that those over sixty made up between eight and ten percent of the overall population.²

In part these elders of the manor must have been called upon to verify which tenants held certain pieces of land. The survey which the steward compiled consisted of a list of six freeholders and fifty four customary tenants who between them held one hundred and fourteen landholdings. These holdings were of variable size: the freeholder John Stroude held one and a half carrucates or approximately one hundred and twenty acres, Edward Hardy held two freehold virgates and half an acre of customary land as well as a cottage, the widow Christine Hake had two cottages with four acres of customary land. On many manors, particularly on large estates, stewards compiled surveys every generation: earlier surviving Broad Sydling surveys were compiled in 1342, 1384, 1440 and 1481.³ These surveys were the fixed points at which ownership and tenancy were beyond dispute.

These older tenants had lived through a period when customary tenure was redefined. The first Broad Sydling survey in 1342 shows a classic medieval structure in which the customary tenants were clearly divided into groups according to

their holdings: cottagers with three or four acres, half virgates of ten acres and virgaters of twenty acres were divided between one hundred and nineteen tenants. Only five tenants had more than one distinct holding. In the 1384 and 1440 surveys this traditional pattern had started to break down. The holdings were consolidated in fewer hands and in 1440 it was necessary to note the few remaining customary tenants who were personally unfree bondmen described as "*nativi*". All of the customary tenants had achieved their freedom by the 1481 survey when several tenants with the same names as those seven listed at the head of the 1527 survey held lands, and many of the traditional tenements had been merged together. By 1527 and it was the task of the steward and older villagers to establish the owners of all the different pieces of land where the traditional holdings had been divided or consolidated and to record those customary rights and responsibilities that were still current.

The older tenants re-affirmed, corrected and informed the steward as he updated his written records. Their memories supplied the knowledge of tenancy rights to a particular tenement which are expressed by reference to one or two former holders. They agreed those tenants who held virgates and half virgates and were obliged to act as tithingmen, reeves and rent collectors, presumably by election or rotation. This task became more difficult as some tenancies were agglomerated and others broken up. Most complex and contentious must have been establishing the grazing rights attached to different properties. In the 1340s when customary land was divided into neat cottages, half virgates and virgates this was probably quite straight forward. However when additional pasture had been carved out of the demesne or enclosed from arable land and virgates had been broken up and assigned to several tenants assessing the rights to pasture was much more complicated.

In listing the seven residents and providing their ages at the start of his survey the steward acknowledged the importance of collective memory in the administration of the manor. This was a common method of agreement found in manorial surveys, perambulations and particulars: at Okeford Fitzpaine in 1584 the steward began his survey by listing thirty two tenants who had taken oaths.⁴ Recognition of oral traditions within legal

texts was common among the aristocracy in the early medieval period: the use of signatures, seals and witnesses partially counteracted forgery while creating trust and authority.⁵ The memories of those seven men were important because they represented the collective memory of all the customary tenants and their contribution ensured the acceptance of the survey as a definitive record by the whole population.

1. Winchester College Archive, 18406.
2. E.A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The population history of England 1541-1871: a reconstruction* (1989), 215-219.
3. Winchester College Archive, 18383, 18384, 18231 and 18232.
4. Suffolk Record Office: Bury St Edmunds, HA 528/28.
5. M.T. Clanchy, *From memory to written record: England 1066-1307* (1987), 232-57.

MARK FORREST

NOTE

BLAKE, 'JERUSALEM', AND GLASTONBURY. William Blake (1757-1827), who has been described as a mystic in 'that tradition of Dissenting prophets' of England's 'alternative religious tradition',¹ and an 'apocalyptic visionary', who evolved his own complex mythology and cosmology² - was not concerned about historicity. Thus, the symbolism of his 'mythopoetic romanticism' should not be regarded as hinting at historical facts, or even a historical tradition. The latter has so often been suggested by a simplistic interpretation of his enigmatic four stanza lyric known as '*Jerusalem*',³ which (as set to music by Parry and re-orchestrated by Elgar) has effectively become an 'alternative national anthem' and the story, to which it supposedly alludes, 'part of our national mythology'.⁴

One usually critical historian, for example, has written, that this poem, which 'ends with an inspiring evocation of national destiny'- rather than a nostalgic longing for a golden age which never existed- opens with an 'oblique reference to the legend that Jesus Christ may once have visited the Isles'.⁵

However as another, but long ignored, scholar wrote, well over half a century ago: 'even if his highly obscure lines could be taken to mean that he believed in a literal visit to this island

(which is certainly not their apparent meaning) his apocalyptic imagery when brought down to earth is localised mainly in London'. Indeed the rhetorical words '... and did those feet ... and was the holy Lamb of God ...?' - 'were no more meant to be taken literally' than the statement found 'further on' in his great allegorical work *Milton* (to which the introductory lyric *Jerusalem* served as the proem) that Calvary was situated 'between South Molton Street and Stratford Place'.⁶

Perhaps Geoffrey Ashe might have the final word. In a recent work he states: 'the version [of] the story of Joseph's coming' which 'brings Jesus to Britain' is 'comparatively modern'. In fact, together with the associated idea that Joseph was a trader in tin, 'it cannot be traced back further than the late 19th century, and thus too late for Blake to have known of it'.⁷

1. P. Ackroyd, *Blake* (1995), 47-8, where he also describes Joseph of Arimathea as 'reputed to be the first to preach the gospel within these islands, and forty three years after the crucifixion of Christ [*sic*, an error for 'the 31st year after the passion'] he built the first Christian church at Glastonbury', as 'for Blake the first Gothic architect' and 'in many ways Blake's true [spiritual] ancestor'. No mention is made, however, of any belief that Jesus came to Britain, let alone to Glastonbury, with (or without) Joseph. On this see my 'Glastonbury's Urtext,' in *SDNQ*, xxxvi (2010), 370-4, especially footnote 9.
2. See G. Keynes, *The complete writings of William Blake* (1966). The classicist and poet, A.E. Housman, in *The name and nature of poetry* (1933), went further, suggesting that as regards the meaning of Blake's poetry 'it may be inadvisable to draw it out ... that we can listen with all our hearing to his celestial tune'.
3. Incidentally not to be confused with his epic poem, *Jerusalem*, of which Ackroyd, *Blake*, 320-22, has commented: 'it is clear that the message is unique because after two hundred years it has still to be properly understood'.
4. The title of a BBC 4 programme (2006); cf J. Paxman, *The English* (1998), 93: 'The roots of the English belief to have been chosen by God lie far back with the implausible legend that Jesus had visited the country as a boy (the basis of William Blake's "And did those feet in ancient times ..."); and E. Jones, *The English nation, the great myth* (1998), 58: the 'theme of England's specially chosen role in the world as the promised land, the new Israel, appears in the apocalyptic vision of Blake's *Jerusalem* ... a powerful folk myth even among professional historians'. Perhaps an echo of this was heard in the resignation speech of a former prime minister (A. Blair, 2008): 'this is a very blessed nation'?
5. N. Davies, *The Isles* (1999), 834.
6. B.H. Thompson, *Glastonbury, truth and fiction* (London, 1939), 12-13; cf. J. Carley, *Glastonbury Abbey* (1988; rev 1996), 184-5, where it is suggested that 'even in the middle ages, there are some hints of a tradition that Jesus himself came to Glastonbury ... William Blake seems to be dealing with similar traditions ... when he asks : And did those feet ...?', but then in a footnote adds: 'For those who are tempted to make much of these lines , however, it is

worth pointing out that in *Milton* Blake also situated Calvary between South Molton Street and Stratford Place.'

7. G. Ashe, *The Offbeat Radicals* (2007) 46-7; cf his *King Arthur's Avalon* (1957), 350-1: 'Glastonbury inspired Blake, who embodies one of the strangest fancies of all . . . there are said to be some wild scraps of Cornish and Mendip folk-lore with a bearing on it'.

M. J. PROTHEROE

QUERY

THE 'MAGIC MAN' AT HIGHBRIDGE, 1873. Does anybody know the identity and background of the 'Magic Man at Highbridge', who was described as effecting the cure of a young girl with medicine and a charm, in the *Wells Journal* of 13 Nov. 1873?

HAZEL HUDSON & FRANCES NEALE

CORRECTION

THE FLEUR DE LYS. The caption for the photograph of the Fleur de Lys on page 93 of the March SDNQ issue should read 'The Fleur de Lys taken from the site of the Market Cross'.

COLIN BRETT

NOTICE

SDNQ WEBSITE. There is now a website for *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries* at sdnq.org.uk. The website is under construction but already includes information on the current issue of the journal, instructions for contributors and advertisers, and a brief history of *SDNQ*, as well as contact details. Transcriptions of documents that are too lengthy to be included in the journal are also to be featured on the site, the first of which is the transcript by Dr Andrew Butcher that accompanies the paper 'The discovery of an early fifteenth-century manorial court roll' on pp. 210-216 of this issue. The website will be updated regularly.

J.F.

OBITUARY

LORD REES-MOGG. We record with deep regret the death of our Patron, Lord Rees-Mogg of Hinton-Blewitt, on 29 December, 2012 at the age of 84. He has been described by Dom Aidan Bellenger, Abbot of Downside, and a member of the SDNQ committee, as ‘one of the most influential men of his generation’. Michael McGarvie writes: William Rees-Mogg was born in 1928 and educated at Charterhouse and Balliol with which he had family connections. He was of good Somerset ancestry going back to John Mogg of Chewton Mendip in 1585. For more than two centuries his family owned Cholwell House at Temple Cloud. His double-barrelled name came from the marriage of Mary Mogg Wooldridge and the Rev. John Rees in 1805.

SDNQ first became associated with him in 2000. He had come to live at Bilboa on the Mells Estate and kindly agreed to explain his family history to members at the Millennium Garden Party at Marston House. He had been an outstanding editor of *The Times* and a leading Catholic and Conservative thinker. Among the many offices he held was that of High Sheriff of Somerset. After ceasing to be editor he continued to write a column for *The Times*, not always featuring great issues but sometimes local matters that interested him, such as a good wine shop he’d discovered in Frome. One day he came across SDNQ and praised it in his column. This encouraged us to invite him to join our committee in 2001. He accepted and after the death of Mrs S.W. Rawlins he became our patron.

He attended meetings when he could and gave SDNQ much sage advice and wise counsel. Those who expected a hard-bitten journalist found instead a quietly spoken gentleman, courteous and erudite with a good sense of humour. I found him modest and unassuming, never domineering and he fitted perfectly into the ambience of our committee. We benefited hugely from his wide knowledge and measured judgement.

Strangely enough, William Rees-Mogg did not drive and it was my pleasant task to take him to SDNQ committee meetings. It was a privilege to be exposed to so much good conversation. On the first occasion I took him I found him drinking Chablis in his garden. On the second occasion I had Dom Aidan Bellenger with me and those two great Catholics, who had such a respect for each other, both refused to take the front seat of my humble vehicle.

Finally, William was persuaded to do so, despite the shortage of room for his long legs. William would talk learnedly about antiquarian books which he bought and sold. He was much interested in the ghost of a monk said on good authority to haunt the Pasvise Room at Bilboa. Its manifestations ceased on the removal of a crucifix from one wall to another. I was surprised to find that he believed Catholic priests should be allowed to marry. Soon after 9/11 he told me that nations soon recovered from such catastrophes. Could I remember the exact date of Pearl Harbour?

The funeral was at Westminster Cathedral, the lesson being 'Let us now praise famous men'. Lady Gass represented SDNQ. William was buried with his ancestors at Camely where his great grandfather, Rev. H.S. Savory, had been rector.

MICHAEL MCGARVIE



William, Lord Rees Mogg, with his wife Gillian, and son Jacob outside their home at Mells in July 2006 (courtesy of The Western Daily Press and Richard Hudd)

ADVERTISING IN SDNQ

Rates for advertising in SDNQ are £8 for a quarter page and £12 for a half page, per annum. Graphics can also be included and all material must be supplied electronically.

Advertisers are requested to contact the Hon. Treasurer for further details.

SDNQ VOLUMES 1 TO 30

The committee of SDNQ are pleased to announce that volumes 1 to 30, covering the period 1888 to 1939, have been digitised and placed on the internet. These volumes are fully searchable for any word or term and are far more accessible than ever before. Access is through a subscription service run by the Origins Network. **For more details visit www.originsnetwork.com**

DEVON AND CORNWALL NOTES AND QUERIES

A Journal devoted to the
LOCAL HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY, BIOGRAPHY and
ANTIQUITIES of the Counties of Devon and Cornwall.

£8.00 a year post free.

The Editor will be glad to receive suitable material relating to the History, Archaeology and Antiquities of the two Counties.

This should be sent to Mr. J. M. Draisey, 87 Howell Road, Exeter EX4 4LN
Subscriptions: N. Annett, 3 Johnstone Drive, Broomhill, Tiverton EX16 5BU

THE SOMERSET AND DORSET FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Founded in 1975, the Society has about 3,750 members worldwide. The Society aims to promote and further interest in all aspects of Family History in the two counties. Its award winning journal *The Greenwood Tree* is published four times a year and is mailed to all members as part of their subscription. Within the counties there are eight local groups which meet regularly to hear talks on different aspects of family and local history and to organise research projects.

The annual subscription is currently £15.

Further details and an application form can be obtained from:
S&D FHS, P O BOX 4502, SHERBORNE, DT9 6YL, England.

DORSET RECORD SOCIETY

Publishes original manuscript material relating to Dorset. Recent publications include:

A Guide to Dorset Manorial Documents, price £6,
(plus £1 postage)

Birth, Marriage, Death and Taxes, the Lyme Regis Censuses 1695-1703,
price £19.95 (plus £2.50 postage)

A full list of titles available can be obtained from the Hon General Secretary, Mrs Ann Smith, c/o Dorset County Museum, High West Street, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1 XA, or at www.dorsetcountymuseum.org

SOMERSET, DORSET, CORNWALL, DEVON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE & WILTSHIRE

We BUY and SELL Antiquarian & Secondhand Books & Manuscripts relating to the genealogy, topography and local history of the West Country and issue regular catalogues.

Please write for a FREE copy to:- AMBRA BOOKS

22 West Shrubbery

Redland

Bristol BS6 6TA

Tel: (0117) 907 6899

Email: ambra@localhistory.co.uk

Offers of single items or complete collections always welcome.

FRIENDS of SOMERSET ARCHIVES

A group has been formed to further the use of records and archives of Somerset interest.

A website has been set up at

www.friendsofsomersetarchives.org.uk

containing details of events and membership fees.

Alternatively, please contact: Frances Daniels,

6 Middlemead, Stratton-on-Fosse, Somerset BA3 4QH

Email: membership@friendsofsomersetarchives.org.uk

SOMERSET RECORD SOCIETY

Established 1887

For details of membership please contact,

The Hon. Secretary, Mr. D. Bromwich,

c/o Somerset Studies Library,

Somerset Heritage Centre, Brunel Way,

Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, TA2 6SF

A list of publications can be found at

www.westcountrygenealogy.com/somerset/somerecsoc.htm

*N.B. – All replies to advertisements to be sent
to the named addresses*
