
NOTES & QUERIES

FOR
SOMERSET AND DORSET

EDITED BY

M. P. FORREST, B.A., P.G.C.E., Dip.Arch., Ph.D.

Dorset History Centre, Bridport Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1RP

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

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

www.sdnq.org.uk

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

HERRICK

No	CONTENTS	Page No
10.	MEDIEVAL TOWN HOUSES: WELLS AND BRISTOL COMPARED	185
11.	ROBERT BATEMAN WRAY AND BLANDFORD FORUM	192
12.	BOUND FOR AMERICA	195
13.	THORNCOMBE'S PARISH POORHOUSES, SCHOOL AND WORKHOUSE	202
14.	I TAKE OFF MY HAT TO YOU: HAT HONOUR VERSUS NONCONFORMITY IN 17TH CENTURY SOMERSET	212
	BOOK REVIEWS	219
	NOTES	222
	NOTICES	228

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 – Design & Print, Bridport DT6 3UX

Chairman: R. W. Dunning, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.R. Hist. S.

Editorial Committee:

Katherine Barker, M.A.

Revd. Dom Aidan Bellenger,
OSB, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

J. H. Bettey,
M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.

D. M. Burnett

Andrew Butcher, M.A., DPhil.

Judith Ford, B.A., PhD, F.S.A.

M. P. Forrest, B.A., P.G.C.E.,
Dip.Arch., Ph.D.

Lady Gass, M.A.

Max Hebditch, C.B.E, F.S.A.

T. W. Mayberry, M.A., F.S.A.

Sir M. Medlycott, Bt., F.S.G.

Ann Smith, B.Ed., Dip A.A.

G. M. Smith

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

Hon. Membership Secretary and Treasurer

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

Hon. Secretary

Mrs Ann Smith, B.Ed., Dip A.A.
editors@sdnq.org.uk

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 and 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.

Dorset Editor: m.p.forrest@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Somerset Editor: aj.webb@virgin.net

Advertisements:

Half page £12; quarter page £8; payable in advance.

Back numbers: £4 each plus postage.

10. MEDIEVAL TOWN HOUSES: WELLS AND BRISTOL COMPARED.

Introduction

The appearance of Roger Leech's masterful *The town house in Medieval and Early Modern Bristol*¹ should make scholars review their data on other towns. In that way we can build up a picture as to what is special about Bristol, whether there are regional similarities and what may be general. This piece attempts to contribute by looking at Wells in the light of Leech's findings.

To begin with there are contrasts in terminology. The terms 'hallhouse' and 'shophouse' that Leech draws from fifteenth century rentals and uses to structure his account² do not occur in medieval Wells. At Wells 27 pre-1500 rentals of the cathedral communar survive together with a mutilated town guild rental of c.1390 and its complete 1427/8 rental. All generally make distinctions between shops, tenements or dwellinghouses, and cottages. The 1427/8 rental also lists shambles for the market-day stalls on the main street³ (a class only briefly considered by Leech). However, more detailed sales, leases, etc are abundant with some 850 available. They are supplemented by accounts of repairs and survivals incorporated into standing buildings. So meaningful comparisons are possible, even though Wells lacks both the richness of historic plans and pictures and the half century of archaeological investigation on which Leech can draw. The loss of the majority of probate inventories for Wells in World War II also removes a major source.

Shops

The Wells material recognises five broad categories for retailing and associated craft activities such as shoemaking. Two categories, 'bench' and 'shamell' or 'shambles', are used in the Middle Ages exclusively for structures in the highway although later, in 1596/7, the bishop abandoned his prison for laymen on Sadler Street and its replacement is listed as one shamell perhaps reflecting its size or structure.⁴ In contrast 'shop' is always used to describe a property on a plot of land clear of the road. The other two terms are more problematic being used in

both localities. They are 'stall' and 'seld'.

Bench is an accurate description of the basic structure used by any market trader and the term was current by c.1280 with both benches and half benches being sold or let. It was last employed in 1438.⁵ Most commodities need protection from the weather so benches must have had awnings from the first. So the term stall was also appropriate and was used in 1251 to describe what is clearly in the street from the details of its location.⁶ There seems to have been a general view of what was acceptable in the highway. In 1346 Adam de Carlton obtained a bench in High Street. In 1351 he developed this into a cooking house. As a result his fellow burgesses took him to the king's courts for obstructing the highway and he was forced to demolish it.⁷

Initially, many of the retail facilities developed in front of the premises lining the main streets may have been little different with a bench protected by an awning or pentice roof projecting from the main building behind. However, this type of structure became more elaborate over time and the distinction between it and a shop less apparent. The ambiguities are illustrated by two related transactions of 1382 concerning a small unit at the front of modern 41 High Street. In the first the executor of Gilbert le Boghiere granted Walter Halyete a rent from a stall with an upper chamber, described as between two shops, plus its reversion after the death of Joan in the Hurne. In the second Joan and her husband grant the tenancy to John Tracy but the premises were described as a shop with upper chamber.⁸ Given this lack of clarity it is unsurprising that this is the last use of the term stall.

The use of seld is more puzzling. Leech identifies his Bristol selds with those studied in London and Chester. Those were private bazaars.⁹ His examples of size and a lack of an upper storey fit this. The Wells usage is clearly different. The earliest use of the term was in c.1260 in the first surviving reference to 1 Market Place.¹⁰ In it Geoffrey le Ferrur granted Walter de Caticote his building (*fabrica*) with a seld on its north and a solar beyond the building. As the site is only about 9m by 12m the seld was small. Similarly, the selds in High Street must have been no more than benches. This is confirmed by the tenants

and the rents they paid, for example Augustine the cobbler paid 2s p.a.¹¹ Away from the street the term is hard to distinguish from stall or shop. For example, in 1363, Walter de Compton left two High Street properties to the cathedral. One was large comprising the rear of modern 9 and all of 11 and 13. It came with deeds dating back to 1352 and it took until 1384/5 to clear the dean and chapter's title with a mortmain license and quitclaims from everybody with possible interests.¹² From 1352 to 1363 the property is described as a burgage with two selds. Some descriptions add that the selds had solars above them. Then from 1365 shop is used instead of seld, which does not feature in any subsequent records.

Shops generally equate to Leech's Bristol shophouses. Thus the second property listed under Sadler Street and High Street in the 1427/8 town rental is described as 'shop' but in a quitclaim of 1374 it was stated to be a shop and chamber.¹³ Similarly, its northern neighbour, modern 7 Sadler Street, was described in 1426 as a shop with chambers and solars although in the abuttal of 1427/8 it is merely a shop.¹⁴ It probably had an extra storey compared with its neighbour. Again, John Oxenforde rebuilt 1 Market Place in 1363. The first description surviving from 1380 merely calls it a corner tenement with shops and cellar but a lease of 1414/5 specifies a shop with solar above and a 1417 transfer has the more detailed (and confusing) 'cellarium with shops, solars, houses and chambers built above'.¹⁵ Another example warns against a facile assumption that the shopkeeper inevitably occupied the room over the shop. In 1320 William de Leghe leased Thomas de Testwode a shop on the front of William's tenement at 39 High Street. Instead of paying a fine for his lease Thomas was to roof the solar over the shop at his own expense. But it was specified that William retained control of the solar and shortly after he leased it to Alan de Boys. This arrangement did not last and in the next year Thomas was granted both shop and solar. A further lease of 1323 added the cellar under the shop to Thomas' holding.¹⁶

Leech could find no evidence that Bristol shops featured the mini-halls that can still be seen at Church Street, Tewksbury, Gloucestershire.¹⁷ Wells has such evidence. The second property that Walter de Compton left to the cathedral was a

shop forming the western part of modern 57 High Street and only 3m by 8m in size. It is initially described as a shop with solar. It was in a poor state by c.1400 and the communar had to expend considerable sums on repairs. So his account gives a picture of the structure. In 1407/8 it was given a new gable and chimneys. In 1408/9 and 1414/5 works were done on the gutters. Then in 1416/7 there was further work on the gutters but more radically there were major works to the roof. The hall and rooms were retiled in stone. So this unit must have resembled those at Tewksbury in size and structure.¹⁸ If this structure seems small it should be noted that its western neighbour, once specifically stated to be a small shop, was only 1.5m by 7m.¹⁹

Mention has been made of cellars. These were particularly prone to being let separately and subdivided. Thus the 1414/5 lease of a shop at 1 Market Place included only half a cellar. Again the larger Compton's property included a cellar that a former owner had separated for use as a wine cellar in connection with his tavern. The wording seems to indicate that the tavern was elsewhere. In contrast to Bristol there is no link between cellars and taverns. Indeed taverns were rare in Wells and wine drinkers must have used the comparatively numerous inns.²⁰

Two final points need making about shops in Wells. Firstly, they spread beyond the modern shopping streets. For example, several are recorded in Chamberlain Street. Thus in c.1393 the cathedral was left a substantial property on Chamberlain Street, at the New Street corner, referred to as Mogge's house. The communar's accounts for 1400/1 make it clear that it came with five shops adjoining.²¹ The cathedral escheator controlled two properties at modern 23 Chamberlain Street. The eastern unit had major repairs in 1417/8. The accounts show that the site had a shop on the street frontage. The works provided it with a new stone doorway to the street, two internal doors, a trapdoor, a 'stair' (presumably a ladder) and an upper floor. A wall was built between the shop and the main unit. It was being prepared for its subsequent letting as a separate unit.²²

Lastly, it is noticeable that women were often involved in the operation of these shop units at Wells particularly in the

period before c.1400. For example, in the area of High Street between Wet Lane (Broad Street's predecessor) and Mill Street when people actually holding the shops (rather than receiving a rent from them) are examined it is found that three men were involved, four married couples and four women. This includes an element of double counting in that Alice Chaloner held the westernmost unit with her two successive husbands and also operated a stall on its northern side. This stall was subsequently severed and came into the hands of John Fyhyde, vicar choral, who in 1341 granted it to his sister Margaret as a stall and curtilage.²³ Leech's Bristol examples do not show such a level of female involvement although he does not specifically address the question.

Houses

The town rental, when not referring to shops, uses the term tenement for all but a handful of cottages. Tenement was the most common term employed in leases and conveyances. It then meant the plot containing a house and any other outbuildings.²⁴ However, some Wells transactions prefer *messuage*. This usage is commonest in early records but was sometimes copied by successive clerks throughout the Middle Ages.²⁵ *Burgage* is also occasionally used. Strictly this applies to a form of urban tenure allowing free disposal subject to a fixed payment to the town lord but it was used loosely. Thus the shop Compton left to the cathedral is sometimes called a *burgage* although technically its rent of 4d to the bishop shows it to have been a third of a *burgage*.²⁶

The communar's accounts use *house* or *dwellinghouse*.²⁷ The escheator's accounts are less helpful as they are arranged by commemorative services not the properties that paid for them. These only appear in items such as loss of rent or costs of repair. In such cases *house* is the commonest form.²⁸

Although Wells lacks the abundant evidence of Bristol it is apparent that the larger houses of the more affluent *burgesses* were *hall houses*. This is shown by documents and survivals of the buildings themselves. It is obviously most satisfactory when both are available. This is the case at modern 36 and 38 High Street. Thomas le Devenysh built up a holding here in the

period c.1283 to 1324 and then redeveloped the site with five shops on the High Street frontage and his hall behind. The eastern end of his hall is still visible in the inner room of the King's Head at no. 38.²⁹ More often we must rely on documents. For example, in 1418/9 the communal had to repair Mogge's house and the major work was retiling the hall and chamber.³⁰ Sometimes the name itself is adequate. Thus the house variously called the Juy or Guy Hall was successively the home of the two greatest clothiers of late-medieval Wells, John Atwater and John Mawdeley, senior.³¹ The preference of aspiring burgesses for a hall is obvious given the proximity of excellent examples in the bishop's palace, deanery and the canons' houses.

In the principal streets these halls were generally tucked away behind shops. But this was not universal. Henry Bouedych had his kitchen on the High Street frontage.³² The shop at 39 High Street has been discussed but the transactions also hint at an imposing door to William de Leghe's tenement behind, as the solar is said to extend over the entrance to William's tenement as well as the shop.³³

There was a gradation of properties. The works of 1417/8 at 23 Chamberlain Street also involved the main house. It was re-roofed but only in thatch.³⁴ But the bottom of the hierarchy was the cottage. Leech follows Palliser's suggestion that cottages were usually a single room.³⁵ In Wells the situation was more complicated. By the late-fifteenth century the shop that Compton had left the cathedral was no longer viable as a shop unit. It was let as a dwelling and listed as a cottage.³⁶ It, as established, was heated, had two storeys and a mini-hall. In Wells usage a cottage was certainly a humble dwelling with restricted accommodation let at a relatively low rent. Otherwise it had to possess some of the following characteristics. It might be in poor repair or old-fashioned. It could be on a restricted site (although cottages in Southover were on plots of 30m depth). Most were in more peripheral and lower class areas such as Southover, South Street and Tor Street.

Conclusions

Wells shows both similarities with Bristol and contrasts. The

terminology is certainly different and it will be interesting to see a discussion of other south-western towns and their usage. At Wells clerks had rather different traditions to Bristol. Indeed the cathedral clerks had a style that differed from those of the town guild. All could use terms loosely. As leases and rentals were copied from their predecessors their descriptions changed slowly.

The lack of pictures, excavations and inventories means that relatively little can be added on dwellings. In contrast the material on shops does illustrate their evolution. From relatively slight and temporary features in front of houses they turned into permanent structures with accommodations above. Some were then severed and became independent units characterised by small depth.³⁷ Others were let by whoever held the plot as a source of extra income. In this process the older terms stall and sold lost their former relevance and by the 1390s had fallen out of use.

1. See R.H. Leech, *The town house in Medieval and Early Modern Bristol* (2014).
2. Leech, *Town house*, 11-2, 69-142.
3. L.S. Colchester (ed.) *Wells Cathedral communal's accounts 1327-1600* (1984) 50, 66, 72, 78, 84, 90-1, etc; for the 1427/8 rental A.J. Scrase and J. Hasler (eds.), *Wells Corporation properties*, Somerset Record Society (hereafter S.R.S.) 87 (2002), 29-35 and the original Somerset Heritage Centre (hereafter S.H.C.), DD/CC 111736 32/33; for the mutilated rental Wells Corporation archives box labelled rentals.
4. The National Archive, SC 6/Eliz/2008.
5. D.O. Shilton and R. Holworthy (eds.), *Wells City charters*, S.R.S. 46 (1932), 20, 95, 107.
6. W.H.B. Bird and W.P. Baildon (eds.), *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells I*, Historical Manuscripts Commission (1907), 81.
7. Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 59; C.T. Flower, *Public works in Medieval law II*, Selden Society 40 (1923), 135-6.
8. Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 92-3.
9. Leech, *Town house*, 145-6.
10. Bird and Baildon, *Calendar I*, 142.
11. Bird and Baildon, *Calendar I*, 151, 401.
12. Bird and Baildon, *Calendar I*, 367-73; W.H.B. Bird and W.P. Baildon (eds.), *Calendar of the manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells II*, Historical Manuscripts Commission (1914) Ch. 309 p.615, Ch. 325 p.618, Ch.339 p.621, Ch. 358 p. 624, Ch. 364-5 p.624, Ch. 370 p.627, Ch. 374 p.628, Ch. 376 p.628; A.J. Scrase, 'Development and change in burghage plots: the example of Wells' in *Journal of Historical Geography* 15:4 (1989), 357-9.
13. Scrase and Hasler, *Wells Corporation properties*, 30; Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 87.
14. Wells Cathedral Archives (hereafter W.C.A.), AH 147.

15. L.S. Colchester (ed.), *Wells Cathedral escheator's accounts 1369-1600* (1988), 7, 12-3; Bird and Baildon, *Calendar II*, Ch. 411 p.636, Ch. 535 p.698, Ch. 552 p.662.
16. W.C.A., AH23-5, 30.
17. Leech, *Town house*, 69-70.
18. For earlier history see n. 12 above; Colchester, *Communar's accounts*, 39, 45, 48-9, 56.
19. Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 82-3, 90, 93 (the last has the dimensions); Scrase 'Development and change in burgage plots', 360-1.
20. Leech, *Town house*, 113-4, 156-60; Bird and Baildon, *Calendar I*, 370; A.J. Scrase 'Wells Inns' in *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset* 31 Part 320 (1984), 378-95.
21. Colchester, *Communar's accounts*, 30.
22. Colchester, *Escheator's accounts*, 83-4.
23. Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 23, 29-30, 57 for the corner house; for the others see n. 12, 18, 19 above.
24. Leech, *Town house*, 60.
25. For early usage see Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters* 19, 33-4, 39-40, 45, 63, 75 all of which came to the town and are called tenements in 1427/8 and contrast with W.C.A. AH43, 48, 63, 85, 90, 109, 220-4 where messuage is used throughout the Middle Ages.
26. A.J. Scrase *Wells: the anatomy of a medieval and early modern property market* (1993) 77-9; Scrase 'Development and change in burgage plots' 360.
27. Colchester, *Communar's accounts* 60, 72, 78, 84, etc.
28. Colchester, *Escheator's accounts* 7, 13-4, 17, 19-20, 26, 33, 40, 48, 52, etc.
29. Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 25, 33-5, 40, 43, 60-5; S.H.C., DD/WM 1/24, 1/27, Ch. 43; E. Hobhouse (ed.), *Register of John de Drokenford, Bishop of Wells 1309-29*, S.R.S. 1 (1887), 210.
30. Colchester, *Communar's accounts*, 69.
31. Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 94; Bird and Baildon, *Calendar II*, Ch. 472 p.647, Ch. 756 p.706 (but see original for house opposite); F.W. Weaver (ed.), *Somerset Medieval wills 1385-1500*, S.R.S. 16 (1901), 389.
32. Shilton and Holworthy, *Wells City charters*, 90.
33. Leech, *Town house*, 67-8; W.C.A., AH24.
34. Colchester, *Escheator's accounts*, 83.
35. Leech, *Town House*, 2; D.M. Palliser, 'Urban Society' in R. Horrox (ed.), *Fifteenth century attitudes* (1994), 132-49.
36. Colchester, *Communar's accounts*, 143.
37. Scrase 'Development and change in burgage plots', 357, 360-1.

TONY SCRASE

11. ROBERT BATEMAN WRAY AND BLANDFORD FORUM. Situated in the north-west corner of the church of SS Peter and Paul, Blandford Forum, is a floor-slab inscribed 'Byng Wray 1753'. The Blandford parish registers record Byng Wray's baptism on 8 March 1753 and his burial, just nine months later, on 11 December. The name of Byng's mother is

not recorded in either entry, but his father is identified as Robert Bateman Wray.¹ Wray was a distinguished gem-carver and seal-engraver, who has been described as 'the first of English engravers of his day'.² He was born in 1715 in Broad Chalke, Wiltshire, the son of William Wray, the Rector of the parish, but Robert is usually described as being 'of Salisbury', the city in which he died in 1779.³

Wray's mother's name before marriage was Byng and she and her husband were 'connected to some of the best families' in Wiltshire. Mrs Wray's brother, Edward Byng, was a noted portrait painter who had been a pupil, and an assistant, of Sir Godfrey Kneller.⁴ Through the influence of his uncle Edward, Robert Bateman Wray 'acquired a taste for the fine arts' and learned to 'draw the human figure with grace and precision'. He eventually chose to learn the art of seal engraving and was apprenticed to Matthew Gossett (1683-1744)⁵ of Berwick Street, Soho (although, due to Wray's precocious abilities, this arrangement did not last). Land tax and parish records show that Wray was resident in London until the late 1740s.

Byng Wray's baptism and burial in Blandford Forum indicate that Robert and his family were, for a time, residents of that town and this is supported by an entry for 'Mr Wray's [house]' in the list of those paying the Church rate in Blandford Forum in 1754.⁶ The reasons for Robert Bateman Wray's residency in Blandford are unclear. Wray's pattern book and register, covering the period 1738-1743, show that, during that period, his customers included the Dukes of Marlborough and Queensbury and the Duchess of Somerset.⁷ One biographical note on Wray states, however, that 'twenty guineas was the highest remuneration he ever obtained for the finest of his works' and that he 'enjoyed a reputation about 1770'.⁸

Wray's pattern book shows that in the late 1730s and early 1740s the fees he obtained for a commission were sometimes considerably less than twenty guineas, and it is possible that living and working in London became too expensive. In 1743 Wray married Margaret Bolton and a son, also named Robert Bateman, and a daughter, Margaret Anne, were born in the parish of St Paul's, Covent Garden, during that decade.⁹ Wray's growing responsibilities may have prompted a move to an area

of the country where his family connections could be of benefit in gaining further customers, and where living expenses were less than those in the capital. This does not explain why he apparently settled for a time in Blandford Forum, rather than returning to his native county. One biographical record includes the assertion that, 'In the year 1759 after a residence of more than thirty years in London, circumstances had induced Mr Wray to quit the metropolis, and to fix himself a house in Church Street, Salisbury',¹⁰ but the Blandford evidence indicates that Wray's quitting of the metropolis may have been earlier in date, or that he removed himself temporarily, in the early 1750s, before quitting London permanently in 1759.

That the skills of a seal carver would have been in demand locally is indicated by the seals, of an increasingly wide variety of designs, that were affixed to 18th-century documents relating to Blandford and its inhabitants (although none of these seals has yet been attributed to Wray).¹¹ There were certainly useful contacts in the county. For example, Wray is known to have carved gems to designs drawn by the Dorset-born history and portrait painter Giles Hussey (1710 – 1788), whose family estate was Nash Court at Marnhull.¹² Whatever the Wray family's reasons for residing in Blandford, their stay there was, apparently, of short duration. Wray's name is absent from Blandford records after 1754.

1. Dorset History Centre (hereafter D.H.C.), PE-BF/RE/1/2.
2. *The Penny Cyclopaedia for the Diffusion of Knowledge*, vol. 27 (1843), 581.
3. Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, PR045/Broad Chalke: All Saints; J. Stratford, *Wiltshire and its worthies; notes topographical and biographical* (1882), 107.
4. *Penny Cyclopaedia*, 580-1.
5. http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioId=102390.
6. D.H.C., PE-BF/CW/1/1.
7. Society of Antiquaries, MS 420 Pattern book and register of Robert Bateman Wray, 1738-43. The pattern book shows Wray's versatility; he undertook, for example, armorial designs, heads of figures from antiquity (as well as of prominent contemporary figures, notably Alexander Pope), studies from nature and a variety of what he described as 'fancies' (designs created to please the customer). For a single commission from Sir John Barker, Bart., for instance, Wray created a head of Elizabeth I, a fancy, and a coat of arms using gold and topaz as settings. The cost of the whole order was 17 guineas.
8. S. Redgrave, *A dictionary of artists of the English School: painters, sculptors, architects, engravers and ornamentists* (1878), 487.

9. Revd W.H. Hunt, *The registers of St Paul's, Covent Garden, London: christenings 1653 – 1752* (1906).
10. *Penny Cyclopaedia*, 581.
11. See, for example, J. Ford and T. Gent, *Wax seals of Blandford Forum 1650–1850* (2016).
12. S. O'Connell, 'Giles Hussey' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004.

JUDITH FORD

12. BOUND FOR AMERICA. In the early years of the 18th century crime in Britain was on the increase. Gaols were full to overflowing and the ultimate deterrent, the gallows, was ineffectual in stemming that flow. In fact, many of those sent to the gallows became celebrities and folk legends. Though the number of crimes that carried the death penalty steadily increased as the century wore on, something more drastic had to be done and done quickly. Transportation was not a new concept. It had already been tried with varying degrees of success but what was to follow was transportation on an entirely different scale.¹ In 1718 an act was passed 'for the more effectual transportation of felons'.² The passing of the act opened the floodgates to a wave of transportation and between 1718 and 1775 over 30,000 convicts were dispatched from England to America. Though half of this number came from London and its surrounds,³ Somerset contributed a sizeable number of felons to those sent to the Colonies.

A collection of Somerset transportation bonds pertaining to America are held at the Somerset Heritage Centre covering the years 1725-1775.⁴ By supplementing these with a few earlier bonds⁵ and lists of transports from newspapers of the time⁶ it is possible to hazard a fairly accurate guess as to the numbers involved. Over 1,000 Somerset convicts can be identified by combining the above sources. The bonds themselves rarely list the crimes these felons committed but what they do give us, along with the convict lists are the names of those responsible for transporting them to America. John Cox, a Bristol merchant was responsible for many of the early trips, followed by George Buck of Bideford, Ethelred Davy of Exeter, Robert Fowler Coade of Lyme, Thomas Kenney of Bideford, John Lovering of

Tawstock, Thomas Benson of Northam, Thomas Whitehearse of Bideford, Thomas Carder, Edward Clothier of Ilchester and Richard Grisham and Elijah Stodder of Bristol. Transportation of Somerset convicts in the 1760's was dominated by Samuel Sedgley, William Hillhouse and Samuel Berry of Bristol. Sedgley & Co as they were known were founded by Samuel Sedgley, a wealthy Bristol subcontractor involved in both the convict and slave trades. The firm went bankrupt in 1768. Shortly before Sedgley's firm went under, a new firm was founded by William Stevenson and James Cheston. They were later joined by William Randolph. Stevenson and Randolph soon monopolised the West Country convict trade.⁷ They ran operations in Bristol while Cheston supervised the Maryland end of the business, gathering tobacco and other goods to be transported back after the convicts had been unloaded. Cheston initially arranged convict sales off the eastern shore of Maryland but later moved operations across the bay to Baltimore Town.⁸

It is hardly surprising that such a large proportion of business was carried on from Bristol. The convict trade complemented these merchants' existing business. Slaves and convicts were transported to America while tobacco and other goods made the return journey. After London, Bristol became the next largest centre for convict transportation in the whole of England. The manufacture of tobacco was extremely labour intensive and the convenience of English speaking workers compared to slave labour had its attractions for the plantation owners.⁹ At times the demand for convicts was so great that the Bristol based firm of Stevenson, Randolph and Cheston had standing orders to supply plantation owners with convicts months before they arrived by ship.¹⁰ Of those sent to America from Somerset virtually all ended up in Maryland and Virginia. Though some early bonds suggested Jamaica as a possible alternative destination only one bond definitely states a specific alternative.¹¹

During the early years of transportation most of the convicts were sentenced at the Assizes *i.e.* for more serious crimes, but as time went by this was supplemented with a sizeable proportion of offenders from the Quarter Sessions. Many

convicts seem to have been transported for fairly trivial offences but their names can often be found in previous Quarter Session records suggesting that they were habitual offenders.¹² Another point of interest is that of those whose crimes are known, only a small number were transported for acts of violence, unless the violence was linked to robbery. Crimes against property seemed to far outweigh the seriousness of crimes involving assault against a person. For instance, many masters who beat their apprentices to death escaped serious punishment.

Not all of those sentenced made it to America. The bonds list a number who died in prison after the contract for their transportation had been agreed. Lewis Clement died in Taunton gaol in 1737,¹³ Grace Boon in 1742¹⁴ and William Lovell in the same year. Others managed to make their escape before leaving England. William Sparrow alias Evean escaped from Ilchester gaol in November 1752, his crime, stealing money and a coat at Chard.¹⁵ Another escape occurred two years later when William Spratt and John Cleeve alias White broke out of Ilchester gaol on 21 April 1754. Perhaps Spratt later regretted his decision as he was captured and sent to the gallows in April 1758.¹⁶

Some escape plans illustrate how desperate these felons were to avoid transportation:

On Sunday, 24th April 1754 about seven o'clock in the evening the Transports, to the number of sixteen, with the rest of the felons in the gaol of Ivelchester, in all about thirty, found means to get off their irons, and locked up the under keeper, and made their escape, but all are retaken except two felons and a debtor. Mr Cox and Clothier, the keepers of the said gaol, stood at the door with several to assist them, but the felons with their irons they had sawed off, clubs, knives, and other weapons, which had been privately conveyed to them, forced their way, and beat the two keepers in such a manner as to confine them to their beds.¹⁷

Others chose another course to escape transportation. When Mr Arnold, a mason, was brought before the Wells Quarter Sessions held in January 1771, he was given the choice between transportation or enlisting as a soldier in the King's army; he

chose to enlist.

Even when on board ship escape was often attempted. It is more than likely that Somerset convicts were on board the *Albion* in May 1764. The *Bath Chronicle* takes up the story.

We hear from Bristol that Saturday morning put back again into Kingroad, the *Albion* Transport. The convicts on board had formed a scheme to make themselves masters of the vessel, and after destroying the crew, to carry her to Spain. For this purpose they had got their irons off thro' the help of a blacksmith, (one of their number) and everything was ready to carry their bloody design into execution, the Wednesday before the vessel returned; when one of the prisoners concerned informed the Captain of the whole affair. The crew being alarmed they were all properly secured, after they had fired on them through the deck; happily no lives were lost; one of the Transports was shot through the leg, and another through the arm, who were brought up and sent to the infirmary Sunday last.¹⁸

A few weeks later the *Albion* once again set sail with the 80 or so convicts involved in the original plot restrained by iron collars.¹⁹

A number of those transported did make it back home again after escaping from their masters in America. With a steady stream of vessels making the trip from Maryland and Virginia to the west of England it is hardly surprising that West Country convicts more regularly made the return journey than those from other areas. John Poulter, one of those 'folk heroes' already mentioned, explained some of the principles behind making a good escape from America. When arrested for robbery he tried to turn King's Evidence against his comrades. His *Discoveries* gained widespread credibility. Not only did it provide details of his own criminal career but also provided a guide on returning from transportation.

After they are in any part of America, the general way is this, just before they go on board a ship, their friend or accomplice purchase them their freedom from the merchant or captain that belongs to the said ship, for about ten pounds sterling, some gives more and some less; then the friend of the convict or convicts gets a note from the merchant or captain, that the

person is free to go unmolested when the ships arrived between the capes of Virginia, where they please. But I never heard of any convict that came home again in the same ship they went over in; for the merchant, or captain gives a bond to the sheriff of the county where such convicts go from, to leave them in America, and they get a receipt from the Custom there; but as there is ships coming home every week, if they can pay their passage they are refused in no ship.²⁰

It appears that Elizabeth Gammin was another one of those returnees. She was transported for 14 years in 1747 but had returned to Somerset by 1753. Her original crime was serious enough to warrant a 14 year sentence and would suggest she was one of those given the death penalty for her original crime and that she was later reprieved. She was given no second chance and went to the gallows in September 1753.²¹

Another Somerset man to escape from his master in America was David Rawl. He ran away in the Summer of 1746 having only arrived in America a short while earlier. He was described as:

a shoemaker by trade, about 5 feet 9 inches high, walks something stooping, wears black bushy hair. He took with him his shoemaking tools, two pairs of new Fall shoes, a brown holland frock, a pair of cloth breeches much worn, an Osnabrug shirt, a large bird-eye handkerchief and large felt hat.²²

He was still at large a year, later so he may well have successfully made the journey back to Somerset.

One of the youngest people transported during this period was Thomas Barber, a twelve year old boy convicted of 'stealing a 6d loaf, one lb of bacon and a knife' in 1758. What probably sealed his fate was the fact that he had already been convicted of horse stealing at a previous Taunton Assizes. The year 1737/8 was significant for its juvenile offenders namely Edward Wise, aged 11, for house breaking, Thomas Bindon, aged 14, for house breaking and two boys aged about 13 for stealing one cock and two pullets.²³

Other transported convicts must have left their families with untold hardships to endure. In 1756 James Otridge, a Paulton

coal miner, was transported for stealing crimson gloves at Frome market. He left behind a wife and daughter. Seven years later they were removed from Paulton to Frome Selwood, their last place of legal settlement.²⁴ In 1773 Robert Collins was sentenced to 14 years for horse stealing. His wife Mary and children Mary and Betsey were later removed from Taunton St Mary to Wedmore.²⁵

Horse or sheep stealing were two of the most common crimes warranting transportation. One such convict was William Pugsley, transported for 7 years after stealing a sheep from the Revd John Chester of Monksilver in 1735.²⁶ Others were convicted of rather more unusual offences. In 1729 Elizabeth and Mary Wood were transported for defrauding Mary Haddon of Kingston St Mary out of two gold rings and two pieces of silver under the pretence of telling her fortune.²⁷

Transportation for burglary was common and not an exclusively male domain. In 1732/3 Elizabeth Sevier, a Bridgwater lady around 23 years of age was transported for 7 years for breaking into the house of William Burnell and stealing 14s 6d. In the same year John Knowles of Kingston Seymour was sentenced to 7 years after stealing money, a shirt and two books from Ambrose Wilde.²⁸

In 1764 John Granfield, a labourer from Ham (near Somerton) escaped the gallows due to a flaw in his indictment. When caught burgling the house of Mr Hann he locked himself in a closet but to no avail. For his crime he was transported for seven years.²⁹ Life sentences were very rare but in 1771 two 'lifers' were transported, Ann Mopsey for stealing a gold ring and George Strickland, a clock maker who stole around 80 watches from Mr Bullock of Bath.³⁰

Occasionally a brief description of the case can be gleaned from various newspaper reports. Joseph Chapman, a mariner from St Martin's, Wiltshire was transported in 1750 for breaking into a dwelling house in the parish of Lincombe and Widcombe. He is described as:

about 59 years old, a middle sized man, sand coloured beard and eye brows; had on, when carried to prison, a bad light colour coat and breeches, and an old waistcoat.³¹

Thomas Jefferies, transported in 1765 for committing several burglaries in the Castle Cary and Ansford area was described as:

About 26 years old, five feet nine inches high, dark brown complexion, short curled brown hair, crippled in his right foot, pitted with the mark of the King's Evil in the left side of his face, one of his middle fingers short, occasioned by the King's Evil, and wore away an olive coloured thickset coat.³²

One unusual case from 1738 was that of Patrick Mackoon or Markaone, who was 'to be apprenticed to Mr Ethelred Davy of Exon to serve him seven years in America being a vagrant in Crocombe'.³³ It seems rather a harsh punishment for a vagrant. Ethelred Davy was himself one of the merchants involved in the convict trade.

In 1775 transport ships returning to Bristol brought reports of rumblings of discontent in the American colonies coming to a head. American ports began refusing entry to ships from England and in July of that year a convict ship was forced to return to England. Though one ship was allowed to land its cargo of convicts as late as 1776 transportation to America was in effect at an end. Abortive attempts were made to resume the trade in 1783-4, but when these attempts foundered the British authorities were forced to look elsewhere. In the meantime many convicts were confined to the hulks³⁴ until, in May 1787 the first fleet of convicts set sail for Australia.

1. A. Vaver, *Bound with an iron chain: the untold story of how the British transported 50,000 convicts to colonial America* (2011), 54.
2. 4 Geo. 1, Cap. XI *An act for the further preventing of robbery, burglary and other felonies, and for the more effectual transportation of felons, and unlawful exporters of wool; and for the declaring the law upon some points relating to pirates.*
3. Vaver, *Bound with an iron chain*, 5.
4. Somerset Heritage Centre (hereafter S.H.C.), Q/SCT/1-5 Transportation Papers 1725-75.
5. S.H.C., Q/RROA/3/23/8-10 transportation orders, 1722 and Q/RROA/3/23/ 26-29 bonds to transport prisoners, 1724.
6. *Bath Journal*, *Bath Chronicle*, *Sherborne Mercury* particularly Somerset Assize reports.
7. Henry Cruger and John Malard also took a smaller cut of the Somerset transports around this time.

8. Vaver, *Bound with an iron chain*, 82-3.
9. It was also cheaper to purchase convicts as opposed to slaves.
10. Vaver, *Bound with an iron chain*, 160.
11. Samuel Whiting was transported in 1756 by Richard Grisham and Elijah Stodder of Bristol to the Island of St Christopher for seven years.
12. See for example James Osband, a Merriott blacksmith who had already committed a theft some 7 years before he was transported (S.H.C., Q/SR/336/3/48 confession and information, 6 Jul. 1768).
13. S.H.C., Q/SCT/1 transportation papers, 7 Oct. 1737.
14. S.H.C., Q/SCT/2 transportation papers, 7 Feb. 1742.
15. S.H.C., Q/SR/320/3/63 informations, 28 Apr. 1752.
16. <http://www.capitalpunishmentuk.org/somers.html>.
17. *Sherborne Mercury*, 29 Apr. 1754.
18. *Bath Chronicle*, 21 May 1764.
19. *Caledonian Mercury*, 9 Jun. 1764.
20. J. Poulter, *The discoveries of John Poulter alias Baxter* (1754), 28.
21. *Derby Mercury*, 7 Sep. 1753.
22. *Maryland Gazette*, Annapolis, 9 Sep. 1746 and 7 Oct. 1747.
23. S.H.C., Q/SR/305/130 calendar of prisoners.
24. S.H.C., Q/SR/331/2/6 removal order, 23 Feb. 1763.
25. S.H.C., Q/SR/342/1/48 removal order, 24 Nov. 1773.
26. S.H.C., Q/SR/303/85 examinations, 21 Apr. 1735.
27. S.H.C., Q/SR/297/7 calendar of prisoners, 29 Jan. 1730.
28. S.H.C., Q/SR/300/196 calendar of prisoners, 9 Jan. 1733.
29. *Bath Chronicle*, 2 Aug. 1764.
30. *Bath Journal*, 24 Sep. 1770.
31. *Bath Journal*, 5 Feb. 1749.
32. *Bath Chronicle*, 19 Sep. 1765.
33. S.H.C., Q/SR/306/93 calendar of prisoners, 11 Jul 1738.
34. Though Somerset transportation bonds dated later than 1775 still list America as a destination most convicts were probably held in prison hulks.

PAUL MANSFIELD

13. THORNCOMBE'S PARISH POORHOUSES, SCHOOL AND WORKHOUSE. Until changes to parliamentary boundaries in 1844, Thorncombe parish was a detached part of Devon. Despite its Somerset postal address, it has been part of Dorset ever since.

Introduction

During the early 18th century, the population explosion and widespread unemployment put the poor relief system under severe strain. The Workhouse Test (Knatchbull) Act 1723 attempted to address the problem through the abolition of outdoor relief. It was thought compulsory indoor relief, the

housing and maintenance of paupers in parish accommodation, and putting able bodied paupers to work to pay for their board, would be more cost effective. Under the act, vestries were empowered to buy or rent suitable properties and all parish paupers were obliged to enter the workhouse.



Chard Street, Thorncombe, circa 1910. Pictured right: Thorncombe's 19th century elementary school, destroyed by fire in 1974. Next to it (centre right) is the end wall of the 17th century parish workhouse which survives today as 1-2 Church View.

(Reproduced courtesy of Kate Rundle)

In his recent survey of Thorncombe's overseers and workhouse accounts, among various 'themes for further study', Arnold Shipp suggests 'buildings used by the parish for poor relief'.¹ Further analysis of Thorncombe's Overseers of the Poor accounts and linkage of other evidence covering the period 1722-1876 has addressed various questions, clarified inconsistencies and pinpointed the location of three parish poorhouses and two workhouses, one of which was temporary. Since Shipp's survey was published, the Dorset History Centre has catalogued the Manfield Heyson archive (D-MHM) and re-catalogued the Richard Grosvenor Bartelot archive (D-RGB)

which considerably facilitated the research which informs aspects of this article.

Between 1722 and 1732 the Overseers accounts record repairs to four parish properties.² Two poorhouses, probably used to house the elderly, sick and mentally ill were already owned by the parish. A further property was acquired in 1723 and another rented by the parish for use as a workhouse between 1725 and 1734. However it would seem that these interim measures fell short of demand. So in 1734 Thorncombe's vicar Thomas Cook donated a tenement in trust to the parish for use as a new parish school and workhouse. 'The House', as it was known colloquially, continued to provide indoor relief to Thorncombe's paupers up to the establishment of the Axminster Poor Law Union workhouses under the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.³

The location of Thomas Cook's Charity's parish workhouse has been subject to two different theories in recent decades resulting in self perpetuating inaccuracies.⁴ Workhouse Farm (now known as Higher Farm) on High Street is one candidate. The other is School House Farm, in the hamlet of the same name. School House probably got its name from a schoolhouse founded in February 1613/14 'for the good and benefit of the inhabitants of Thornecombe and all others who shall send or [words missing] be taught or brought up'.⁵ In her 1719 will Elizabeth Bragge of Sadborow left 50s (£2.50) per annum in perpetuity 'for the schooling of poor children'.⁶ Standing on a small plot opposite Plott House (now School House Farm) it burnt down in 1734.⁷ Under its deed of covenant the vestry was responsible for repairs to the schoolhouse. The fire thus put the vestry under a legal obligation to find new premises. Given that the vestry's efforts to meet its other legal responsibilities under the Workhouse Test Act apparently fell short of the mark, Thomas Cook's charitable gift of a large house, orchard and garden appears to have killed two birds with one stone.

Nineteenth century Charity Commission and Education Department papers place Cook's tenement which incorporated the school and a new parish workhouse, opposite the parish churchyard in Chard Street.⁸ Cook's school was demolished in 1875. A new elementary school built in 1876 on the site of the

'Great Hall', part of Cook's 'Great House' was burnt down in 1974. A detached modern house, 'Wellstone House', was built on the site. The replacement school, built further up Chard Street, next to the village hall is still in use today. The 19th century school master's house which survived the fire, 'The School House', now privately owned, sits at one end of the plot. It was built on land donated in 1875 by the owner of Sadborow, and lord of the manor, Captain John Bragge Esq.⁹ At the south end of the plot was Cook's parish workhouse linked to the school by a passage. It survives as 1 and 2 Church View, albeit extensively restored.

Workhouse Farm, Forseys, Peadons and Lumbards

Meeting the cost of repairs to privately owned properties out of the poor rate in exchange for using the building as a poorhouse or workhouse, was used by some parishes from the 16th century onwards.¹¹ Two years after the Knatchbull Act was enacted, the loft of an unnamed property was 'mended' and earth, straw and thatching materials were supplied to 'the house [deleted] Ousley's House' in 1724. Further work in 1725 included 'linners for the chimney rafters, lasts and nailes' and 'dawbing the mantle' [plastering the inside of the timber chimney stack with clay] was carried out 'abt Ousleys house' and 4s (20p) head rent for two years paid.

Linkage of property deeds relating to another neighbouring property to these entries in the Overseers accounts has enabled identification of its location as Higher Farm (formerly Workhouse Farm), High Street.¹² A grade II listed property, it is said to date back to the 18th century, although side pegged crucks visible in the plasterwork of the interior south west wall point to an earlier structure.¹³ William Ousley died in 1727.¹⁴ Following his death '2 years rent for Ousleys house' was paid to by the Overseers to John Bragge Esq of Sadborow, the freeholder. Payments for 'house Rent' continued to be made to John Bragge annually until 1734, after which they ceased. This points to the building being used for indoor relief until Cook's new parish workhouse opened. It is therefore likely that this is how the Workhouse Estate and subsequently Workhouse Farm got its name.¹⁵



Detail from 1811 OS Map showing location of Thorncombe's parish workhouse and poorhouses.¹⁰

(©2015 Great Britain Historical GIS Project and the University of Portsmouth)

Between 1723 and 1731 repairs were also carried out on two other parish poorhouses: Forseys which was given to the parish in 1709 and Peadons which was acquired in 1726.¹⁶ Overseer Richard Hillary arranged to pay £20 to recently widowed

Isabella Peadon, broken down into 'weekly allowances by the Overseers of the Poor of Thorncomb (sic) for the relief of her & her children' in exchange for the assignment to the parish of her 'Dwelling House, formerly a Barn with the latter garden', following the death of her husband Joseph.



Rear view, Workhouse Farm circa 1955. It was rented by the parish from William Ousely in 1725 for use as the parish workhouse.

(Reproduced with kind permission)

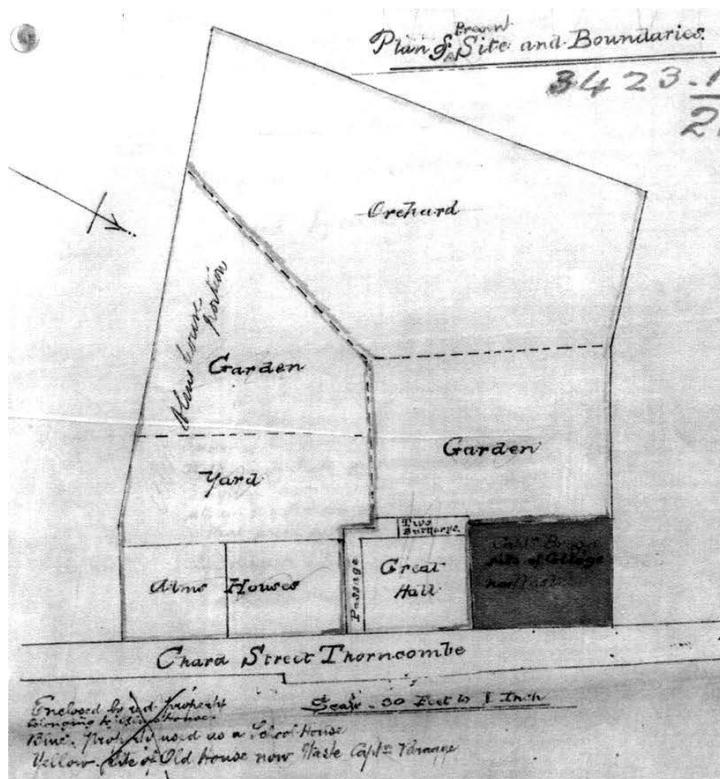
Parish properties were often pressed into service as 'pest houses' to isolate victims of smallpox and other epidemics.¹⁷ Another parish poor house, Lumbards, appears to have been used intermittently to house those suffering from measles and smallpox. The Overseers of the Poor accounts records that the property was repaired in 1723. Spikes in burials in 1722 and 1723 identify them as crisis years, during which there were epidemics.¹⁸ Lumbards was opposite Beere Farm on the parish boundary. So it was ideally situated to isolate victims of contagious disease. A building on the site, which may or may not have been the original poorhouse, is recorded on the 1839

Tithe Map and apportionment. By the 1889, it had been demolished. The plot remains vacant today.¹⁹

Deeds and correspondence relating to the sale of Lumbards in 1762, as part of the Maudlin Estate, by Henry Cornish Henley to clothier Hugh Trenchard, include a reference to 'the House'.²⁰ The Overseers accounts of 1725 record income from rent for Lumbards, the year the Overseers earmarked William Ousley's house for a workhouse. Lumbards was therefore originally owned by the parish but clearly not big enough for indoor relief purposes. It was sold to Henry Holt Henley of Leigh House near Winsham in 1738. Further repairs were made between 1774 and 1780 as part of an apparently symbiotic arrangement between Hugh Trenchard and the Overseers of the Poor. Their accounts record steps taken to deal with a series of measles and smallpox outbreaks between 1752 and 1780. During this period, 1761 and 1772, have also been identified by Schofield as crisis years.

School and workhouse

The building housing the new parish workhouse was part of a tenement [holding consisting of land and a house] donated by Thorncombe's parish priest Thomas Cook in trust to the parish in 1734.²¹ The 'great house now [to be] known by the names of the school and workhouse,' was 'for the use and better maintenance of the poor' and that it should be kept in good repair otherwise it would revert back to Cook's heirs.²² However the name stuck. In answer to a question from Devon topographer Daniel Lysons in 1821, Thorncombe parish vicar Charles Egerton writes in a letter, he has no idea why 'the school & poor house . . . was dignified with the name of the Great House'.²³ Cook's deed of settlement specifies that the new school will consist of the 'great hall, and two butteries on the right side of the entry with three chambers over them for a schoolmaster to teach poor children' together with a third of the garden plot and orchard. The rest of the premises are to be used for 'an almshouse' for 'poor persons', nominated by overseers . . . 'to be maintained from 'public rates'.²⁴



Cook's 'Great House' on Chard Street. Copy of 1873 plan showing proposed site of the new National School.²⁵
(Courtesy of Dorset History Centre)

New elementary school

In 1820 The Charity Commissioners reported that the property continues 'to be divided according to the donor's directions, one part being appropriated for a school and the habitation of the schoolmaster and the remainder, for a workhouse ... inhabited by poor persons supported by the parish'. The school provided free education for 11 pupils but it seems attendance was sporadic. Their education and the school master's wage was paid for by Thomas Cook's charity and Elizabeth Bragge's endowments.²⁶ In his 1818 return to the *Select Committee* ... into the *Education of the Poor*, Charles Egerton reported that,

'The poor are desirous of having their children nominated on the list of free scholars, but are very remiss in sending them ... as whenever they can earn any thing, (*sic*) their attendance at school ceases', Elsewhere in the parish, four other 'small day schools' catered for a further 35 pupils and charged between 4d (2p) and 6d (2½p).²⁷

The 1870 Education Act which legislated for universal education of children between the ages of 5 and 13 removed the need for separate provision for pauper children. After extensive negotiations between the trustees of Thomas Cook's Charity, the Education Department and Charity Commission, the demolition of the old school was authorised in 1874 to make way for a new elementary school. From 1834, part of the workhouse (2 Church View) had been rented out and the other half (1 Church View) used as a parish room for 'paying the poor, penny readings and vestry Meetings'. It was subsequently sold for £110 in 1875, to defray additional £250 in building costs relating to the school after the builder went bankrupt.²⁸

Axminster Poor Law Union

Just over a century after Knatchbull's Act was passed, there was another attempt by parliament to reduce the burgeoning cost of poor relief. Under the 1834 Poor Law Reform Act, the provision and administration of poor relief was centralised under the Poor Law Commission. New union workhouses were set up which amalgamated several parishes under one umbrella. Tough living conditions designed to persuade able-bodied paupers to actively seek employment further afield, were also intended to force farmers to pay a *regular* living wage to maintain a local workforce, rather than using poor relief to subsidise quiet times of year.

As a result Thorncombe's workhouse was closed and able-bodied parish paupers and their families were now sent to the Axminster Poor Law Union workhouse. Those unable to work due to age or health problems, continued to receive their dole and live in the parish. Paupers in need of sheltered accommodation were probably sent to Axminster workhouse as there was no longer any parish accommodation for paupers in Thorncombe. To fund the new union workhouse, parishes were

obliged in law to sell their own workhouses. Unlike the parish workhouse which was protected by the terms of Cook's charitable deed, Thorncombe's poorhouses were not. So in 1837 Thorncombe parish sold Forseys and Peadon's for £62 to mason Bernard Phelps.²⁹ The houses were next door to each other on the corner of Chard Street at the junction with High Street. On Bernard Phelps' death the properties were acquired by Thomas Ousley in 1875.³⁰ By 1897 Forseys and Peadons had been demolished to make way for Jubilee Cottage, the garden of which originally extended to where Pennyhayne, built in the early 1970s, stands today.

1. A. Shipp, *Poor relief in Thorncombe 1722-1809* (2013), 21-3.
2. D.H.C., PC-THO/3/1 Thorncombe Parish Council, overseers of the poor, account book, 1722-1747.
3. *Oxford English Dictionary* on-line at www.oed.com (accessed 14.08.2015).
4. J. Ede, *Thorncombe. A village history* (unpublished typescript, 1982); R. Farley, *Thorncombe life memories and the history of the parish* (1995), 38; E. Retter, 'Thorncombe Workhouse' in *The Dorset Year Book* (1957-8), 117-118.
5. G. Andrews Moriarty, 'Additional Records Relating to the English Ancestry of the Bowditch Family of Saalem Mass.' in *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* (July 1928), 303-312.
6. D.H.C., PE-THO/SC/8/1, e Extract of the will of Elizabeth Bragge, late of Sadborow Devon, 1719 [mid to late 19th century].
7. D.H.C., D-MHM/9098A, abstract of title of Thomas Newman to lands in the parish of Thorncombe, 1734-1840.
8. The National Archives (afterwards T.N.A.) CHAR 2/67 Records of the Charity Commissioners and Charity Commission. Commission for Inquiry into Charities: Papers. Devon, Thorncombe; ED49/1785 Department of Education & Science. Elementary Education Endowment Files. Thorncombe Church of England School a) Reverend Thomas Cook and Elizabeth Bragge b) Girls School, 1872-1907.
9. T.N.A., CHAR 2/67 Letter from Dommett & Canning on behalf of the trustees of Cook's Charity to the Charity Commission received 17 June 1873.
10. Ordnance Survey, First Series, Sheet 18, scale 1:63360 (1811) on-line at www.visionofbritain.org.uk (accessed 14.08.2015).
11. S. Hindle, *On the parish? Micropolitics of Poor Relief in rural England circa 1550-1750* (2003), 268-9.
12. D.H.C., D-MHM/8989, Thorncombe. Lease of cottage in reversion, 28 Feb 1735; D-MHM 8965 Counterpart lease for Whyte Lion Inn, Thorncombe, 20 Jan 1724.
13. Higher Farm House, Thorncombe, on-line at www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk (accessed 28.08.2015); R. Machin, *The houses of Yetminster* (1978). With thanks to Mr Machin for his advice.
14. Thorncombe Burials 1691-1740 on-line at www.opcdorset.org/Thorncombe (accessed 14.08.2015).
15. D.H.C., D-RGB/LL/118 Thorncombe, untitled document identified as poor rates, 18th century. [A poor rate return, it is dated 1748. The total value £93 3s.

- 6d. concurs with the Overseers of the Poor Accounts for the same year. John Ousley is assessed at 12s. (60p) for Workhouse Estate].
16. T.N.A., MH12/2095/155 Folio 237 Internal Memorandum. Thorncombe parish, 8 May 1837.
 17. G. Oxley, *Poor Relief in England and Wales 1601-1834* (1974), 71.
 18. Department of Continuing Education, Oxford University, Advanced Diploma in Local History via the Internet, CD-ROM (2008). R. Schofield, *Parish register, aggregate analyses: the population history of England database and introductory guide. A Local Population Studies Supplement* (1993), 3; Thorncombe.xls. Database quoted by kind permission.
 19. D.H.C., T/THO Thorncombe Tithe map 1839; OS County Series Dorset, 1:2,500 (1889) on-line at www.old-maps.co.uk (accessed 14.05.2015).
 20. Somerset Heritage Centre, DD\TOR/ 112 Winsham deeds, 1647-1776.
 21. J. Bristow, *The local historian's glossary of words and terms* (2001), 179.
 22. D.H.C., PC/THO: RE1.2 Thorncombe parish registers, 1641-1740. Inside back cover.
 23. British Library, Add. MSS. 9427 p.116, Lysons notebooks, letter from Charles Egerton, Vicar of Thorncombe to Samuel Lysons, topographer, dated 11 Jan. 1821.
 24. T.N.A., CHAR2.67 Extract made 15 June 1873 from a deed of settlement by the Revd. Thos. Cooke of a dwelling house in Thorncombe for a school and an alms house, 13 Nov. 1734.
 25. D.H.C., PE-THO/SC/8/3 Draft for a conveyance relating to the building of a school in Chard Street with plan, 1873.
 26. Report from the Commissioners: Charities for England and Wales (1820), 30-31 on-line at <https://books.google.co.uk> (accessed 28.08.2015).
 27. *A digest of parochial returns made to the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Education of the Poor: Session 1818*, vol. I, pp.18.
 28. T.N.A., CHAR2/67 Letter from Dommett & Canning on behalf of the trustees of Cook's Charity to the Charity Commission received 4 Aug. 1875; Letter from Dommett & Canning on behalf of the trustees of Cook's Charity to the Charity Commission received 6 Sept. 1875.
 29. T.N.A., MH12/2095/176 Sale of Parish Property Form 8 ... Thorncombe Parish Workhouse.
 30. D.H.C., D-NWS Acc. 8024 Nantes and Wylde Solicitors Collection, Ousley deeds.

EVE HIGGS

14. I TAKE OFF MY HAT TO YOU: HAT HONOUR VERSUS NONCONFORMITY IN 17TH CENTURY SOMERSET. In the biography of Joseph Alleine, a local nonconformist minister, in the mid to late 17th century, there occurs the following description of his Taunton parish's attitude to hats:

They had no religious reverence for the mere building in which worship was offered. A person entering the church while Mr.

Alleine was preaching, would see every man there keeping his steeple-hat on . . . Many devout people were scandalised by it. When Col. Turner, a gallant Cavalier, was hanged for burglary, he told the crowd gathered round the gallows that his mind derived great consolation from the thought that he 'had always taken his hat off when he went into a church'. 'Some holy Nonconformists I have known', says Mr. Baxter, 'that would rarely mention God but with their hats put off, or bowing down their heads, and it hath often affected me more than a sermon.' . . . They would certainly have worn their hats while listening to the minister; though, when he commenced prayer, they would have uncovered. How was it? In those days, let it be understood, wearing the hat indoors was an ordinary habit, and the lords on whom Mr. Pepys bowed attendance never thought it implied discourtesy to do so even at the dinner table; but actually to take it off with reference to anything religious was thought to imply worship, - taking it off at church, merely because it was a church, was thought to imply worship to the mere building.¹

What is going on here? The whole anthropology of hats is lost on us today. They are for warmth in cold weather, or dressing up for a wedding. Perhaps the only tradition we have is that men remove their hats on entering a house or church, but do young men still do this?

Hat-making and politics in the 17th century

Hats always implied status. Sir William Webster's will of 1535 refers to his hat: '[To] Sir Michael Harneyge my porteyse, my hatte, my sleppers and my third tache [buckle, usually silver]'.² Other wills refer to breeches, blue jerkin, hose - not so special items.³ Hats had been made of beaver fur. There had been beavers in the Somerset Levels, as bones from Dr. John Coles' excavations show, but they had been brought to extinction by the 1600s or so, with loss of habitat and hunting.⁴ Beaver skins had to be imported from America, and were consequently expensive.

In 1638 Charles I decided to make the manufacture of beaver hats a separate trade and he granted a charter incorporating the Company of Beaver-makers, at whose hall every beaver hat was to be stamped and pay a tax of 1s. The chief agent in procuring the charter was Francis Spatchurst, who represented the interests of

the earl of Stirling 'who had laid out considerable capital in promoting the beaver business' and was to receive a rent out of the tax.⁵

The first Earl of Stirling was one of the founders of Nova Scotia and needed some return on his efforts; furs were one of the few products of these new colonies and Charles hoped to recompense British efforts (especially Scottish efforts) in enlarging British territories through this proposed tax. What Charles did not seem to realise was that pure beaver hats were very expensive and most small hat-makers used mixed beaver and felt; in 1639 Charles declared that beaver hat making and felt making were separate trades, thus striking at the living of most hat-makers. The Long Parliament clashed over this decree. A pamphlet, probably written by Lilburne, leader of the Levellers, inveighing against taxes and tithes, joined in the fray:

Though the poor hat-makers, who earn their living with heavy and hot labour, both early and late, do pay excise both for all the material, and fire which they use . . . yet when they have made their hats, and done all they can with trouble and toil, day and night, they are forced to pay excise over again out of their very labour.⁶

The Levellers saw the Civil War in terms of a fight between rich and poor, although they were not against wealth earned by the sweat of a man's brow. Hat makers were not to be scorned, though that is not how Anglican bishops saw them, especially when competing for congregations:

These separatists did not believe in an ordained priesthood but chose a gifted layman to lead them, who was maintained partly by the voluntary contributions of his flock and partly by continuing to work at his secular occupation . . . Bishop Hall complained to the House of Lords of preaching by cobblers, tailors, felt-makers 'and such like trash.

In June 1641 the Commons sent for a number of these lay preachers . . . Chief among them were the two Arch-Separatists, Greene and Spencer . . . John Greene was a hat-maker or feltmaker by trade . . . It is not the custom', protested a critic of the separatists, 'Of any well settled church in Europe to ordain such as you, I mean hat makers, cobblers, tailors, horsekeepers . . . in the

forenoon making a hat, or rubbing a horse, and in the afternoon preaching a sermon.⁷



A modern drawing from a trade token of Stephen Timewell showing a hat and a feather. He was mayor of Taunton in 1683. (The original token is owned by the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society; the drawing is by Adrian Webb)

The anthropology of hats

Both sides in the Civil War wore feathers in their hats, pink feathers for the king, or orange for Parliament, although either side could wear black or white. Apparently the advantage was that if you were on the losing side you could escape by just removing your feather from your hat.

With the Commonwealth came plain dress which stood for democracy and the plain man - no more frivolous feathers.

Sir John Reresby returned from abroad in 1658 to find that the citizens and ordinary people of London could barely stand the sight of a gentleman. Walking one day with his valet who sported a feather in his hat, the two of them were set upon by workmen and escaped only with difficulty.⁸

Wearing a hat was a sign of respectability and became symbolic of status. At his trial Charles I was placed with his back to the people. 'All that any of them could see . . . was his tall black hat'; not a crown but still a statement of his authority.⁹

As the hat became a sign of rank, the custom had grown of doffing your hat, or 'hat honour':

Gentlemen expected, and often received, deferential obedience from their tenants . . . Contempt by inferiors was sometimes met by violence, as when Sir Samuel Sandys of Ombersley, Worcestershire, ordered his servants to beat up a tithingman who had provokingly kept his hat on in Sandys' presence and had spoken insulting words.¹⁰

'I take off my hat to you' became more than a recognition of a

superior. Even when a lord returned the compliment by telling you to keep your hat on, there were pitfalls:

The person of quality having oblig'd you to be covered in a place where you ought not to have done it but by particular command, you must pull off your hat as often as in the discourse his Lordship's name be mentioned, the name of any of his relations, or of any person of quality that is intimate with him . . .¹¹

Should too much name-dropping mean things got out of hand, the 'person of quality' might relax the rules. Still it was necessary to remain on your guard: 'If his Lordship chances to sneeze, you are not to bawl out "God bless you, sir", but pulling off your hat, bow to him handsomely, and make that observation to yourself'. No wonder that there was apparently a Turkish curse which ran: 'I wish you as little rest as a Christian's hat'.¹²

Quakers did not take any notice of rank. 'The Lord forbade me to put off my hat to any, high or low' said George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends. Many found this rude, an affront to the polite customs which oiled the business of society.

It is easy to see why members of the élite found the Quakers so threatening. They were, a Somerset JP declared, 'in contempt of government'. Their passionate interruptions of church services, refusal to pay tithes, rejection of oaths and hat honour: all struck, actually or symbolically, at the foundations of ordered society.¹³

The envoys from Holland who came to plead for Charles before his execution 'noticed that the Commons politely removed their hats at every reference to the Dutch government, but remained with their heads covered when the name of King Charles was mentioned'.¹⁴ A Civil War pamphlet mocks the sycophants:

And because the Lord Keeper, Privy Seal, and treasurer's long tails should not daggle in the dirt, they must have another sycophant slave apiece to carry up for them, with their hats off doing homage to their breech. Oh, height of all baseness! What, will they creep to one another's arses for honour? Why, oh, his majesty's breath of honour it may be blows out there, and therefore he holds up his gown that it might blow him that holds it

up, and make him to be called Sir.¹⁵

When Cromwell and Fairfax visited Oxford to be awarded honorary doctorates, they wore gowns but as to cap and hood, they having formed part of the vestments worn by Romish priests, were of course rejected as 'mere conjuring garments'. Headgear seems to have been dangerous stuff, 'symbols of a priestly class'.¹⁶

So the men of Taunton were sticking to their radical egalitarian agenda in not removing their hats, even in church. What was the usual attitude on removing a hat or not when entering a building? At this time men did wear their hats indoors, even when dining, as prints show. However, Anglicans usually removed their hat on entering a church, out of respect:

Trouble during church services was almost invariably the fault of noisy young people. The sidesmen were supposed to keep them in order . . . John Hooper, a butcher's apprentice, sat 'with his hat on his head and laughed and flouted' at them as they paraded round the church.¹⁷

Alleine's Nonconformists only take their hats off at the mention of God:

Some holy Nonconformists I have known . . . would rarely mention God but with their hats put off, or bowing down their heads, and it hath affected me more than a sermon.

Deference came back with the Restoration, and old customs were restored. As time went on, etiquette became less clear, especially when women were added into the picture:

In came Mr. James all spruced up with his hat on. Oh Master Holland do keep your hat on. Not said I (rather unguardedly) before the Ladies. This threw poor James into a kind of quandary - Why Sir, we keep our Hats on! On this, starting up, he boldly claps his hat upon a peg. Oh No, cried I. Oh No, cried the Ladies, that must not be. Then immediately I put my hat on. At last he was prevailed to take his hat down from the peg and, Put it on, cried everyone. No, says Master James, not this one, I know better. So out he stept and brings down a new handsome Hat.¹⁸

Socialists in the 19th century scorned the doffing of hats in deference. William Morris was annoyed with the way his gardener tipped his hat to him. The First World War swept all this away, including women's extravagant creations, as the ranks pulled together. However, in Wellington in the 1930s some still clung to rank - or just their familiar headgear.

I do not think I ever saw George Mackay, the doctor, in anything but a top hat. Thomas Baker of the Elms near West Buckland would walk in from his country house wearing one. Fred White, who lived at the Avenue, was another. 'Squire' Sanford was painted holding a top hat in his hand. William Day Horsey was daily wheeled in a bath chair around the town wearing one and the old man, Doram, who wheeled him wore one also.¹⁹

1. C. Stamford, *Joseph Alleine: his companions and times. A memorial of Black Bartholomew 1662* (1861), 113.
2. F.W. Weaver, *Wells wills arranged in parishes, and annotated* (1890), 10-11.
3. Weaver, *Wells wills*, *passim*.
4. B. Coles, *Beavers in Britain* (2006).
5. B. Manning, *The English people and the English revolution* (1991), 228.
6. Lilburne[?] *England's birthright justified* quoted in B. Manning, *The English people and the English revolution* (1991), 380.
7. Manning, *The English people*, 95.
8. P. Thorold, *The London rich* (1999), 31.
9. C.V. Wedgwood, *The trial of Charles I* (1964), 128.
10. D. Underdown, *Revel, riot and rebellion; popular politics and culture in England 1603-1660* (1985), 22.
11. de Courtin's, *Rules of civility* (c.1670).
12. Thorold, *The London rich*, 14.
13. Underdown, *Revel*, 251-2.
14. Wedgwood, *The trial of Charles I*, 171.
15. Anon, *Light shining in Buckinghamshire* (1648) quoted in Manning, *The English people*, 371.
16. Stamford, *Joseph Alleine*, 42 and 111.
17. D. Underdown, *Fire from Heaven* (1992), 81.
18. J. Ayres ed., *Paupers and pig killers; diary of William Holland, a Somerset parson 1799-1818* (1984), 146.
19. A.L. Humphreys, *When I was a boy; a West Country town in the seventies [1870s]* (1933), 87.

FELICITY HEBDITCH

BOOK REVIEWS

Peter Fitzgerald, *Nathaniel Ireson of Wincanton architect, master builder & potter*, 72pp, 36 illustrations, published by the Dovecote Press, 2016, £15.00 plus £2.00 p+p from the author, Pen Mill Farm, Penselwood, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 8NF, peterrfitzg@aol.com. The main purpose of this book is to raise funds for the restoration of Nathaniel Ireson's fine statue in Wincanton churchyard.

Nathaniel Ireson was born in 1689 at Ansley, near Nuneaton. The author tracks Ireson's rise to fame as a master mason and renowned architect from humble beginnings in the Midlands. By 1725 he had bought Windmill Hill Farm, near Wincanton, where he made bricks and delft earthenware pottery. He extracted building stone which he used in numerous local building projects, working across Somerset and Dorset. He carved church monuments and played a crucial role in the rebuilding of Blandford Forum after the Great Fire of 1731. By the time of his death in 1769, he was a highly regarded architect whose legacy lives on throughout the West Country.

The author has approached this biography of Ireson in an interesting way by dealing with the main events in his life first. Fitzgerald then includes chapters on patronage and politics; architectural style; the Blandford School and Borromini capitals; church monuments; and a chapter by Sarah Fitzgerald on Wincanton Delft. By doing this the reader is given a greater insight into Ireson's world and the events which helped shape him into one of the leading architects of the early 18th century.

The quality of the production is a great credit to the publisher, with the usual type face and a nice section of colour illustrations. Although this is not a weighty tome, it does contain a lot of well presented detail and two useful appendices documenting the known places where Ireson worked. Personally it would have been nice to see more detailed references and an index. Also, a map showing the extent of the places he is connected with might help readers appreciate the geographical extent of his achievements.

A.J.W.

Emma Down and Adrian Webb, *Somerset mapped: cartography in the county through the centuries*, Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society in association with Halsgrove, 2016, pp.i-xxv & 1-230, hardback, £24.99.

Somerset is fortunate to have two archivists and historians of cartography as well placed and experienced as Emma Down and Adrian Webb to draw together the maps of the county and place them within their historical context. This task has been attempted by authors, publishers and Record Societies in many counties, but rarely with such success. It is not difficult to present a volume of attractive images with captions, but a series of well presented maps, carefully selected and expertly described is a different matter.

The authors have chosen to explore the history of cartography within the Somerset and the historical themes that necessitated the production of the maps. This approach is at once imaginative and offers much more to the reader than a simple chronological presentation of attractive facsimiles. The use of maps produced by antiquarians and historians to illustrate the period before 1500 allows for discussion of the Roman, Saxon and medieval periods and includes some rare insights such as Charles Pooley's sketch map of preaching crosses uses ecclesiastical monuments to plot areas of social interaction more commonly illustrated by the economic sources of tax collection or market charters. Antiquarian maps are not limited to the period before contemporary cartography, the important Somerset antiquarian Charles Chadwick Healey's map of Hopton's itinerary and the movements of royalist forces during the civil war is a welcome addition.

All the expected areas of mapping are covered: the development of roads, railways and canals, the changing divisions of the county administration and the nineteenth century tithe commutation series. Down and Webb's particular knowledge of coastal surveys means this subject is particularly strong and the descriptions of the different maps and the processes that lead to their creation are of interest to readers nationally. The anonymous, panoramic, coast map of 1539 is reproduced over three pages, Wagenhauer's 1589 map of the Bristol Channel highlights navigation hazards, Collins map of

the Severn and Bristol Channel of 1694 adds detail to the coastline, finally another naval officer, Murdoch Mackenzie, produced in 1771 an updated survey using more advanced techniques which is recognisable as a modern chart

Although this is a substantial work not everything can be included, it is unfortunate that Tunnicliffe's map of 1791, the best map of Somerset's complex hundredal structure, is only illustrated by a section of the south of the county. Parish, poor law union and district council boundaries might also have received more attention as might early nineteenth century inclosure, but these are minor criticisms and these maps are generally available and well described elsewhere. Their absence is more than compensated by the thoughtful inclusion of unusual material that might inspire research using less frequently cited sources: unexpected and welcome surprises such as the contemporary plan of the battle of Sedgemoor and William Smith's ground breaking geology or 'fossilological' map of 1811.

While *Somerset Mapped* is accessible to the general reader the depth of knowledge of the authors means that this volume is also a useful work of reference for professional historians and archivists. The sections of the Valuation Office maps produced in 1910, the land use maps of the 1940s, War Office and County Council zoning maps of the mid-twentieth century clearly distinguish sets of annotated Ordnance Survey maps of great interest to social and economic historians and under used by local historians.

All sections in this volume are clearly presented and described with an expert's eye and this is what makes this volume more than a coffee table book. In describing Scratchy's map of 1736 the Webb and Down tell us how he measured the thickness of seams of coal and projected their course underground, corrected his proofs and marketed his county to subscribers, before reproducing pages of his sketch plans and notes. The extensive research into the cartographers, their techniques and the context of their work mean that *Somerset Mapped* is of interest to general readers and historians in Somerset and beyond.

M.P.F.

NOTES

THE FIRST FOUR YEARS OF THE SDNQ WEBSITE

sdnq.org.uk In November, 2012 the Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries website came in to being. Initially, the website provided information on the character and history of the journal, as well as contact details and examples of 'notes' and 'queries' from previous issues. The aim of the website was to provide an informative, straightforward and stylish web presence that reflected the ethos of SDNQ.

The basic structure and aims of the website are unchanged but the scope of the site has broadened. For example, there are now pages that reflect the anniversary years of World War I. These include an article on Memorial Halls, by Felicity Hebditch, that has prompted the compilation of a list of such halls in Somerset and Dorset (this can be found on the **World War I Memorial Halls** page). Information on halls not yet included will be welcomed. Another recently added page is **Historic Somerset and Dorset** and this is intended for photographs, taken by subscribers and readers of the journal, of historic sites from across the two counties. Increasing the involvement of subscribers and readers is a central aim of the website team. Contributions for consideration for inclusion on the website should be sent to: editors@sdnq.org.uk.

A very important recent addition to the website is the fully searchable **Index to SDNQ volumes 1–37**. The possibility of compiling a consolidated index was first suggested in the minutes of the SDNQ Editorial Committee in 1929, but it is only now in the computer age that it has finally been achieved. Although the index pages are, at the time of writing, still under construction in terms of presentation, their presence has brought a steep increase in hits on the site as well as an increase in enquiries for back numbers. (Details of how to order back numbers are available on the inside front cover of the journal as well as on the website.)

Where statistics are concerned, the number of hits on the website recorded in October, 2013 was 99 and in October, 2016 this had risen to 580. In early November, 2016 the number of hits on the site, since its inception, had passed 7,000.

The website will continue to develop and may, at a future date, provide the facility for the payment of subscriptions and back numbers via the site and include a 'members' area' for subscribers. Feedback is welcomed on all aspects of the site.

JUDITH FORD

DRAYTON WASSAIL: THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH.

Drayton Wassail has been described previously in these pages;¹ this short note records a significant change in personnel which took place on Old Christmas Eve (January 5th) 2015. The recorded history of the custom goes back to 1903 when Cecil Sharp noted the song² whereas the unrecorded history probably reaches back into the 18th century.³

The song is recognised under the general umbrella of 'The Somerset Wassail' and is a rare example of the living English folksong. Although other versions have been noted for a collection of villages within a twenty mile radius of Taunton⁴ this is one of the few visiting wassails that is still performed. A similar wassail is carried out in the adjoining village of Curry Rivel;⁵ the other surviving visiting wassails are in Cornwall.⁶

During the known history of the Drayton Wassail the personnel always changed spasmodically in ones and twos, with the unwritten understanding that the incoming members had to be males, and either born in the village or had been resident for a recognisable period of time and possessed a good ear for a song.

The core of the recent wassail party has been members of the Willey family (first noted in Drayton church records in 1763):⁷

Brian Willey	born Drayton (born 1938)
Richard Willey	born Drayton (1937)
Gerald Willey	born Drayton (1938)
Norman Atwell	born Drayton (1934)
Eddie Hancock	born Weston-Super-Mare (1936), resident since 1952.

Brian was the leader, the brothers Richard and Gerald are his cousins, as is Norman whilst Eddie is brother-in-law to Norman.

Each one can recall the occasion of their first wassail in the late 1950s or early 60s and the experience of joining with the then senior members of the team which included such characters as Bill 'Puggy' Meare, 'Dusto' Winter and Charlie Showers, several of whom had been staunch members with fifty of sixty years' service.

As a core group the Willey quintet in their turn have kept the tradition alive, essentially unchanged, into the 21st century. Times change and that link is now broken by their mass retirement in 2015 due to a combination of *anno domini*, failing health and the exigencies of winter travel. The consensus was that a handover to "the younger generation" would be timely. Their last wassail evening began at Midelney Manor at 6 pm and ended at the Drayton Arms after 10 pm. A total of £285 had been collected and was donated to the Village Hall funds.

However, a heartening sign, also present in the last wassail party that evening were the six members of the "new team" eager to accept the baton, and the challenge, for another era:

Steve Burrows	born Redhill (started 2004)
Mike Hargreaves	born South Ferring (2007)
Dave Adams	born Penang, Malaysia (2008)
Geoff Lock	born Drayton (2010)
Stephen Legg	born Wellington (2013)
Mike Kennett	born Croydon (2014)

All are Drayton residents and together had accumulated over 40 man-years of wassailing experience before taking over the custom.

Even with the increase in size and population of the village, the influx of new people, families of differing social backgrounds, and the rise of modern entertainment and amusement, there is still a genuine feeling and expectancy around the village that the tradition must continue and that the wassailers should be seen and heard on the evening of January 5th.

Post script: On January 5th 2016 the 'new team' had increased from six to thirteen as seven even 'newer' members had joined. In alphabetical order the seven newest members are: Joe Appleby, Martin Bristow, Tim Donaldson, Nick Durnam, Jon Parkinson, Mark Robinson and Tom Sadington. Some had

sheets of words, others had practised with the recordings of Drayton Wassail on the British Library Sound Archive website. By the end of the evening the new team was bedding in well and sounding good.

Inevitably the relationships with the householders visited were different, and so was the banter, but to an outsider the change would have appeared seamless. One retired wassailer presented his 'wassailing' thumb stick to a member of the 2016 team – the baton had been handed on, in all senses.

1. G.R. Willey, 'Wassailing at Drayton, Somerset' in *SDNQ* 30 (March 1978), 344-352.
2. Clare College, Cambridge, Sharp MSS, ref M2, the second song he noted, from Mrs Quick, the Vicar of Drayton's wife. The original MSS are held at Clare College, Cambridge, and may be accessed on line at www.vwm1.org/full-english and then type *drayton wassail* in the search box [accessed 18.02.2016].
3. The lapse of the Licensing Act for printers in 1695 broke the monopoly of the Stationers' Company and allowed the establishment of local printing presses. The Somerset Wassail Song is a typical product of such a local press in the 18th and 19th centuries, and its distribution centres on Taunton. A parallel song, The Gloucestershire Wassail Song, was first recorded in the *Times Telescope* in 1813, its distribution centres on Stroud, Gloucestershire.
4. Sharp noted the visiting wassail song in Somerset at Bagborough, Barrington, Bradford on Tone, Bridgwater, Cannington, Crowcombe, Curry Rivel, Drayton, Ilchester, Langport, Nether Stowey, Othery, Over Stowey, and Stocklinch. It is not known how many customs were still extant in the early 20th century. Access as for Drayton Wassail, but type *xxxx wassail* in the search box.
5. Curry Rivel's wassail is also held on 5th January. To hear the Curry Rivel song go to <http://sounds.bl.uk/World-and-traditional-music/Bob-and-Jacqueline-Patten-Collection> and search for Curry Rivel under the 'Somerset' heading [accessed 18.02.2016]. Images of the 2016 wassail can be found at www.homersykes.photoshelter.com and search for *Curry Rivel* [accessed 18.02.2016].
6. See, for example, www.bodminwassail.co.uk [accessed 18.02.2016]. A bequest of 1624 refers to an "annual wassail cup" but the exact form of the proceedings is not known. Images of Bodmin Wassail in 2016 can be found at www.homersykes.photoshelter.com and search for *Bodmin* [accessed 18.02.2016].
7. Somerset Heritage Centre, DD/X/Willy, S/1764.

G. WILLEY, M. HARGREAVES, R. PATTEN

TRAINING TEACHERS. The diocese of Exeter was justly proud of its educational activity in the middle of the 19th century and occasionally displayed that pride in its annual printed report, the *Exeter Diocesan Calendar and Clergy List*. There were two colleges operating for a few years, the

'Training Institute for Masters' established in Exeter in 1852 and the 'Training Institute for Schoolmistresses' in Truro from 1858. The *Calendar* for 1861 (pages 116-18) listed those Exeter students who had successfully passed out and were in post, some of them abroad. Somerset readers may be interested in those then serving in the county:

Henry Hale, left Christmas 1853, teaching at the National School,
Bathwick
Edwin T Allen, Christmas 1855, Central School, Wells
Fred A Thomas, Christmas 1857, National School, Nether Stowey
George Williams, Christmas 1857, National School, Wells
Henry Allen, Christmas 1858, National School, Milverton
George Sharp, Christmas 1858, United School, Shepton Mallet
Jonathan Badcock, Christmas 1859, National School,
Christchurch, Nailsea

A second list, published in the *Calendar* for 1867, named (among those who had entered in January 1864) the following who had been appointed to schools at Christmas 1865:

Thomas Ayres, National School, Brendon Hill
Herbert Catford, National School, West Pennard
Archibald Keast, National School, Brendon Hill
John Bowyer, National School, Rockwell Green

Of the 28 lady students at the Truro college in 1861, two were from Somerset:

Elizabeth Thomas from Milverton
Eliza Munck from Curry Rivel

There were no Somerset students there in 1867.

ROBERT DUNNING

REVD GEORGE HARBIN. Lot 1266 of the Morningthorpe Manor Country House Sale (held by Keys Fine Art Auctioneers, Palmers Lane, Aylsham, Norwich, NR11 6JA) on 8 September 2016, is described in the auctioneer's catalogue as:

REV GEORGE HARBIN: COPIES OF SEVERAL OLD CHARTERS, DEEDS AND EVIDENCES ETC OF THE FAMILIES OF FERRERS VERDUN BOUCHER DEVEREUX ROCHE OR DE RUPE ETC NOW IN YE CUSTODY OF THE LD VISC WEYMOUTH AT LONG-LEATE COM WILTS 1717, 2 manuscript volumes, volume 1 175 manuscript pages including index, volume 2 171 manuscript pages plus quantity of blank leaves, larger folded index bound in at rear, 4to, old blind stamped diced Russia, Provenance: probably Harbin's sale by Puttick & Simpson advertised in *The Guardian*, 10 December 1873, Sir Thomas Phillipps' MS 4801 ink note in each volume, Sotheby's 19 February 1947, Lot 538 purchased by Bryan Hall of Banningham Old Rectory, presumably sold to Stanley Crowe, his cat 83 Item 261 (2) An important survival of the charters formerly at Longleat.

The lot was estimated at £300-450 and made £720 plus 23% commission.

Although on the face of it this has little to do with Somerset and Dorset, the connection with Harbin and the greatest archival discovery in recent years of the Athelney cartulary by Professor Keynes is worth a note in SDNQ. In Professor Keynes' paper he stated 'One cannot peruse the list of Harbin manuscripts in the catalogue of the Phillipps library without wondering what interesting historical texts might lie hidden therein'. And following the dispersal of the library of Sir Thomas Phillipps 'it is not always easy to trace the present whereabouts of any given volume'.¹

The fact that one more of Harbin's manuscripts has come to light, albeit for a brief moment, offers some hope of more of his papers surfacing. The provenance given in the catalogue can be added to. The Norfolk Office website includes an appeal for funds to help buy some of the local manuscripts. It states:

The archive being sold has been gathered over many years by a keen local collector. Its eclectic nature means that it is very difficult to give a simple summary of its contents. Some of the highlights are land ownership records from the fifteenth century, diaries, business records and records relating to the care of the poor in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²

The house itself was offered in 2015 for a guide price of £1,500,000 by Savills, who state on their website that 'a Norfolk

antiquarian collector and bibliophile acquired the house with his wife in 1990'.³ The 'antiquarian' in question was Ron Fiske. An article about the sale states:

Fiske began collecting over 50 years ago with the purchase of a copy of Froissart's *Chronicles* from Yarmouth dealer, David Ferrow, but a lifelong passion and involvement with local history, heraldry and other subjects saw the collection grow to something like 30,000 books and pamphlets, together with manuscripts and armorial rolls, a substantial collection of autographs and much more.⁴

Looking at the catalogue, Fiske was far more than a 'keen local collector' as described on the Norfolk Record Office website. Hopefully many of the local records have made their way to their repository.

1. S. Keynes, 'George Harbin's transcript of the lost cartulary of Athelney Abbey' in *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 136 (1992), 149-59.
2. <https://norfolkrecordofficeblog.org/2016/08/30/morningthorpe-manor-appeal/> accessed 7 Jan. 2017.
3. <http://search.savills.com/property-detail/gbnorsnrs150059#/r/detail/GBNORSNRS150059> accessed 7 Jan. 2017. The house was sold for £1,200,000 in June 2016 according a property website <http://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/Morningthorpe.html> accessed 7 Jan. 2017.
4. I. McKay 'Keys to auction vast library from Morningthorpe Manor' in the on-line *Antiques Trade Gazette*, 26 Aug. 2016 accessed on 7 Jan. 2017 at <https://www.antiquetrade gazette.com/news/2016/keys-to-auction-vast-library-from-morningthorpe-manor/>.

A.J.W.

NOTICES

DR J.H. BETTEY. This will be the last time that the name of Dr J.H. Bettey appears as a member of the Editorial Committee of Somerset & Dorset Notes & Queries, a position he has held with great distinction since 1970. He has been a frequent contributor to the Journal of articles reflecting his interest in and knowledge of agricultural and social history. The members of the Committee, on behalf of the subscribers, offer him and his wife best wishes as they leave Somerset.

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 Findmypast Network. **For more details visit <http://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-Records/somerset-and-dorset-notes-and-queries-1890-1980>**

DEVON AND CORNWALL NOTES AND QUERIES

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

£10.00 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 2,100 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 £18.

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:

*Three Tudor Surveys, Lytchett Minster, Durweston
and Okeford Fitzpaine 1584-1585*, price £12.50.

The Sherborne Almshouse Register, 1437-1863, price £12.50,
(plus £2.50 postage)

The Lyme Regis Censuses 1695-1703, price £10.00 (plus £2.50 postage)

A full list of titles available can be obtained from the Hon General Secretary,
Mrs Ann Smith, c/o Dorset History Centre, Bridport Road,
Dorchester, DT1 1RP, archives@dorsetcc.gov.uk

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: Anne Leigh, Streams,

Dashwoods Lane, Bicknoller, Taunton, TA4 4EQ

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 Heritage Centre,

Brunel Way, Norton Fitzwarren, Somerset

A list of publications and membership form can be found at
www.sdnq.org.uk email: davidbromwich@freeolamail.com

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