
NOTES & QUERIES

FOR
SOMERSET AND DORSET

EDITED BY

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

HERRICK

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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.

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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. Subscriptions Secretary.

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

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Advertisements:

Half page £20; quarter page £12; payable in advance.

Back numbers: £4 each plus postage.

30. WHEN SMITHS WERE SMITHS: AN ANALYSIS OF SOME SOMERSET OCCUPATIONAL SURNAMES, 1416-1498.

The significant and growing online resource of indices and images of records of the Court of Common Pleas, provided by the University of Houston,¹ has been the source material for two recent articles on business debt, and the distribution of the woollen industry in the county of Somerset.² The Court of Common Pleas was the busiest civil court in England during the 15th century, hearing significantly more civil cases than the Court of Kings Bench, another partly civil court. The Court of Common Pleas heard cases concerning a debt of greater magnitude than £2, as well as trespass against a person, or in contravention to statutes of the realm, as well as many other civil issues including rape.³ With regard to the craftsmen of Somerset, the vast majority of them were cited in court for debt or trespass.

Whilst studying the indices, which have so far been published for 78 law terms from 1349 to 1563, it became clear that many craftspeople, especially smiths, had surnames commensurate with their occupation; this paper is an investigation of occupations and surnames in 15th century Somerset. It has been stated that

occupational surnames no doubt emerged as an accurate description of a man's trade, but by the middle of the fourteenth century, many such designations had become family names.⁴

My paper, using records from the 15th century, presents some quantitative data to lay beside the above qualitative comment from a medieval historian.

First, a note on the enormity of the task encountered when preparing this paper. Thus far, indices for 39 15th-century law terms have been published from 1416 to 1498. These comprise 9,600 cases which relate to Somerset people. Many of those cases give the occupation of the defendant(s). Whilst some cases and personal names are repeated within, and in more than one, year, once the cases with multiple defendants have been noted, and the many plaintiffs included, there is a possibility that details of nearly 20,000 Somerset people are included. No other source of 15th century data, can come anywhere near to the coverage in this treasure trove of information.

In the indices 126 occupations of smiths were found across the county of Somerset between 1416 and 1498, some 56 of these, *i.e.*

46%, had the surname of Smith. By way of comparison, there were many more butchers, 276,⁵ of which, 16 had surnames of Butcher (usually Bowcher or Bocher), which is 5.7% of the total. Dividing the 39 law terms into three parts of 13 law terms, a declining trend relating to smiths being Smiths becomes apparent; see table 1 below. Even in the late 15th century the percentage of smiths who were Smiths was double the general percentage of butchers who were Butchers. However, the overall lack of butchers named Butcher precludes a comparative analysis over time.

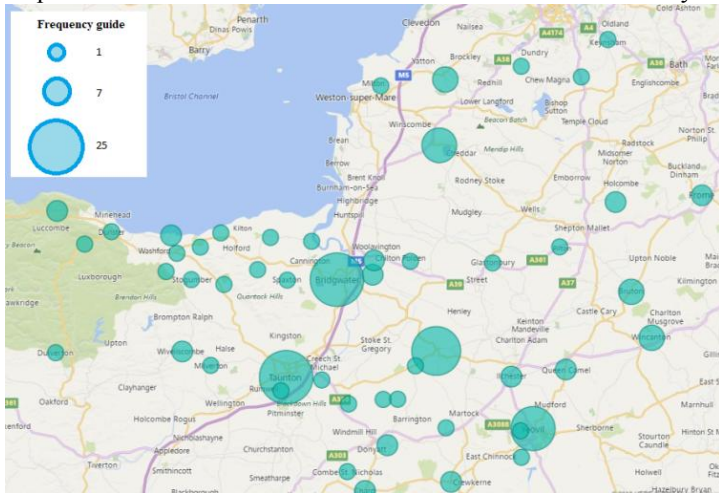
Within the 9,600 Somerset cases studied and over 2,000 craftspeople recorded, apart from smiths and butchers, 26 other craft occupations with people of the same surname were found. Table 2 (below) details the findings. Whilst the percentage of people having the same surname as their occupation has been listed, great care needs to be applied in drawing any conclusions, especially where there are a small number of craftspeople in a given occupation. In my opinion, groups where there are 50 or more operatives provide a meaningful percentage, as the sample size is large enough not to have been distorted by a few chance surnames. The exception to this may be the specialist goldsmiths who would have benefitted significantly from having such a surname, since their craft was so valued. There is probably enough data gathered and illustrated in table 2 to conclude that bakers, brewers, carpenters, cordwainers, masons, tailors and tanners tended not to have surnames that mirrored their trade. The reasons for this are beyond the scope of this article, but, hopefully, now the data is presented, others can work on appropriate hypotheses.

Table 1. Analysis of the changing likelihood of Somerset smiths being named Smith during the 15th century

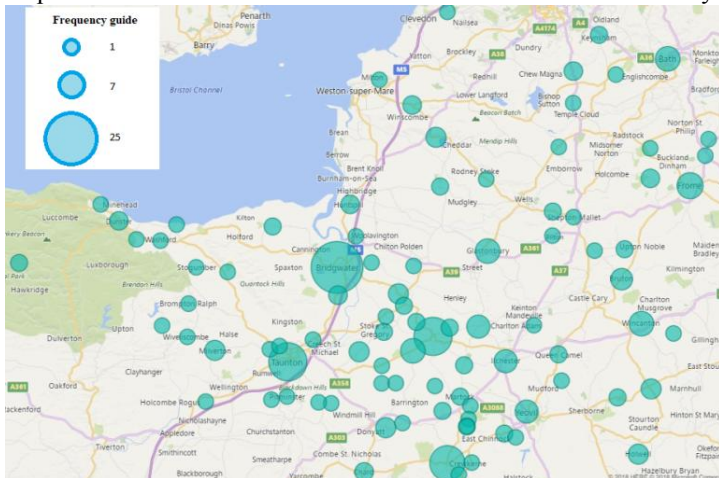
Date	No. smiths who were Smiths	No. smiths who were not Smiths	% smiths who were Smiths
1416-1444 (13 law terms)	34	26	57
1448-1477 (13 law terms)	16	24	40
1480-1498 (13 law terms)	3	23	12

N.B. The decline in the total number of smiths recorded as the century went by is explained by the general decrease in the number of cases heard in the Court of Common Pleas per year as the century went by.

Map 1. The distribution of smiths in Somerset in the 15th century



Map 2. The distribution of butchers in Somerset in the 15th century



Yeovil's football team are well known as 'The Glovers'. Five glovers were found from the indices to be residing in Yeovil during the 15th century. No other Somerset town had more. Sadly, there is no satisfaction to be had from reporting that Yeovil had more glovers than any other Somerset town, because Taunton and

Langport also had five glovers residing in their towns. However, it is clear that since there were 35 glovers found in the county, glove-making was only found in the Taunton to Yeovil corridor.

Table 2. A comparison of the likelihood of 26 types of Somerset craftsmen having the same surname as their craft during the 15th century

Surname / Craft	Total number of tradesman found with craft	Number of tradesmen with matching surname	% tradesman with same surname as craft
Baker	104	5	5
Barber	18	3	17
Bowyer	10	1	10
Brewer	46	1	2
Carpenter	65	2	3
Carver	5	1	20
Chandler	6	1	17
Cordwainer	127	2 (one called shoemaker)	2
Glazier	6	1	17
Glover	35 (five from Yeovil)	5 (one from Yeovil)	14
Goldsmith	16	4	25
Hellier	11	4	36
Hooper	9	1	1
Mason	53	1	2
Painter	1	1 (trade was stainer)	100
Panbeater	1	1	1
Pewterer	5	1 (surname was Pewe)	20
Plumber	2	1	50
Sadler	15	4	26
Sawyer	1	1	100
Skinner	40	1	3
Spicer	12	2	17
Tailor	180	6	3
Tanner	133	5	4
Turner	4	2	50
Waxmaker	1	1	100

In order to shed further light on the smiths and Smiths, a sample of five law terms between 1437 and 1455 was taken, a period when the association between a smith being named Smith was at its highest.⁶ 400 men with varying surnames were found to have one of the following occupations: apothecary, ashburner, baker, barber, bottle maker, bowyer, brazier, brewer, butcher, carpenter, carver, chandler, chapman, cook, cordwainer / corvisier / shoemaker, currier, draper, fisher / fishmonger, glover, hooper, hosier, hosteler, loader / carrier, mason, mattress maker, miller / millward, minstrel, ostler, pan-beater, pewterer, potter, saddler, skinner, smith, stainer, surgeon, tailor and tanner.⁷

Of these occupations, butcher was the most common and widespread in Somerset with 60 individuals recorded. Only two Butchers⁸ (3%) are recorded by surname who were butchers by occupation, which might lead to the supposition that occupational mobility by the mid 15th century caused many people to have different occupations from their male ancestors. However, an analysis of smiths and Smiths leads to a different conclusion.⁹ There were 27 smiths in the sample and 19 of these (70%) were Smiths by name. There were six other Smiths and three had occupations as chapmen, one each of a cordwainer, a tailor and a tanner, all the others had sales or craft trades. Looking at the relationship differently, there were 24 Smiths by name in the sample, 19 were smiths, representing 75% of the data set. There were smiths, sometimes more than one, named Smith across the county in Axbridge, Bawdrip, Congresbury, Crewkerne, Henlade, Langford, Lyng, Pensford, Portbury, South Petherton, Stogursey, Taunton, Timberscombe, Watchet, Wells, West Quantoxhead and Wiveliscombe. No doubt many other smiths with the Smith surname, who did not come to the attention of the Court of Common Pleas, were in many other Somerset settlements between 1437 and 1455.¹⁰

With reference to the entire 400-man sample, 46 (11%) had surnames that were their trade. This seems a small percentage, but, not all surnames were trade names. The majority of surnames were derived from personal names with some from place-names. From this sample of 400 men, 90 had trade surnames, or 23%, which is a significant proportion. As stated above, there were 19 Smiths who were smiths as well as the following whose trade was the same as their surname, three Bakers, two Barbers, one Bowyer, two Butchers, three Carpenters, one Chandler, two Chapmen, two

Cooks, two Fishers, one Glover, one Hooper, one Pewterer, one Plumber, one Saddler, one Skinner, one Stainer and two Tailors. This is quite an extensive list. Just under 25% of these 29 individuals lived in Wells, which was one of the most important urban centres in Somerset in the 15th century, the others being Taunton, Bridgwater and Bath. Wells had men with surnames following the identical trade, *i.e.* Bowyer, Butcher, Carpenter, Fisher, Plumber, Smith and Stainer.

Perhaps, surprisingly, only 19 surnames from the sample of 400 from 1437 to 1455 were unambiguous place-names, 13 of which were Somerset place-names. Ten of the 19 people were men who lived in a larger settlement whose ancestor had, presumably, originated less than eight miles from a nearby village. Thus, there was a Mark in Langport, two Rumwells in Taunton, two Selwodes, a Langford and a Norton (St Philip) in Frome, a Coker in Crewkerne, a Whitchurch in Bath and a Trent in Bruton. Outside of this period, there was a Wiveliscombe in Milverton in 1434, a Banwell in Uphill in 1463 and a Taunton in Frome in 1465. Three place/surnames were clearly from counties outside Somerset. An Ilfracombe (Devon) lived in Bath, a Guildford (Surrey) lived in Wellington and in Wells lived a Teesdale (Durham).¹¹ Again, outside of 1437 to 1455, there was a Warminster in Ilminster in 1468. Out of the 9,600 cases examined, it is perhaps surprising how few people fall into this category.

There are also some examples of international migration indicated by the surname analysis, such as a saddler named Mayo (Ireland) who lived in Wells. England's immigrant database (1330-1550) shows that in the 15th century there were at least two Irish immigrants living in Wells, but they were not recorded as being saddlers or specifically from Mayo. There was a Frenchman living in Keynsham in 1444 and one in Bridgwater in 1477. Sadly, the immigrant database does not record any immigrants living in the town of Keynsham in the 15th century, let alone anyone from France. However, men from Gascony and Normandy could be found in Bridgwater in 1444, but they did not have the surname French. Greater certainty surrounds John Ducheman, a cordwainer who lived in Crewkerne in 1444. The immigrant database lists John Vanuttricion (Utrecht) at Crewkerne in 1437. Therefore it seems very likely that the two Johns were one and the same person, suggesting the people of Crewkerne found it easier to say "Dutchman" rather than "Vanuttricion"!¹² In 1490, a clothier

named John Fleming resided at Glastonbury, perhaps indicative of his origin, or the origin of an ancestor; maybe he was a relation of Henry Flemmyng, a Fleming, who was resident at Bridgwater in 1469.

There are some particular occupational and surname combinations that are worth examining. In 1448 a butcher of Bath was named Pork. In 1453, Taunton was the place of residence of a chapman named Spicer,¹³ whilst in 1442 a Wincanton chapman was named Wyndeler (wine dealer). No doubt the names of these chapmen derived from the specialist sales that they, or their male ancestor, had been involved in. Also in 1442, Helyer was the name of a Watchet tiler, helyer and tiler being the same occupation.

Surprisingly, only two agricultural names are found in the sample of 400 men from 1437 to 1455, both in 1455. An Ilminster butcher was named Shepherd and a Taunton brewer was named Thresher, both the surnames were connected with the management, or processing, of a linked agricultural product, indicating some sort of occupational mobility amongst direct ancestors. Perhaps in the 14th and 15th centuries there was an overall lack of occupational mobility from agriculture to craft occupations. A qualitative assessment of the thousands of 15th century persons studied for this and other publications concludes that the husbandmen and yeoman of Somerset were not named Farmer, Plowman, Thresher, Shepherd, Cowman, Cheeseman or Harrower, as they tended not to have occupational names for surnames at all. In fact William Thresher, a husbandman from Withiel Florey, in 1465, is the only agricultural surname found so far linked to farming.

In relation to Somerset's important woollen industry, analysis of approximately 1,000 Somerset woollen industry operatives between 1400 and 1499 indicates that they also did not tend to have occupational surnames.¹⁴ However, they were more likely to have occupational surnames than people involved in agriculture. Of the 1,000 men with woollen industry occupations, there were 23 dyers named Dyer,¹⁵ four dyers named Woder (woad being one of the main wool dyes used in Somerset), nine tuckers named Touker (Tucker) but only seven Webbers and one Weaver who were weavers; a webber was a weaver. Interestingly, in 1414, there was a Yeovil weaver named Nicholas Lome. Elsewhere, there were also two shearmen named Sherman. It is worth noting how Fuller and Clothier as surnames did not appear until the 16th century. Thus, only about 3.8% of woollen industry operatives had a surname

relating to their trade, perhaps suggesting that surnames had already been established from the 11th to 13th centuries before the woollen industry expanded in Somerset.

The Court of Common Pleas indices are a continually developing resource for social, economic and local historians.¹⁶ This article, based on part of that resource shows that even the surname and occupational information found therein is a window into the social and cultural structure of our nation in the 15th century. Overall, it has been shown that by the 15th century men had surnames that were unrelated to their occupations in Somerset. This was most true for people involved in agriculture and true for most craft and woollen industry occupations. However, within the woollen industry, a dyer was more likely to have been named Dyer than other woollen industry occupations being linked to a surname. Also, for reasons that are well beyond the scope of this article, many smiths were still Smiths in 15th century Somerset.

1. Common Pleas Indices, <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/Indices/CP40Indices/CP40Indices.html> accessed June 2018.
2. P. Ashford, 'Mercantile debt in Somerset, 1500-1550' in *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (P.S.A.N.H.S.)* 157 (2014), 58-71; P. Ashford, 'Mercantile debt patterns in Somerset in the fifteenth century' in *P.S.A.N.H.S.* 159 (2016), 140-57.
3. The standard text describing the Court of Common Pleas is M. Hastings, *The Court of Common Pleas in the fifteenth century: a study of legal administration and procedure* (1947). It is still referred to in current academic work, one source being used for background details quoted in this article, C. Beattie, *Married women and the law in premodern northwest Europe* (2013), 116.
4. M. Bonney, *Lordship and the urban community: Durham and its overlords 1250-1540* (1990), 146.
5. In contrast to the 126 smiths and 276 butchers found across 15th century Somerset from this source, the National Archives (T.N.A.) catalogue 'Discovery', includes one smith and three butchers from the same time period in Somerset, neither of whom have the surname Smith or Butcher. Slightly more results derive from a search of the Somerset Heritage Centre catalogue, mainly from the Bridgwater and Axbridge Borough archives. Seven smiths are found, one of whom is named Smith and six butchers are found, none of whom are named Butcher/Bowcher. With regard to medieval wills published by the Somerset Record Society, no smiths are recorded, and one Ilchester butcher, in 1444, who was not named Butcher/Bowcher. (F. Weaver ed., *Somerset Medieval wills 1383-1500*, S.R.S. 16 (1901), 156). All this underlines the significance of the Common Pleas indices that have been investigated for this article.
6. Those indices consulted were from 1437, 1442, 1444, 1453, 1455 found at [www.uh.edu/waalt/index.php/CP40/705, 724, 732, 768 and 776](http://www.uh.edu/waalt/index.php/CP40/705,724,732,768and776), accessed June 2018.
7. Common Pleas Indices, <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/Indices/CP40Indices/CP40Indices.html> accessed June 2018.

8. This occupational surname appears to have been common in England from the 12th century (P. Reaney, *A dictionary of English surnames* (1991), 76).
9. Smith as a surname appears in England from the tenth and eleventh century, with most occupational surnames such as Baker, Bowyer, Butcher, Carpenter and Dyer common from the twelfth century (Reaney, *Surnames*, 25, 58, 84, 147, 415).
10. A recent study based on the 1881 census has shown that relative to other counties, the proportion of 'Smiths' per 100,000 population is much lower in Somerset and the south-west than in other regions of the country (R. Redmonds *et al.*, *Surnames, DNA and family history* (2011), 1).
11. Common Pleas Indices, http://aalt.law.uh.edu/Indices/CP40Indices/CP40_Indices.html accessed June 2018.
12. University of York, England's immigrant database (1330-1550), www.englishimmigrants.com/ accessed June 2018.
13. A 'spicer' was an alternative name for grocer. (R. McKinley, *A history of British surnames* (2013), 145-6).
14. About 900 of the 1,000 or so woollen industry operatives names and occupations come from the Common Pleas indices, with most of the others deriving from The National Archives and Somerset Heritage Centre catalogues.
15. It is only the imagination that will determine what colours the beautifully named John Skyebow of Taunton, dyer, coloured his cloth in that town in 1448!
16. Common Pleas Indices, http://aalt.law.uh.edu/Indices/CP40Indices/CP40_Indices.html accessed June 2018.

PHILIP ASHFORD

31. CATCHWORK WATER MEADOWS IN DORSET.

Introduction

Whilst studying Tithe maps and apportionments (1835-1845) for another purpose in the parishes in the Beaminster Museum catchment area it was noticeable that there were significant number of fields called 'Water Meadow' and 'Water Mead'. Tithe maps were one of the earlier more accurate mappings of parishes before OS maps. On comparing these water meadows with the 1888 and 1903/4 inch OS maps most were on slopes. The water meadows that are reported in the literature on Dorset seemed to be all bedwork water meadows requiring level ground.¹ The bedwork water meadow originates in about the middle of the 17th century.

An alternative form of water meadow was used to irrigate valleys or slopes and were called catchwork water meadows which may have been in use in the 12th century. It is possible that the Romans knew the working of catchwork water meadows.² The method was later used at a time of marginal land improvement particularly during the Napoleonic Wars period.

If water sources of stream or spring were not available rainwater and farmyard run-off was collected in a specially constructed feeder pond. Alternatively the feed may be from a mill leat going back to the source water, a system originating in monasteries from at least the 12th century and possibly earlier.³ The improvement used water diverted from sources into a contour following ditch or gutter which skirted the top of the meadow.⁴ When the gutter was blocked at the end(s) water overflowed down the hillside, sometimes, depending on the soil type, further spaced gutters (about 6-12 metres apart)⁵ may be necessary further down a slope (see Figure 1) often fed from downslope channels running down the slope.⁶ There can be complex sets of gutters in different directions in the same field and a system of feeder channels and sluices.

Headwater gutter



Figure 1. Diagram of gutters along contours down a slope. The bottom gutter would collect any surplus water and feed it back to a lower level of the source water. (Author)

Other systems have been identified in Nottinghamshire,⁷ Staffordshire⁸ and on Exmoor.⁹ In the South West of England a subset of catchwork water meadows called ‘integrated systems’ can be found. The source water passes alongside a farmyard allowing the liquid manure there to be washed down the meadow.¹⁰

Method used

Tithe maps, OS maps and local knowledge were used to identify and locate the possible water meadows. The maps also sometimes provided information on the source of water for the former water meadows. Aerial photographs of the area do not seem to exist except for urban properties.

The identification of former water meadows could be difficult on site. The gutter was dug out or ploughed out. If the water meadow has not been used for some years, the gutter will have silted up, however the ridge at the lower part of the gutter may remain. Should the field have been ploughed regularly such remains are less likely to be visible. The summer of 2018 was particularly dry so it was anticipated that features would show. Site visits were initiated on fields that were near to or on public footpaths, bridleways or roads. Fortunately some sites have been visited where we already had local knowledge of the owner. Permission was given by the owners who were always interested to provide the history of the site and in particular whether it had been ploughed. The findings were discussed on site and the report was sent to the owners on completion sometimes generating a reply with more information.

The possible source of water and the outlets may still remain. The ridges and water sources were used as the main indicators of those meadows that have been visited which often entailed going to surrounding fields. Photographs were taken of the sites including the observed position of the ridges superimposed. The remaining channels and ditches in or at the edges of fields and the water sources were noted and photographed. Analysis of the result was carried out after the site visit and a second visit was carried out for one site for further information.

Water meadows in the Beaminster area

The area was an economically important sheep rearing area until the 19th century. The downs at Hooke were enclosed in 1620 for sheep.¹¹ Large numbers of sheep are reported at the end of the 18th century in some parishes where records are available: Mapperton 1180 sheep, Netherbury 2825 sheep and Stoke Abbott 3555 sheep.¹² At Beaminster there were about 3000 sheep.¹³ The sheep were kept on the downs during the day and taken and into the valleys for the nights enclosed by hurdles (folded) in order to fertilise the fields. Water meadows have the potential of extending the grazing period and hay production during the year so that farmer's sheep would be larger and healthier to fetch more money at fairs and markets.

The geology of the parishes is complex with more rock types than any other country on southern England.¹⁴ The simplest description gives the downs as an extension of the South Downs

with some chalk aquifers, leading to springs and chalk streams. The valleys tend to have clay based subsoils so are damp or wet and most fields are small, the only larger fields being on the downs as a result of enclosure. There are many valleys, the River Brit at Beaminster alone being fed by 23 streams. The United Kingdom Soil Observatory¹⁵ gives the soils as varying from slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy clay soils to freely draining slightly acid loamy soils. However the details of soil type almost vary from field to field even within parishes, so no simple description is possible in the scope of this paper. It is clear that the area is suitable for water meadows.

The number of named Water Meadows and Water Meads in each of the parishes in the Beaminster Museum catchment area were: Beaminster (five including one associated with a mill), Broadwindsor (five), Hooke (two, one associated with a mill), Mosterton (two), Netherbury (one associated with a mill), Stoke Abbott (one), and Thorncombe (one). All the named sites have been compared with the OS maps of 1888 and 1904 to identify the possible source of the water.

Two catchwork water meadows were between the leat and source water of mills. Other former watermills were also investigated and a further 13 possible water meadow sites were identified that are not named on Tithe maps: Beaminster (three), Broadwindsor (two), Burstock (two), Corscombe (one), Halstock (one), Netherbury (four for two mills), Stoke Abbott (two), Thorncombe (one). Netherbury Mill has also been eliminated by a site visit with three possible water meadows none of which were viable: two of which were too small and the other unlikely to flood. The possible water meadows at Horsehill Mill in Stoke Abbott were too small to make them viable. Further investigation on the two at Broadwindsor and one at Thorncombe showed that they were unlikely to provide any remaining evidence because these sites are so changed.

Site visits have been made to 15 possible former water meadows, in most cases there is little remaining evidence of the a water meadow although the way in which it was fed and drained is more often clear. Examples are given both where there is some evidence and where there is little evidence.

An example of a water meadow on a farm where there is evidence of the gutters at Stoke Abbott

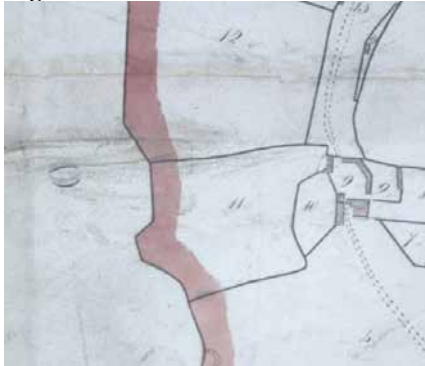


Figure 2. Field 11 is named *Water Mead* on the Stoke Abbott Tithe map.¹⁶ On the apportionment the use is shown as meadow (landowner John Bullen occupier John Peach) (5 acres, about 2 hectares). The stream appears to be a little way away. (D.H.C.)



Figure 3. 1903 6 inch OS map Dorset XXVIII.NE, enlargement. The dotted lines show the rough directions of the ridges along the field contours that could have been the gutters. The arrows show the slope of the field. It is possible that there were more gutters in the field. The feed may have been from the Northern boundary with a drain channel through the middle. The current field is as shown on the 1903 map but the boundaries have changed from field 11 in the tithe map.

The large field to the North of the water meadow has a big slope and would have drained into the current field which may well have been marshy. There is bank hidden in the hedge on the north side of the water meadow. By making a bank on the North side of the field the surface water would have been diverted from the water meadow.

There is a large stream on the left of the map and two smaller streams on the right. The stream to the South side of the field shown with the arrow A is man-made with a right angle bend. The stream on the West side has been straightened on current OS maps and on the ground. It is possible that there was a sluice along the stream to enable it to overflow into the field.

It is not clear how the top of the field was fed. May be there was a leat from one of the streams which fed into this part of the field along the field side of the north boundary. The drainage from the water meadow appears to have been directed towards the stream on the western boundary with the field sloping towards the south west corner. There is a bank in the south east corner of the field that may have been produced to enable this flow. However the corner may have been raised much later to ease access on to the wooden bridge from the bridleway

Nutrients from the farmyard could also have been fed into the stream. If there were such nutrients the water meadow is called an integrated system.¹⁷ Such a system can be found in good condition at Cloggs Farm in Somerset.¹⁸



Figure 4. The ridge is just above the dotted line. The stream is on the right of the line of trees, although now observed to be linear rather than the earlier natural winding stream. (Author)



Figure 5. The dotted line just below the tree line shows the smaller second ridge in the top of the field. The current stream on the East side appears to have been dug out to a lower level with a v-shaped bank. The reason may be that land drains were installed and the stream needed to be lowered to accommodate the outfall. The stream alongside the West side of the field also appears to have had its level lowered, there being a change in level at the junction between the large field to the north and the water meadow Western edge. (Author)

An example of a water meadow at Mosterton where little evidence remains

The field 75 is named as Water Meadow (landowner Sir William Oglander, occupier George Hussey) on the Mosterton tithe map¹⁹ and used as a pasture (5 acres, about 2 hectares).



Figure 6. Enlargement from 1904 six inch OS map Dorset XX.SW. The water meadow is identified with a P. There is no evidence left on the ground to show the water meadow. From the site visit to the water meadow it is clear that it was fed from the spring. There is a ditch along the East side of the fields indicated by R. The part for the field where the water meadow was formerly has a slope to the river. The three fields on the map to the north of field P and field P have been combined into one large field in recent years. The grass was observed to be monoculture suggesting that the field has been ploughed and re-planted recently.

An example of water meadow associated with a mill at Mangerton Mill



Figure 7. Field 359 identified as Water Mead (landowner John Edmonds, occupier Robert Norman) on the Netherbury tithe map.²⁰ On the apportionment its use is shown as meadow (2 acres, about 2 hectares). The river has been enhanced in blue, the leat in red and the mill in green. (D.H.C.)



Figure 8. Enlargement from 1903 6 inch OS map Dorset XXXVIII.NE. The field labelled A is 359 on the tithe map. The field could be irrigated from the leat returning to the river which is at a lower level. The field has a slope on it (see Figure 9). The water meadow can be seen to slope from the leat on the left towards the river on the right. The bank of the leat (seen behind the tractor) would have originally been about 4 ft. lower before the change to an overshot waterwheel. Sluices at each end of the leat would have made the overflow down the field easy to control.



Figure 9. Photograph showing the bank of the leat behind the tractor in the water meadow as it is today. The field was used as a timber yard from about the 1930s so levels may have been changed. It is clear that this was a water meadow and would function. It is less clear when it stopped being a water meadow. (Author)

An example of possible water meadows between a mill leat and source water at Burstock

The examples here was not listed as water meadows on the Tithe map, however a site visit suggested that these may have been water meadows.

It is possible that one of the mill leats may have originated as water meadow ditches.

Possible water meadows are shown on the 1904 OS map. Whetham Mill is unusual in that it has two parallel leats.²¹ The leat to the right is fed from two streams labelled A and B, whilst the leat on the left is fed from the brook. It seems likely that the right hand leat was originally a ditch along a contour to feed the two water meadows between the leat and the brook. When the mill was built the leat was found to be inadequate so a second leat was built to supplement the water flow. Both the fields slope towards the brook.

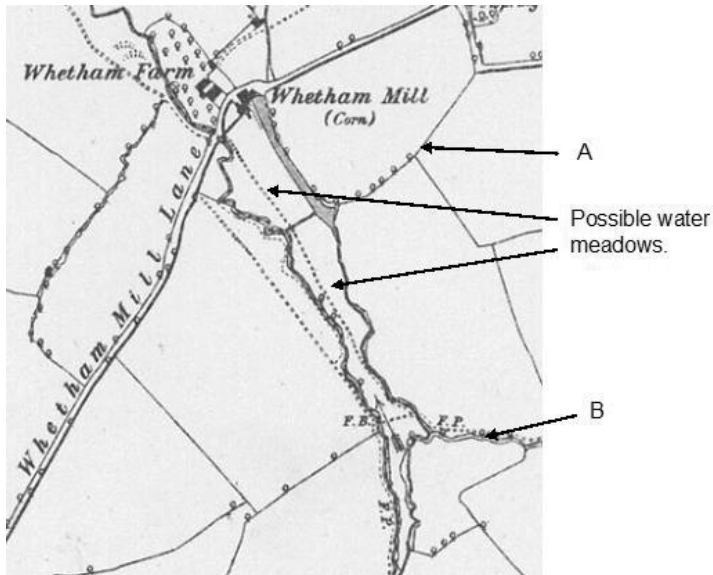


Figure 10. Enlargement from 1903 6 inch OS map Somerset XCII.SE

Conclusion

The tithe maps and OS maps gave some indication of the possible source of water, but there was no information about the steepness and directions of the slopes involved because the contours on the OS map were too widely spaced. It was clear that field work was essential in order to fill in more details. Most visits involved two volunteers from Beaminster Museum. Farmers and site owners often gave valuable information such as the history of the field, in particular whether it had been ploughed.

To date only five water meadows have revealed any suggestion of ridges where the gutters would have been. The ridges are not closely spaced as would occur with the remnants of a ridge and furrow system. Most of the water meadows so far visited have suggested ways that the meadow was fed from a water source and the drainage system for the field so that it has been possible to deduce the way in which the meadows functioned. No owners so far have given permission to dig out the ridge to find their form and structure. Perhaps because of the very dry weather very basic techniques provided adequate information.

Dependent on owner's or farmers' permissions for access .it is hoped that further work will carried out on the remaining identified fields, most of which are inaccessible from public footpaths or roads. With more resources trench digging, soil analysis and aerial photography would enhance information with the owners' permissions.

Other parishes in Dorset, Somerset and indeed other counties may benefit from a similar analysis and basic field work to identify many more catchwork water meadows.

Full details of all the fields identified are kept digitally on the visitor computer at Beaminster Museum and also at the Dorset History Centre.

Acknowledgements. I would like to thank Professor Tom Williamson on the University of East Anglia for persuading me to carry on with the investigation, Alan Wakefield who came with me on most of the site visits; Dr Arnold Shipp and Callum McSherry for their helpful suggestions; the landowners, occupiers and parish residents along with other colleagues from Beaminster Museum who have contributed to and helped on this project and in particular to my wife Patricia who has endured endless hours of information about water meadows!

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18. Smith, *Water meadows*, 1.
19. D.H.C., T/MSN Mosterton Tithe map and apportionment.
20. D.H.C., T/NBY Netherbury Tithe map and apportionment.
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DUNCAN HARRIS

32. THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ACCOUNTS FOR HENRY HEBDICHE OF SPARKFORD, 1634.¹

Introduction

Just as the executor of a will had to provide accounts to show that he or she had settled the testator's estate, paid all outstanding bills and distributed the legacies left by the deceased, so administrators' accounts were a necessary requirement on the death of a person dying intestate. The document was the last stage in the process of settling an intestate's affairs, and it had to set out all the money received by way of debts, rents or sales and all the expenses incurred by the administrator during the process of dealing with the estate. Most importantly, it had to record a final balance which, when approved by whichever ecclesiastical court oversaw the process, meant that the administrator was freed from any further liability. As proof of fair dealing, the administrator was required to keep receipts for any sum of money over 40s that they either received, or disbursed, and such receipts were handed over to the court in evidence, although the survival rate of these is very poor.²

The document that does exist is the fair copy of the accounts drawn up by a notary or court proctor and filed amongst the records of the relevant diocese. For the diocese of Bath and Wells approximately 950 of these documents ranging in date from c.1577 to c.1748 survive and among them is the 1634 account rendered by Sampson Morris, the brother-in-law and administrator of Henry Hebdiche of Sparkford. This document consists of 10 sheets of paper each 31 cms wide by 40 cms long; the sheets are now stored loose in a folder although originally they were stitched together at the bottom. The document had suffered from damp before its deposit and conservation at the then Somerset Record Office and

some of the text on the left hand margin has been lost. These gaps are indicated in the text by [...]. The great majority of the entries in the account are undated and I have made the assumption that they are listed in chronological order of payment.

Henry Hebdiche's death

The exact date of death or burial of Henry Hebdiche is unknown; unfortunately, the Sparkford parish registers have not survived prior to 1729 and the extant Bishops' transcripts do not contain an entry for his burial.³ There is a gap in the series between April 1609 and April 1611 and it seems likely that he died in the early part of 1611. The earliest of Sampson's entries that is dated is for a payment of wages at Michaelmas 1611, so Henry's death must have occurred before then. Nor do we know the cause of Henry's death, although there is evidence in the accounts to suggest he may have died of plague. However, the number of burials in 1611-1612 (three) is no greater than in 1608-1609 and only one more than in 1613-1614, so any outbreak of plague or other infectious disease at this time would appear to have been a minor one in Sparkford.

The charge

Sampson charged himself with the sum of £460 8d,⁴ which he stated was the whole and entire sum of the value of the goods of his brother-in-law 'according unto an Inventory thereof made and exhibited in this Courte and remaineing in the Registrye thereof'. This inventory, unfortunately, has not survived amongst the Diocesan papers. He then added a further sum of £44 which he received from Francis Napper and John Guyer of Wells for rent of the Sparkford inn from Michaelmas 1611 until an unknown date (due to the document being damaged). The next four or five words have been very firmly crossed out and interlined above them is written 'sixe yeeres from thence followeing att sixteene pounds per annum'. The final value of Henry's estate was given as £556 8d.

What this would be worth in today's money is difficult to say. The National Archives' currency converter says that in 1610 £556 8d would have purchased 67 horses or 298 cows, or paid the wages of a 'skilled tradesman' for 30 years, while that of the Bank of England gives £149,352 as the modern equivalent. It is, however, safe to conclude that Henry Hebdiche was a man of some consequence at the time of his death.⁵

Allowances

The bulk of the document is taken up by the sums of money Sampson claimed to have disbursed during the time of his administration. He began with the debts that Henry owed at the time of his death. These amounted to £91 8s 6d due to 11 named creditors, including Sampson himself who was one of two debtors who had lent Henry the sum of £18, the other eight having lent between 19s and £13 8s. All the men came from one of seven parishes within a 10 mile radius of Sparkford or from Sparkford itself.

As well as debts, Henry owed wages at the time of his death to his servants. Sampson paid 20s to Joan Clerke for her half year's wages and 16s 8d to Richard Clerke, presumably for the same period, to Michaelmas 1611. Simon Sheane and Luce Govier were each paid a quarter year's wages of 10s and 5s to Lady Day 1611.

The legal fees for obtaining the grant of administration and the costs of making the inventory referred to in the charge were carefully noted:

for the fees of the administracion, the double draweing and ingrossing the Inventories, for a bond, Wax and seale, for the Accomptants and his neighbours and likewise three of the children of the said deceased for there diet and horsine at [...] for Mr Clerk his fees for his advice & counsell about the procureing the Administracion and other things about the same the sum of xxvi^s viii^d.⁶

A good number of the entries deal with agricultural matters. The rents for lands which Henry had leased, *e.g.* the half yearly rent paid to Richard Clerke for Mr John Rogers for three parcels of land in Sparkford called Lords Lane, the Marshe Close and Bridg Close £10 10s had to be paid. There are payments for 'breaking' or ploughing the ground and sowing seed, grass was mown and wheat was reaped, fences were repaired and the wall in Sparkford churchyard was 'stopped'. There were further payments for the carriage of crops *e.g.* 2s was paid for carrying four wain loads of wheat and 5s for carrying six loads of beans and two loads of dredge from Weston Bampffield to the inn at Sparkford, Henry's four plough oxen had been valued at £20 and his two steers at £6; when one ox died Sampson had to note this £5 loss in his account. At one point there was a dispute with the vicar of Weston Bampffield and Sampson

paid and laid out ... in the Archdeacons Courte at Wells and in the Peculiar Courte of the Deane and Chapter of the Cathedrall Church in Wells to answer Mr Hugh Davidg parson of Weston Banfeild in a cause of tythes the sum of xvs.

Two other entries referring to the 'justments' (agistments) made to Mr Lidford, the parson of Sparkford, and to Mr Davidge, the former for unidentified property in Sparkford and the latter for farm ground called Salts, possibly in Weston Bampffield, may also relate to tithe payments.

The children

The welfare of Henry's five children was also Sampson's responsibility. Their mother, his sister, is never mentioned in the account and was likely dead herself by this time. The children had to be fed, clothed and, in the case of the sons, educated. The cost of clothing for the five children for three years is given as £7 10s although with no detail and 'for the dieting of the five children for three years for every of them £5' plus their 'dieting' for another three months each cost 20s, a grand total of £80. There are later entries for individual items of clothing for the three sons from 2 March 1613/14 'untill the giveing in of this Accounte' e.g. three and a half yards of cloth to make a jerkin and hose 10/3d and shoes 16d, fustian dowe, canvas and buttons for a doublet 5s 6d, all for Henry; three and a half yards of cloth to make a jerkin and hose 10s 3d for Sampson, a payment to John Old for the cloth to make Sampson and John doublets with the linings and buttons 11s 6d and a further payment of 3s 4d to John Cumming of Queen Camel to make the clothes. John received a pair of shoes costing 12d and Sampson a hat at 2s.

An entry in 1613 refers to a payment of 32s 'for two yeares schooleing of Henry Hebdiche and John Hebdich to Mr Wootton of [...]amell' and another similar entry to 'Mr Wootton of Queene Cammell for John [...]bdich schooleing for one quarter of a yeare ended at our Lady day Anno domini 1614' of 18d. The entry immediately following is the apprenticeship fee for Henry to learn the trade of a shoemaker from Mr Horne of 'Sherburon' (Sherborne?), which suggests Henry's education was complete by 1614. Whereas there are two more entries for John being taught to write by Mr Joyce of North Barrow, firstly for a month and then for a further five weeks at a total of 2s 4d.

The Sparkford Inn

There is some doubt whether Henry owned the inn or rented it during his lifetime. Although Sampson collected rent for it for at least six years from Francis Napper and John Guyer, there is also an entry in which he paid Richard Clerk

for the Rent of the Inne and the grounds thereunto belonging for three yeares to bee Compleated at the feast of the A[...] of our blessed Ladie the Virgen mary Anno Domini 16[...].

Sampson seems to have been responsible for the upkeep of the property and notes the payments he made for work done on the buildings. First of all John Gully was paid 4d to hang up the sign at the inn, then there was a payment of 9s for mending the glass window at the [...] Sparkford, followed by tiling and pointing at a cost of 10s, thatching the house and stables of the inn 2s 8d and mending the hooks and twisters of the inn gates for 7d.⁷

That Henry and his family lived at the inn seems clear from two later entries in the accounts and it is these which suggest the cause of his death:

Item This Accomptant desiereth allowance of the sum of xlv^s paid by him unto George Mason for Phisecke for the people of the Inne at Sparkford in the time of the infection of the Plague and for the Washing and sweetening the house of the said Inne & the walls the summe of xlv^s

Item This Accomptant desiereth allowance of the summ of x^{li} for the expenses of the people vzt six beeing penined upp in the time of the sicknesse of the Plague in the house who are five children for the space of xi weekes vzt from Candlemas Anno Domini 1610 untill Whitsuntide then next followeing.⁸

From the bottom of page seven to the end of the accounts the entries relate to the household goods distributed amongst the children. First of all is 'A note of goods delivered to Jane Hebdoch when she was married'. The entries include the fifth part of the rent of the inn for the Midsummer quarter amounting to 16s, from which we may extrapolate that the rent was indeed £16 per year. Jane also sold to the wife of Francis Napper of Sparkford, innholder, some household goods including a coverlet and bolster, eight table napkins and a powdering tub to put butter in. The money received for these articles was shared with her sister Sarah,

but Jane took away with her a green carpet, a cushion and a barrel as well as a gold ring valued at 15s; none of the other items have a value against them. The last entry on the page is for the sum of £5, the value of the clothes of Elizabeth Hebdiche 'the [...] of the said deceased' which the daughters had received. This, I think, must refer to Henry's wife and strongly suggests she was dead by this time.

On page nine are listed the money and goods that Sarah received. There were eight items of bed linen to the value of £5, a gold ring worth 15s, household goods including pewter candlesticks, a brass skillet and a brass pot, pot hooks, two cheese vats and an old carpet, all valued at 18s. Peter Clerk 'now married to Sarah' received £40 for her fifth share of two chattle leases of the inn and her fifth part of another chattle lease of land called New Close. Sampson paid him £35 immediately with the remaining £5 'whensoever hee shall call for yt' on condition that he 'seale an assignment of the same unto the three sons' of Henry. He also promised to pay Peter £20 'betwixt this and twelfth day next ensuing'.

Finally, on page 10, is a note of the money and goods delivered to Sampson, Henry and John. The first received £12 in cash, the other two £8 18s. However, it is impossible to tell if they all received the same in the way of household goods due to the poor condition of this last page of the account but, as the value of each son's share of the goods was 53s 4d, it seems likely they did. All three were given two silver spoons, pewter and brass vessels, and Sampson had a feather bed, but otherwise the account refers only to 'implements of household stuff'. The final entry is a list of the brewing utensils and furnishings in the inn which they received in common; a brass furnace, brewing vat, hogsheads, spits, andirons, table boards, forms, stools, a bedstead in every chamber, a cupboard and two gurnards.⁸ All this was valued at £15.

The question that needs to be asked concerning this account is, if the supposition as to the date of Henry's death is correct, what can explain the 23 year delay before the presentation of the accounts to the diocesan court? The obvious assumption would be that Henry's five children were minors at the time of his death and that the accounts were not given in until all had reached their majority. In Sampson's preamble to the accounts he does say that he is the 'administrator of all and singular the goods cattles chattles

and debts of Henry Hebdich aforesaid durement the minoritye of the aforesaid children'. However, even if all of the children were minors in 1611 *i.e.* under 21, there is some evidence to suggest that the youngest would have attained thier majority by 1623.

The children are listed as Jane, Sarah, Sampson, Henry and John. Whether this list is by order of birth we cannot be sure, as the only baptismal entry we have is for John on 28 October 1602, but it would seem likely that it is for the following reasons. Both of Henry's daughters had married by the time Sampson finished his account and the final copy was drawn up. Sarah married during the period of his stewardship; an entry written immediately after the one referring to the payment for Henry's apprenticeship records the payment of 26s 8d for 'Sarah Hebdiche her Wedding peticoate', and, as already mentioned, money and goods were given to Jane when she married. Both girls could still have been minors when they married, but although 12 was the legal age for marriage for women at this time it would have been very unusual for both daughters to have married so early; the fact that Sarah was preparing for her marriage as her brother Henry was being apprenticed surely suggests that she was older than him and John, if not Sampson. There is no mention in the account of any preparation for Jane's marriage; she may well have married before Sarah. The fact that Sarah and Jane received their mother's clothing from Sampson indicates that the daughters were old enough to wear adult clothing, although it is true the entry is undated so that it cannot be established when this happened.

As there are no entries for payments for schooling for Sampson it seems fair to assume he had finished his education by the time his father died and was therefore older than his brothers. By 20 June 1614 he and Henry were of an age to be parties to a lease in reversion of land in South Barrow. This land was already in the possession of Jane, their sister, which again can be considered evidence that she was older than her brothers. The lease survives in the Sanford family papers¹⁰ and the account shows a payment of £3 6s 8d to Mr Oliver Lottisham for the lease and another of 6s 8d to Mr Clothear, the steward, for 'makeing the lease'. By 1626, eight years before the account was submitted, Henry was back from Sherborne and living in the inn. Joan Winter, a servant there, accused him of being the father of her child saying that he had the

carnal knowledge of her body in the inn at Sparkford where they both dwelt at the time the Monday after our Ladies Day in the chamber of the said Henry Hebditch.¹¹

As he is described as a shoemaker in the Quarter Sessions rolls dealing with the case, my assumption is that he had completed his apprenticeship and was in his early twenties.

If, therefore, it can be taken that all of the children had attained their majorities by 1623 when John reached 21, what other explanation can there be for the delay in filing the account at Wells? In theory, accounts usually should have been submitted within six months after the inventory had been exhibited, or handed in, and within twelve months of the grant of administration. Strange as it may appear, it was not so unusual for there to be a delay in submitting these accounts and the accounts seem never to have been presented in the same numbers as the inventories were. There could be a number of reasons for this: the unwillingness of the person nominated as administrator to get on with the task, the administrator dying before completing the administration, or the administrator having done the work and then dying before it could be submitted. It might then only be done if his executors or administrator found the paperwork when they came to sort out his own estate. What does seem clear is that the church courts do not seem to have taken the initiative in such matters but only acted when a complaint was made concerning the non-fulfilment of the administration.¹²

One final point is worth noting here. Very few of the entries in the account are dated but in some cases where specific dates are mentioned in the text, Catholic feast days are used, *e.g.* the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, never Michaelmas but always St Michael the Archangel, Our Lady's Day rather than Lady Day. Were the Hebdich and/or Morris families Catholic? Perhaps Samuel was reluctant to have much to do with the ecclesiastical powers at Wells and was only galvanised into action when his wife Elizabeth was presented at Quarter Sessions in May 1633, when she was charged with being a recusant.¹³ We shall, unfortunately, never know the answer to this question.

1. S.H.C., D\D\cta/H/21.

2. For a more detailed explanation of the system of returning administrators' accounts and the layout of the documents see http://familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/nei/NEI_account.pdf.

3. S.H.C., D\D\Rr/383.

4. Sums of money in the accounts are written in Roman numerals. I have changed these to modern numbers except where I have transcribed an entry.
5. www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator; www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result.
6. There is a space between 'at' and 'for' as if a place name should have been inserted here. The whole entry suggests that Sampson, some other parishioners who knew the circumstances of Henry's death, and three of his children all went to Wells (?) for the legal business of obtaining the administration and charged for their food and accommodation while they were there.
7. Although there is a gap in the document here, the entry lies between the one for hanging up the sign and the one for tiling and pointing so that it seems reasonable to suppose it relates to the inn as well.
8. Candlemas: the 2nd of February 1611 by modern reckoning. Whitsunday fell on the 27 May in 1611 which is a period of 16 weeks, the number originally written. In the margin the sum due was given as '£20-10-0'; the £20 has been deleted and '6/8d' added after the 10. Number 'xi' has been altered from 'xvi'.
9. I have been unable to find 'gurnard' in any dictionary, dialect dictionary or lists of household or agricultural implements. It is, however, interesting that on the Bristol Channel coast the gurnard fish was known as a tub-fish; is it possible that in Sparkford, a long way from the coast, a tub might be called a gurnard?
10. S.H.C., DD/SF/2/49/1.
11. S.H.C., QSR/56/109; QSR/57/7 and 77.
12. I am grateful to Mary Siraut for her help and advice on this question; see also Durham University web site at note 2.
13. S.H.C., QSR/69/152.

SUE BERRY

33. TAUNTON CASTLE, SIR BENJAMIN HAMMET AND THE REV. JOSHUA TOULMIN'S *HISTORY OF TAUNTON*.

In the copious notes, made from mainly printed sources, collected by the antiquarian James Savage (1767-1845) of Taunton are copies of two letters from Sir Benjamin Hammet (1736-1800) to the Rev. Joshua Toulmin (1740-1815). Unusually for Savage, there is no indication of the source or provenance of the letters,¹ which is an aspect of his work that he meticulously recorded over a period of several decades. Therefore if any reader knows the whereabouts of the originals it will be of interest. It is worth pointing out that the latter section of the first paragraph of the first letter was referred to in a publication in 1845 by Mrs Matthew Hall.² It is known that Savage collected a large amount of material for his revision of Toulmin's *History of Taunton*, which was published at Taunton in 1822, in which he did not include information from Hammet's two letters.

The recent biography of Hammet by Mark McDermott includes several mentions of Toulmin but not the two letters.³ The subject matter contained in the letters sheds some light on Hammet's role

in Toulmin's *History of Taunton*, published in 1791. Not only did Hammet offer to procure source material from the Vatican archive for Toulmin, but he obtained over 150 subscribers through his many and varied contacts, provided documents and even contributed his own anecdotes. Hammet may have discussed this publication with 'Mr Pitt', although this is unlikely as he did not subscribe to the book; perhaps Hammet gave him one of the 12 copies he personally subscribed to. However, the reference to 'Mr Pitt' is in the context of an 'Address', which may not have been associated with the book itself.

Hammet's interests in the Civil Wars and Taunton Castle expressed in the first letter are worth examining in more detail. His interest in the period was sparked when he was a boy, presumably in the 1740s, by people who talked of the 'different sieges that this Castle has stood', but whether the anecdotes he heard were handed down from family members or others he did not state.⁴ It is possible that information was passed down through a family connection but it is known that no member of the Hammet family signed the Protestation return of 1641 for Taunton, neither do they appear in the subsidy rolls for 1642.⁵ A petition to the bishops in 1641 also does not show any Hammets in Taunton.⁶ However, the Taunton St Mary Magdalene parish register includes numerous entries for the surname during the 17th and 18th centuries. But was Benjamin from a Taunton family who witnessed the events of the 1640s and 1650s, something which was not considered in the recent biography?

In a late 19th-century family history it is stated that the Hammet family 'migrated from Cornwall to Clist St. George, near Exeter, Devon, in the seventeenth century'. There are few facts in this published history prior to the birth of Sir Benjamin that can be verified.⁷ It is documented that John Hammatt was instituted as rector of Clyst St George on 2 March 1694/5⁸ but died on 13 January 1696/7 aged 39.⁹ On 18 September 1697 a Benjamin Hammitt was appointed as preacher.¹⁰ Theophilus Eedes replaced John Hammatt and baptised Theophilus Hamet son of John and Ann on 27 February 1696/7. The 19th-century family history confirms some of the above but then states immediately afterwards that 'A son of the Rev. Francis Hammet settled in Taunton about a century and a half ago'. It then lists details of three sons (allegedly of the son of 'Francis') namely Francis, John and Sir Benjamin. The question is, who was the Revd Francis Hammet?

The 19th-century family history must be incorrect, as the Church of England database does not include an entry for a Francis Hammet. It is possible however that the late 19th-century family history was not totally incorrect. It is known that Sir Benjamin's father was Joseph. At the time of his marriage to Ann Trott of Taunton St James, Joseph was described as a resident of Wilton on 22 February 1716/7, suggesting a possible date in the 1680s or 1690s for his birth. Therefore was Joseph a brother of Theophilus who was baptised at Clyst St George on 27 February 1696/7 and was buried at Taunton St James on 8 April 1774?

If our theory is correct then the Revd John Hammatt of Clyst St George was incorrectly referred to as Francis in the 19th-century family history. The Revd John Hammatt was the son of John of Taunton, and was educated at St Edmund Hall and matriculated 25 June 1674 aged 16, B.A. 1678, M.A. from Christ College, Cambridge in 1681, vicar of Stantonbury, Buckinghamshire, 1679-1685, rector of Emmington, Oxfordshire, 1685-1691, and of Clyst St George, Devon,¹¹ 1694-1696. He earned Anthony Wood's scorn, being described as a 'sniveling non-conforming, conforming vicar,' and the writer of a 'pitiful, canting and silly discourse' for a sermon published in 1685 with the title *A burning and shining light, sermon preached at the funeral of the late reverend Mr James Wrexham minister of Haversham in Bucks; on Joh.5.35*.¹² Therefore the baptism of John (son of John Hammet) at Taunton St Mary on 19 October 1657 was that of Sir Benjamin's grandfather. Thus proving part of the family story to be correct that Sir Benjamin was descended from a clergyman whose son settled in Taunton, possibly around 1710. The clergyman's father, also a John, is the one mentioned in the notes on page 100 of *Sir Benjamin Hammet 1736-1800 a biography*, who was buried on 22 June 1704 at Taunton St James, described as a Chandler,¹³ his wife may have been the Mrs Hamat buried on 1 June 1685 at Taunton St Mary Magdalene. If Joseph (Sir Benjamin's father) was baptised at Emmington then the entry is lost, as although the registers start in 1539 there is a gap between about 1640 and 1715.¹⁴ Similarly the register of baptisms for Stantonbury are missing before 1772.

One item of note is the use by members of the family who stayed in Taunton of the surname Hammet otherwise Mable, or Hammet alias Mable. It appears as the former on 4 January 1689/90 in relation to a surrender within the Hundred of Holway, and continued to be used until 20 September 1710.¹⁵ A variant use

can also be found in the Taunton St Mary Magdalene parish register for the marriage of Joel Mabel alias Hammet in 1698 to Joan Poel. Also at Cheddon Fitzpaine when Sammuell Hammatt alias Mable, chandler, married Joan Reed in 1702. Both men were brothers of the Revd John Hammet. This variant surname can also be found in the parish registers of Woodbury, Devon in the first half of the 17th century.

Sir Benjamin's great-grandfather's will, dated 6 August 1703, describes him as a chandler of Taunton St Mary Magdalene. He mentioned his sons Joel, Samuel, Richard and Benjamin but understandably there is no reference to John who pre-deceased him. Four married daughters mentioned, *i.e.* Anne Gardner, Rose Musgrave, Mary Caslicke and Joan Tucker.¹⁶ Of these children the marriage of Rose into the Musgrave family must have been a significant turning point in the Hammet family fortune. This united the Hammets with a family of significant local standing which Camden stated had come over with William the Conqueror. They settled at Charlton Musgrove and branches can be found at North Petherton, West Monkton, Stogumber and Old Cleeve.¹⁷

Hammet's letters to Toulmin confirm his self-confidence and assertiveness, as well as his concern about the state of his health during the later part of his life. He almost seems to be taking charge of the preparation of Toulmin's proposed book at times, but his references to the dedication of the book and to various sources may have been in response to questions in a previous letter to him from Toulmin which presumably has not survived. His advice about enlivening the book with anecdotes seems to have been his own idea.

Hammet's reference to altering an arch in the castle into a room is tantalising. The 'Arch that I have lately altered into a Room, was built above 1200 years since by Ina King of the West Saxons for his Mistress' which, despite its romanticism, does provide written evidence for the change. The reference to a tower is even more problematical. It would appear at first sight to be a reference to a tower in the castle, but the mention of five Somerset towers in the 'Florid Gothic' style, of which that in Taunton was thought to be the finest, suggests that this may be a reference to the tower of St Mary's church, which was built during Henry VII's reign (if not by him). Also, why should *monastic* writings be relevant to the building of the tower if it were a tower in the castle? In the case of St Mary's, however, the vicar was subordinate to the prior of

Taunton Priory, which may have some relevance.

In Hammet's second letter there is a cryptic reference to 'the present pursuit for the E.I. Direction'. The 'E.I. Direction' evidently refers collectively to the Directors of the East India Company.¹⁸ The Company's affairs, which could be controversial, concerned not only its Directors and Proprietors, but the Board of Control which Pitt had set up in 1784, and interested members of Parliament and the City. Hammet himself is not, however, mentioned in Philips's detailed history of the Company, although it includes lists of MPs with significant Company connections. His role in relation to the Company in 1789 is therefore uncertain (was he possibly seeking election as a Director?) although he is recorded as part-owner of the East Indiaman *Taunton Castle* in 1790.¹⁹ It is likely that the 'frank' mentioned at the end of the letter is a reference to Hammet's privilege of franking letters as an MP.²⁰

London, Feby. 14, 1789.

Dear Sir, - I assure you it was not wanting of respect to Mrs. Toulmin that I did not answer her letter - I have not yet been able to reconcile myself for the expence I have been at for the purchasing of your house, &c. &c. I have recd. your proposals for the History of Taunton. I am so pleased with it that I shall feel myself very much gratified by your prefixing my name to the Work, if you think my Affection to my native Town and the Improvements I have made and am making deserve such a compliment. You will write to me on this subject, but I will give your Book effectual protections. I have been very busy ever since the rect. of your first letter and procured 100 subscriptions which I will be answerable for, & send you a list of the names - I do not think I have half done. - Have you got Dugdale's Monasticon, Doomsday or Year Books - the Three Acts of Parliament, for the Market House, Paving, and Hammet Street I will send you, if you have not got them and procure you any other Books that may assist you in the Work. - Take care that you enliven the performance with as many anecdotes as you can collect. - The Arch that I have lately altered into a Room, was built above 1200 years since by Ina King of the West Saxons for his Mistress - whose Queen after his death destroyed that part of the Castle to be revenged on that Lady - How soon afterwards it was rebuilt and fortified so as to be called the Western Key of the kingdom I know not.

Many Anecdotes I have remembered to have heard, when I was a boy of the different sieges that this Castle has stood, most recent are those of Oliver Cromwell and Charles the First - Enrich the work with as many Antiquities as you can procure - I will send to Rome for an Account of the Building of the Tower, for in the troublesome times of Henry the Eighth the

Writings of almost all the monasteries were sent to the Sovereign Pontiff for Security – I think it was built by Henry the 7th at the close of the Civil Wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster, as a reward to the Town for their attachment to his Family in preference to that of York; he built four others in the County all of the Florid Gothic, but the Tower of Taunton is supposed to be the finest he ever built.

I think there is a fine shield for an Antiquarian to work upon in your present History – There must be some Acct. of the Foundation of the different Pories – I will also procure you a copy of the different Charters – which you will translate from the Old Latin & introduce in your Work – I have never been well since I left Taunton and am now just setting off for Maidstone, or I could fill another sheet of paper.

Your letter about the Address gave me great pleasure and I took an opportunity to mention it to Mr. Pitt.

I am with great regard and esteem, Dear Sir, your very obedient & humble Servant,

Benj. Hammett.

Sir Benjamin Hammett to Dr. Toulmin.

Lombard Street, Mar. 23.89.

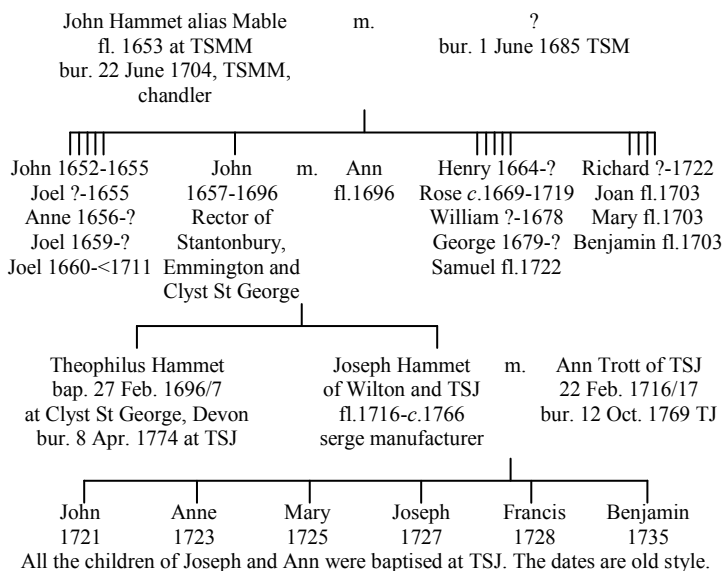
Dear Sir, - I had the Favour of your Letter this morning; my time is so much taken up in the present pursuit for the E.I. Direction that I must defer sending you an account of the Subscribers that I have procured until the hurry is over. I can safely say, you may put down one hundred and fifty copies for myself and Friends, & you may depend that I shall not remain inactive and when my list is completed you shall have the particulars – I directed with much pleasure the frank you requested and remain Dear Sir,

Yours Obligated Servant,

B. Hammett.

The connection between Hammet and Toulmin is obviously Taunton. However, another connection between Toulmin and Hammet was through a special meeting convened by the Court of Common Council held at the Guildhall, London, in February 1790. In a debate over the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which ‘deprive the Protestant Dissenters of those civil rights to which they are equally entitled with the rest of his majesty’s subjects’,²¹ Toulmin had presumably been invited or permitted to give evidence. He was in a modern sense an expert witness who spoke in favour of repeal. The debate involving Dissenters that lasted over four and a half hours, centred around the question of the ‘civil rights of the nation, and the establishment of the Constitution’. Both Hammet and Toulmin, with others, contested the question by supporting repeal but to no avail.²²

An outline pedigree of Hammet of Taunton, Somerset, Stantonbury, Oxfordshire, Emmington, Buckinghamshire and Clyst St George, Devon



Key: TSJ = Taunton St James, TSM = Taunton St Mary Magdalene

1. S.H.C., DD/S/HF 1 notes and newspaper cuttings of materials for the history of the county of Somerset collected by James Savage. Reproduced with permission of the South West Heritage Trust. The letters were only discovered in May 2018 by the Somerset editor.
2. M. Hall, *The Queens before the Conquest*, vol. II (1854), 65-6.
3. M. McDermott, *Sir Benjamin Hammet 1736-1800 a biography* (2017).
4. S.H.C., DD/S/HF 1 notes and newspaper cuttings of materials for the history of the county of Somerset collected by James Savage.
5. A.J. Howard and T.L. Stoaate ed., *Somerset Protestation returns and lay subsidy rolls 1641/2* (1975).
6. A.J. Howard ed., *A Somerset petition of 1641* (1968), section C3.
7. S.H.C., DD/S/HT/1 Typeset genealogy of 'Beadon, of Gotten and Creechbarrow, West Monkton, co. Somerset', n.d. This is based on J. Burke and J.B. Burke, *A genealogical and heraldic dictionary of the landed gentry of Great Britain & Ireland*, vol. 3 (1850).
8. CCED under Clyst St George, accessed 3 June 2018.
9. H.T. Ellacombe, *The history and antiquities of the parish of Clyst St. George* (1875), 34, 36-7.
10. CCED under Clyst St George, accessed 3 June 2018.
11. J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses 1500-1714* (1891), 626-51.
12. M.D. Lobel, 'Emmington' in *A history of the county of Oxford: volume 8, Lewknor and Pyrton Hundreds* (1964), 91-8.

13. S.H.C., D/P/tau.ja 2/1/9.
14. Lobel, 'Emmington', 91-8.
15. S.H.C., DD/DP 98/1 index to surrenders for the Hundred of Holway, 1660-1822. John Hamet appears in the 1660 subsidy for Holway and Extra Portum (T.N.A., E 179/172/418).
16. M. Siraut, *Somerset wills*, S.R.S. 89 (2003), 115.
17. S.H.C., DD/S/HT/1 Typeset genealogy.
18. C.H. Philips, *The East India Company 1784-1834* (1940), *passim*.
19. McDermott, *Hammet*, 51-4.
20. McDermott, *Hammet*, 61-4.
21. www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol14/vii-xxvi.
22. *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 25-27 February 1790.

A.J.W. and M. MCDERMOTT

34. COURSING IN DORSET AND TRIUMPH IN THE WATERLOO CUP. Field sports are capable of arousing strong emotions and today remain socially and politically divisive but undoubtedly the pursuit of field sports have 'helped to shape the countryside, its appearance and ecology'.¹ Hare coursing, to test the skills of greyhounds under controlled conditions, not necessarily resulting in the death of the hare, distinguishes it from other forms of hunting hares: shooting, beagling, and with packs of harriers. The popularity of coursing grew in the early 19th century as a consequence of the publication of two important books and a piece of government legislation. The books were Goodlake's *Coursers Manuel or Stud Book* (1828) and Thomas Thacker's *Coursing Companion* (1829). In 1831, a new Game Act was passed, which, among other clauses relating to the ownership and preserving of game on an estate, lifted previous restrictions on the breeding and owning of greyhounds. The number and geographical spread of coursing clubs increased and under the aegis and patronage of the Earls of Sefton the Waterloo Cup was established in 1836 and the National Coursing Club in 1858. Other contributory factors in the growth of coursing were the presence of public coursing meetings, run by coursing clubs (as opposed to private club meetings,) the continuing development of the railway, allowing competitors and spectators to travel to distant venues, and extensive coverage in the national and local press and sporting periodicals.²

On Saturday 22nd February 1879, the attention of many of Sherborne's inhabitants was focused on the result of the Waterloo Cup, the most prestigious event of the coursing season, traditionally held at the Altcar Club, Southport, over three days.

George Hooper Miller, a Sherborne farmer, greyhound breeder and trainer had entered his home-bred dog, Misterton, in the sixty four dog stake, with prize money amounting to £500 and £200 for the winner and runner-up respectively. The news of Misterton's victory arrived in Sherborne by telegram at 4.30pm and wide-scale rejoicing ensued - some, undoubtedly, of a pecuniary nature - Misterton having been backed extensively throughout Dorset.

A large crowd and the hastily assembled Town Band gathered at Sherborne railway station on the following Monday to await the arrival of the last train from London. Music and cheering greeted the appearance of Hooper Miller and Misterton and the jubilant crowd made their way to the Digby Hotel for refreshment and a chance to admire the victor.³ A complimentary dinner was held the following week at the Black Horse Hotel in Castleton to honour this notable achievement: the first occasion a breeder, trainer and greyhound from Dorset had triumphed in the Waterloo Cup. The chairman for the evening, Lionel Ruegg, proposed a toast to the health of George Hooper Miller, 'that hearty good fellow'.⁴

Evidence for coursing in Dorset has to rely primarily on investigation in estate archives, libraries, the Dorset History Centre and newspaper files, such as the *Sherborne Mercury*, the *Western Gazette*, and the *Dorchester Chronicle*. The Dorset volume of the *Victoria County History of the Counties of England*, in the section on sport, makes no reference to coursing, only the pursuit of hares with beagles and harriers.⁵ Considerable work is required to retrieve a more complete history of coursing in Dorset and this article is solely concerned with the career of George Hooper Miller which does provide valuable details of the sport, for a short period, in and around the town of Sherborne, Dorset. A second article will pursue the establishment and records of the Lulworth Coursing Club (1865),⁶ press coverage of other coursing meetings in Dorset and the involvement of Captain (later Colonel) Thomas Henry Gatehouse Besant of Dorchester (1807-1874).

George Hooper Miller was born in 1845, the eldest son of Thomas and Ann Miller, well-respected and long-standing tenants of the Digby estate. In 1851, the family were living at Castle farm in Castleton, Sherborne, working 400 acres and employing twelve labourers.⁷ On the death of Thomas in 1860, the tenancy was taken on by Ann, his wife, and by 1871, the family had moved to Blackmarsh Farm, farming 540 acres and employing twenty men and three boys. Hooper, together with his younger brother, Thomas

Henry, continued to help work the farm. Both were keen sportsmen, enjoying hunting with the Blackmore Vale Hunt and showing horses at local agricultural shows but gradually Hooper's interests became focussed on the breeding and training greyhounds for coursing. His reputation as a breeder inevitably grew after his initial victory in the Waterloo Cup, followed by a second victory in 1881 with Princess Dagmar (a greyhound he was able to 'nominate' through his membership of the Altcar Club and one he purchased after her success, for breeding purposes). He also acquired Coomasie, a diminutive fawn bitch who had won the cup in 1877 and 1878. Mullingar another hound of his own breeding was the winner of the Gosforth Park gold cup which afforded him great pleasure. Advertisements for his stud at Osborne appear in *Sporting Life* and the *Newcastle Daily Journal*⁸ where attention is drawn to its location one mile from Sherborne station, revealing again the importance of the rail network in facilitating not only attendance at coursing meetings but also by utilising its connections for access to studs.

In October 1886 the dispersal sale of Hooper Miller's kennel at Mr Herbert Rymill's well-known Barbican Repository attracted 'the largest attendance ever seen at a greyhound sale'.⁹ The sale comprised fourteen coursing greyhounds, five brood bitches, three stud dogs and twenty six saplings (young greyhounds) although Misterton did not reach the reserve of 1000 guineas. The sale realised a total of 3,523 guineas, which included various greyhounds bought-in, on not reaching their reserve. The sale prices (with only three over 100 guineas and the majority between 5 and 50 guineas) demonstrated the accessibility of the sport to those persons of modest incomes, when compared with field sports such as hunting, horse-racing or shooting. Yet Hooper had no intention of retiring from greyhound coursing and in November 1866, as Hon. Secretary he helped organize the first Blackmore Vale open coursing meeting in the neighbourhood of Sherborne and Milborne Port (Somerset). The meeting was formally constituted with a President, George H. Gordon (inspector of schools and J.P. for Dorset and Wiltshire) Stewards and Field Stewards, and an approved Judge and Slipper (the person whose job it is to release-or 'deliver' each pair of greyhounds from the 'shy'-a three-sided screen-having allowed the hare the leeway of some eighty yards). Among the company attending the draw and dinner at the Half Moon Hotel (host Edwin Pragnell) were patrons

from Sherborne, Dorchester, Blandford, Sidmouth and Taunton. A crucial consideration for organisers of all coursing meetings was to establish cordial relations with local landowners to allow access to their land and consequently, at the Half Moon Hotel, the health was drunk to the tenant farmers who had granted permission to course over their lands.¹⁰

The meeting assembled at Milborne Port railway station and moved, via the nearby Bugle Inn, to Milborne Wick, where a large field of spectators, estimated at more than one hundred horsemen and between eight and nine hundred on foot, watched the day's sport. Hares were plentiful at the start but became scarcer during the day leading to uncompleted cards. The following day the meeting was held near Osborne but the unfavourable weather and lack of hares meant that some stakes were divided and others uncompleted. Nevertheless it can be seen that the reputation of Hooper Miller in local and coursing circles was sufficient to attract the interest and participation of a wide range of patrons and spectators and provide the opportunity to enjoy the sport of public coursing in a Dorset and Somerset setting.

Details of another meeting, again held over the Milborne Wick estate, were reported in the press in January 1888¹¹ but it is unclear whether these meetings became a regular annual fixture. For instance, a report of the Blackmore Vale open coursing meeting held in November 1895, held under National Club Coursing rules, refers to the meeting having lapsed for three years and full entries were not obtained for two of the three stakes. Hooper Miller and Edwin Pragnell of the Half Moon Hotel were again involved and having met at the Half Moon, the company proceeded to land in the vicinity of Lenthay Common in Sherborne. The judge was Mr G.W. Ross of Ibberton and the slipper was Mr B. Nurse of Brent Knoll (Somerset) named and approved officials willing to attend a properly constituted meeting, even in a county such as Dorset, not readily associated with coursing, but one where evidence is mounting for active participation in the sport.¹²

Hooper Miller was also involved with the Blandford coursing meeting, acting as a steward. It is unclear as yet of the date of its formation but a press report in December 1883 refers to a meeting held at Tarrant Gunville by kind permission of Henry Richard Farquharson Esq., (a family well-known in hunting circles) at which there was a large attendance, including 150 mounted followers. At the conclusion of the meeting, two hundred persons

attended a champagne lunch at Eastbury Park, illustrating the continuing importance of patronage by the landed gentry.¹³ A passing reference, in the report, is made to Farquharson's grandfather having made land available at Langton for coursing.

Hooper's interests also included horse breeding and in partnership with Robert Lemon of Sherborne he established the Glynwood Stud in Longburton. Their most notable success was the breeding and sale of Glenwood, a yearling out of Ormonde, for 5,000 guineas in 1891.¹⁴

Sadly, on Tuesday 1st December 1896, at the age of fifty-one Hooper Miller died in his Church Lane lodgings at Sherborne of 'acute mania' preceded by delirium and nine days of convulsions. His obituary records that he had been living in straightened circumstances after a run of misfortunes, and the recent loss of a litter of puppies to canine influenza affected him deeply. The Blackmore Vale coursing meeting in November 1895 proved to be his final event. His fame and reputation merited reports of his death in papers as far afield as the *East Anglican Times*, the *Cork Examiner*, and the *Yorkshire Post* as well as West Country newspapers. Tribute was paid to his success with breeding greyhounds, coursing victories in England and France, and his popularity and generous nature.¹⁵

The county of Dorset is perhaps more associated with the field sports of fox hunting and shooting than coursing with greyhounds and the paucity of secondary sources has hitherto limited research into this subject. A steady growth of national interest in the sport occurred during the second half of the 19th century, as has been suggested. A purposeful study of coursing activities in Dorset, will hope to reveal the hitherto hidden history of coursing in Dorset, in particular the whereabouts and frequency of meetings, the names and social background of the owners and other personnel involved. From such a search, the significant career of George Hooper Miller has been retrieved and highlighted his notable achievement in twice winning the Waterloo Cup, bringing him fame and recognition in his native Dorset.

1. R.W. Hoyle ed, Preface xiv in *Our hunting fathers: field sports in England after 1850* (2007).
2. I. Roberts, 'Starting a hare: exploring the history of coursing since the mid-nineteenth century' in *Our hunting fathers*, 212-40 and E. Crittall ed, 'Coursing' in *A history of the County of Wiltshire* IV (1959) 382-383 and in A.T. Gaydon ed, *A history of Shropshire* II (1973) 183-5.
3. *Western Gazette* 24 February 1879.

4. *Western Gazette* 1 March 1879.
5. *The Victoria History of Dorset*: volume II, ed. William Page (London 1908.)
6. Dorset History Centre, D-WLC/E/40 and 41.
7. 1851 Census T.N.A., HO 107/1859 DOR Fol.163 Pg.20.
8. *Sporting Life* 20 January 1888 and *Newcastle Daily Journal* 10 January 1884.
9. *Sporting Life* 11 October 1886.
10. *Western Chronicle* 19 November 1886, *Western Gazette* 19 November 1886, and *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* 20 November 1886.
11. *Western Chronicle* 13 January 1888.
12. *Western Gazette* 15 November 1895
13. *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* 22 December 1883.
14. *Sporting Times* 20 June 1891.
15. *Western Gazette* 4 December 1896.

GEORGE TATHAM

NOTES

MIZZYMEAD IN NAILSEA. “This sounds like an lovely type of fizzy alcoholic beverage which should be drank [sic] in the summer – but as we all know it is actually where Nailsea School and the recreation ground are.” Such was the opinion of a *North Somerset Times* staffer on 30 April 2015. The writer’s opinion underlines the fact that, so far as I know, the origin of this distinctive name in what is now the centre of Nailsea town has never been securely established. The earliest extant deed of the farm which bore this name dates from 1596, and the farmhouse is believed to be late medieval.¹ However, I have not found the name itself in records before the eighteenth century:

Meesey Mead (Parson’s tenement), undated map of 18th century appearance in Somerset Heritage Centre, image supplied by Nailsea and District Local History Society.

Mizzeymead farm, 1730.²

Mizzy Mead, 1791, in Nailsea apprenticeships.³

Mizzey Mead, *Mizze Mead*, and various other spellings, from 1795 onwards, in Nailsea overseers’ accounts.⁴

Mizzy mead, 1830.⁵

I have heard it claimed casually in a radio broadcast that it may derive from *misty mead*. But there is nothing to support that, and it is much more likely to have as its first element a word continuing Middle English *misī* ‘swamp, bog, quagmire’, itself derived from Old English *mēos* ‘marsh, very wet land’, with a new suffix *-ī*,

perhaps originally for an adjective.

Misī survives regionally today, pronounced exactly the same, as *mizzy*, though only in north-western English dialects.⁶ There are quite a few examples in Cheshire field-names,⁷ and it occurs notably in the name of Mizzy Road, Rochdale, Lancashire, which leads to a street called *Bentmeadows*, perhaps indicating rushy moorland (with *bentgrass*, meaning, in dialect usage, especially ‘coarse moorland grass’). But *mizzy* may well once have had wider geographical currency, since the base-word *mēos* is found in place-names as far south as Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

More locally, the same word is found also, from 1594 onwards, in *Meezy Hurst* in East Dean, Gloucestershire,⁸ nowadays a geological SSSI. The earliest spellings of this name (*Missy*, *Myssy*, *Myssye*), from 1594, unambiguously indicate a short first vowel (though the first-mentioned spelling of the Nailsea name does not; the rest do). Smith alternatively suggests that this name may derive from a variant of the Anglo-Norman French surname *Maisey*, but that does not suit the pronunciation very well, because the surname has no known variants with a short first vowel; and in any case the suggestion might be thought implausible in a name for a small local woodland feature and without a genitive case form in -s anywhere in its record.

The main buildings of Mizzymead Farm were situated at the present Mizzymead Rise and Barns Close. On the earliest large-scale Ordnance Survey maps (1884/5), they are close to a small pond, as well as the obligatory farmyard pond, and twentieth-century maps (e.g. 1: 2500, 1931) indicate a windpump, i.e. for drainage or water extraction, just east of the site, suggesting a high water table. Prosaic though it may be, therefore, and despite an apparent modern dialect mismatch, the origin of the name is on balance likely to be ‘bog meadow’, with the name becoming attached to this farmstead of the Tynte estate in the modern era.

Acknowledgement. My thanks are due to Peter Wright of Nailsea and District Local History Society for information supplied.

1. Know Your Place website for North Somerset, <http://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/?edition=nsom#>, accessed 25 February 2018.
2. N. Knight, ‘Who was Richard Baber of Backwell, clockmaker?’ in *Pennant: the local history journal of Backwell, Nailsea, Tickenham and Wraxall* 1.1 (1992), 3-5, online at www.ndlhs.org.uk/pennant/Pennant-1.pdf.
3. S.H.C., ‘A list of the estates liable to take apprentices’ reproduced online at <http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/ian.sage/Nailsea/PRS/apprenticeships.html>.

4. S.H.C., D:\PC\na\8/3/2 Nailsea overseers' accounts, 1768-1819 available online at http://abel-serve.co.uk/ian_sage/Overseers/overseers.html.
5. Ordnance Survey 1" first series, sheet 35.
6. J. Wright, ed., *English dialect dictionary*, 5 vols (1898-1905), available online at <http://eddonline-proj.uibk.ac.at/edd/index.jsp> under mizzy.
7. J.McN. Dodgson, *The place-names of Cheshire*, vol. 5, section 1: ii, Survey of English Place-Names 54 (1981), 283.
8. A.H. Smith, *The place-names of Gloucestershire*, vol. 3, Survey of English Place-Names 40 (1964), 222.

RICHARD COATES

QUERIES

WHITE HART SILVER. During her research for the Dorset Record Society volume Three Tudor Surveys June Palmer found several references to the payment of a local tax or obligation known as White Hart Silver paid in Blackmore Vale. Mrs Palmer passed away in 2018 and the Dorset Editor intends to form her notes into a piece for SDNQ. If readers have references or knowledge of this topic I would be most grateful.

M.P.F.

PILLYWIGGINS. I am working on a research project about pillywiggins. They are mentioned in a list of fairies in *A field guide to the little people* by Nancy Arrowsmith (1977). The only information about them is one sentence: 'The popularized Dorset Fairies, Pillywiggins, are tiny flower spirits'. Since then, they've appeared in a significant number of fantasy books. I have been trying to find out if there are any older works that mention them, or anything similar at all in folklore recorded before 1977. Any help or advice would be much appreciated.

SARAH ALLISON

SDNQ WEBSITE

SOMERSET WILLS RECORDED IN THE CHARITY COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS. The Charity Commissioners' reports from 1819 to 1837 are contained in a set of 36 printed volumes for the whole of England and Wales, which are held at the Somerset Heritage Centre (S.H.C.), Taunton. From these 36

volumes a single un-indexed volume covering the historic county of Somerset was compiled by the Charity Commissioners. A list of 408 entries of 402 peoples' wills was prepared by D.T. Hawkings from this single volume of reports is now available on our website.

These reports include details of all the donations made in peoples' wills to parishes in each county in England and Wales for charitable purposes. Some are as early as the 17th century. Often the date of the will is not given and rarely is the court of probate mentioned. Some spot checks have shown that many of these wills were proved in The Prerogative Court of Canterbury, others for local courts administered in the diocese of Bath and Wells; the originals were destroyed in the Second World War at Exeter.

The place of residence of the donor is not usually given but the parish receiving the donation is always given. The receiving parish may, or may not be the donor's place of residence. The parish receiving the donation appears on the right hand side of each entry in the following listings. Sometimes this is mis-spelt; in these cases the correct spelling has been entered. Sometimes the date of probate is given and the date of death of the donor. Some entries give no indication of the dates of the will, of the death of the donor, or the year of probate. Some of the donors lived outside the county of Somerset and have been included in this listing.

DAVID T. HAWKINGS

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