
NOTES & QUERIES

FOR
SOMERSET AND DORSET

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

HERRICK

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32. FIRES, FIRE FIGHTING AND INSURANCE IN 18TH-CENTURY BATH. In his article 'Fire precautions in 17th-century Bath' (*SDNQ*, XXXI (1981), 109-112), Stephen Porter mentions the existence of timber and part-timber buildings in what was otherwise a stone-built Stuart city. These more hazardous structures, as fire insurance records show, could still be seen in the old centre well into the eighteenth century, and even thatch had not, it seems, entirely been superseded, for a large blaze in 1726 devastated a block of what John Wood calls 'old thatched hovels' on the east side of Horse [later Southgate] Street.¹ The main thoroughfares of early Georgian Bath remained narrow and cluttered, and the process of infilling continued to reduce open space within the walls. Not until after 1750 were the three principal gateways pulled down, the Marketplace cleared of obstructions, and some of the streets widened. Various trades dependent on ovens, kilns and open fires – bakers, apothecaries, metalsmiths, tallow-chandlers and brewers – were also concentrated in the cramped lower town. In 1745 so evident was the fire risk from forges at a workshop adjoining the Bear Inn stables in the heart of the city that the Corporation ordered their removal.² By contrast the Georgian terraces now spreading across the fields and hillsides outside the ancient core seemed altogether safer. Here the streets were generously broad, hazardous trades were often banned, and all construction was in local limestone with brick chimney flues and tiled roofs. Yet quite as many conflagrations are recorded in the new suburbs as in the older districts during this period. It is clear that most eighteenth-century interiors, with their coal fires, candle-lighting, and increasing number of hangings and inflammable furnishings, were potentially dangerous environments. Given the huge traffic of visitors at Bath, the surprising feature is perhaps that fires were not more frequent and worse.

Early fire-fighting equipment was still rudimentary. In 1694 the Corporation had been given an engine by William Blathwayt soon after his election as one of the city's two M.P.s. Since a new barrel had immediately to be cast for it at city expense, the appliance may have been second-hand. The Chamberlain's Accounts for 1710-11 mention the 'Engeon' being played – tried out -- by order of the Mayor, and the same source for 1712-13 records a payment of £3 for looking after,

presumably putting in order, the fire engines – now in the plural.³ Along with these engines doubtless came leather pipes, squirts, ladders, ropes, and crooks for dragging off roof-tiles. The only other equipment took the form of buckets kept for emergencies in various city properties under the terms of their lease.

The engines were presumably deployed at the Horse Street fire of 1726 (when two houses were completely lost and others damaged, and the Corporation spent £3.15s. on beer for the fire-fighters) and they were called out again in 1730 as a precaution against a threatened arson attack on a city tradesman.⁴ Though the Bath Local Act of 1739 at last made statutory provision for a night watch to guard against fire and other dangers, the twenty years up to 1746 appear to have been remarkably free of serious incidents. That April, however, fire broke out in the substantial premises of Skrine's (or Abbey Church) House, a superior lodging near the Cross and Hot Baths, where – embarrassingly enough for the city – Princess Caroline was staying. Fortunately the magistrates were able to call on troops billeted in Bath to fight the blaze and to commandeer water from the baths. Once tiles had been stripped from the roof so 'that the Water thrown up by the Engine, or otherwise, might have its Effect', damage was confined to a few upper rooms.⁵ This was a lucky escape, but a year later, in May 1747, a greater disaster threatened when number 22 Queen Square, the second house from the west in the north range, caught fire. With a wind from the north-east the flames spread to the corner house belonging to David Eames and gutted much of it, the wainscotting burning 'with great fury' and one man being injured by a collapsing wall. Rather less damage was done to the two adjoining houses, but, as was pointed out at the time, the whole north side of the Square might easily have been consumed had the wind been from the other direction, notwithstanding the easy availability of water from the central reservoir to supply the engine.⁶ While Nash, the master-of-ceremonies, launched a collection on behalf of the unfortunate Eames, attention refocussed on fire-fighting apparatus.⁷ On 8 June a vestry meeting at the Abbey Church agreed to purchase an engine for parish use as long as the parish of St James did the same, and three weeks later the Corporation resolved to buy one out of civic funds – though whether an additional

appliance or a replacement is not stated.

Several fires and fire scares in the 1750s and 1760s underscored the perennial risk to life and property. In 1753 another conflagration in Horse Street damaged a wheelwright's, a smithy, some stables and a shop. In 1755, after the city appliances had dealt with a fire at a Trim Street stable, the *Bath Journal* wanted every parish to have its own fire engine 'for Stable Boys (as well as a great many other Servants) pay little regard to Security'. A year later, minor outbreaks at the White Lion's brewhouse (caused by a cracked chimney flue), and at a watchmaker's workshop in Borough Walls, were the prelude to a destructive fire at Jennifer Fleming's house on South Parade in which a young man died and the building was reduced to a shell. Again Nash organised a public subscription towards the £1000 financial loss.⁸ Fires at two different apothecary's shops in 1758 and 1764, in a wine merchant's vaults in 1761, and at the stables of the White Hart inn in 1760, while all fairly quickly extinguished, must yet again have reminded tradesmen of the need for adequate insurance cover.⁹

Since the early eighteenth century Bathonians had been used to taking out policies on their premises, workshops, stores, merchandise, furnishings and utensils, but they were obliged to do it through agents of the Sun and other London fire insurance companies.¹⁰ From March 1767, however, it became possible to insure with a wholly local institution, the Bath Fire Office, the first insurance company established in the provinces since 1720 – a venture perhaps prompted by the Corporation's recent action of inserting hydrants (or 'fire plugs') into the water supply. Sited at William Kingston's, a stationer in Trim Street, the new office promised 3% above what London insurers paid in the event of a claim. Its initial capital, derived from sixty shareholders, was considerable and the names of its twelve directors, all substantial local tradesmen, bred confidence. Some 460 policies were issued in the first year of operation, with three classes of premium according to the hazardous nature of the property, contents or business insured. Having at this stage only a set of water buckets, fire bags for removing household goods, and various implements, but no appliances of its own, the company offered rewards of a guinea, half-a-guinea and a quarter-guinea to those bringing the first, second and third engines to the site of a fire.¹¹ Perhaps it was

this inducement that led to the thunderous haste with which the three city fire engines left their storage point in the north transept of the abbey church during a service in 1771, greatly alarming the congregation in the chancel.¹²

In 1775, 1776 and 1777 the Bath Fire Office opened branches at Bristol, Chippenham and Melksham respectively, but from February 1777 faced opposition from a rival company, the Bath Sun Fire Office. The latter, run from John Salmon's printing office in Stall Street, was, like the *Old Bath Fire Office* (as it was now dubbed), a joint-stock company, though with initial capital of only £30,000. The small print of the Bath Sun's policies excluded claims for money, bills, documents, jewellery, pictures, gunpowder, and any losses resulting from enemy action or civil disturbance.¹³ Whether or not it had its own fire-fighting devices at this stage, its competitor, the OBFO, was in due course driven to acquire them. During an outbreak of fire in December 1779 at Westgate Buildings, covered by OBFO insurance, household goods that were supposedly moved to a place of safety were never afterwards recovered. This mishap, even though five engines and thirty-odd firemen soon put the fire out, inspired the Fire Office to take fuller control of operations in future by forming its own brigade.¹⁴ Appliances were acquired from George Ford's engineering works in Bridewell Lane and kept in readiness at Trim Street, where 'instant application' was requested whenever fires started at insured buildings. Engines and firemen would then be sent 'to give immediate assistance, and to take care that furniture etc. be safely removed'.¹⁵ The Trim Street engines were soon in action at St James's Parade, as Edmund Rack noted in his journal:

Last night about 11 Just as we were going to bed we were alarmed by the Watch with a Cry of Fire on our Parade. I went to the door and saw flames bursting out of the windows at No. 12. We were in no danger, nor should have been had it been at the next House, the party walls being 18 Inches thick. Two or three Engines were got to Work in a Qtr of an hour, and after burning the inside of 3 Rooms the fire was extinguished. A great deal of damage was done to the furniture by moving, but all was insur'd.¹⁶

It is doubtful, however, whether either fire office risked sending engines and men a few months later, in June 1780, to the blaze deliberately started by a mob of Gordon Rioters at the newly built Roman Catholic Chapel almost next to St

James's Parade. Neither magistrates, constables or militia could prevent the total destruction of the chapel and its associated premises, and this time the city itself offered financial compensation.

By January 1785 some deal seems to have been struck with the Corporation by which the OBFO had a stake in the 'Fire Engine house' in Orange Grove, keys to which were held at its Office, as well as at the Guildhall, the Abbey Church, two nearby shops, Fords the engine-makers, and by the night constables.¹⁷ The Fire Office nevertheless retained engines at Trim Street since these were called out later that year to fight a major fire at the house and storerooms of John Plura, a leading Bath upholsterer and auctioneer at 10 Milson Street/9 John Street. Despite all efforts to remove large quantities of furniture stored on site, losses were valued at several thousand pounds. Both local insurance firms appear to have been concerned and offered a joint reward to all those who had busied themselves to minimise the disaster.¹⁸ Scarcely a year later, in December 1786, Bath's worst fire in the whole century, in terms of loss of life, broke out in Avon Street at a cheap lodging-house. Again, drying linen at an open fire was blamed for the outbreak. Flames and smoke from the ground floor prevented escape by the stairs, seven of the fourteen occupants died, and one of the two who jumped from the top floor suffered serious injury. Since 1777 all city properties had been required to be insured as a condition for renewal of lease, but in this case there was no cover and the wretched victims could appeal only to public charity.¹⁹

Fire insurance was increasingly big business at Bath in the 1780s and 1790s. By the end of 1792 the OBFO alone had issued around 5750 policies, and before the end of the century competition intensified for both Bath fire offices as national institutions installed their own local agents: the Royal Exchange Assurance and the London Sun in 1788, the Phoenix in 1789, and the British Fire Office in 1800.²⁰ On the other hand the rapid expansion of building in the suburbs at this period was not being matched by increased fire-fighting capacity. A damaging blaze at a nearly finished house in Marlborough Buildings in 1789 drew appropriate criticism in the press: no engines were sited anywhere in the upper town; by the time some *had* arrived the building had gone up in

flames; and in any case the firemen seemed untrained in handling their equipment: all matters requiring 'the immediate attention of the Directors of the Fire Offices'.²¹ No doubt the same Directors also took note of the trials carried out later that year at a house in Belvedere to prove the effectiveness of flame-resistant metal fireplates fixed under floorboards and on ceiling joists, an invention patented by David Hartley, sometime Bath resident.²² Even while these trials were in progress, the need for fire precautions was further reinforced by an explosion at the Grove Tavern, Orange Court, where a firework-maker lodged. Had the fire spread, no insurance claim would have been allowed on the grounds that the building contained gunpowder.²³

A conflagration affecting properties in Borough Walls in 1791 once more indicated a state of unreadiness. Starting in a cabinet-maker's shop, it spread to the premises of first a saddler and then a calenderer, destroying the goods and tools of these and other tradesmen before it was finally got under control behind the Shakespeare Inn. The saddler, insured for only £200, faced a loss of treble that; the cabinet-maker had no cover at all. Whichever the fire appliances that were trundled to the scene, they proved to be out of repair. No fire buckets could be found, a crowd of onlookers got in the way of the frantic tradesmen trying to douse the flames and save their stock, and in the confusion many items were stolen.²⁴ In sharp contrast the engines dealt efficiently with a fire at the artists' exhibition room in Westgate Buildings in 1792. The property was fully insured and the main casualty was Joseph Sheldon's impressive large scale model of Bath which was irreparably spoiled.²⁵ Most incidents like these resulted from building faults or simple carelessness. In 1798 the fire in the kitchen of Molland's, a well-patronised pastrycook's in Milsom Street, was attributed to a damaged chimney flue.²⁶ A more perilous fire at the lodgings of the master-of-ceremonies, James King, at Harington Place in February 1800 began when his bedside candle set light to the fine cotton bed hangings which then blazed up to the ceiling. As other rooms were engulfed, King, his wife and their two servants barely escaped in time. The engines came promptly and the fire hydrants functioned, but this time the lack of pipes, and the difficulty of coupling together those they had, caused much delay before jets of water

could be played on the burning fabric of the building.²⁷

King was not insured and the accident to such a popular Bath celebrity drew forth more comment about the fire services. The city's relative immunity from calamitous fires was no reason for complacency, thought the *Bath Herald*; the Fire Offices or the Parish Vestries ought to inspect the engines, pipes and buckets at frequent intervals; the firemen needed to be drilled regularly in their duties. Further practical suggestions came from a correspondent who pointed out that engines and pipes become dry and leaky when not often used. Moreover, the dirty water often supplied to fire engines only served to clog the valves and stop them working, yet hardly anyone in the crowds and confusion at a fire knew how to free them. The answer, he went on, was to have guards on duty to stop untrained people meddling, and meanwhile to teach all respectable tradesmen exactly how force pumps worked. Almost always the engines could be supplied with water from proper hydrants, either by suction or a portable force pump (as used in breweries). Feather pumps had little value, doing no more than sprinkle the fire, and as a rule chains of fire buckets were just a nuisance.²⁸

These remarks followed immediately on the arson attack which razed Williams's Quayside brewery to the ground.²⁹ Would-be incendiaries had occasionally threatened Bath residents in the past, and arson was certainly suspected in 1782 when an empty house in Belvedere suffered fire damage.³⁰ The fire-raising campaign of early 1800 was more deliberate, however, in its aim of forcing tradesmen to reduce their prices at a time of growing hardship for the poor. Active patrolling by night constables prevented any further attacks, but once again the city's vulnerability was highlighted and the case made for a more professional fire brigade. The first steps would be taken in 1806 by merging the forces of the two Bath Fire Offices and jointly acquiring a new fire station site on Lower Borough Walls. By 1819 engines were held in readiness at six other sites elsewhere, including at last two in the upper town, at the Assembly Rooms and Kensington Chapel.³¹ Responsibility for combating fires was to remain with the insurance companies until as late as 1891, when a volunteer fire brigade took over the task for a time in association with the police, only to come under local authority control in 1909.

1. John Wood, *An Essay towards a Description of Bath*. 2nd ed. (1749) v.1 p. 232. For the value of stone, brick and tile construction in limited fires see E. L. Jones, 'The reduction of fire damage in southern England, 1650-1850', *Post-Medieval Archaeology* v.2 (1968) 140-9.
2. Bath Council Minutes 9 Dec 1745
3. Bath Chamberlain's Accounts 140 (1694-5), 153b (1710-11), 155 (1712-13)
4. Bath Council Minutes 1 Jan 1727/8 and leases; Bath Chamberlain's Accounts 165 (1725-6); (1745-46); *Hist. MSS. Comm.* 63, MSS of the Earl of Egmont, Diary, v.1 (1920), 17 Nov 1730
5. Bath Chamberlain's Accounts (1745-6); *Bath Journal* 14 Apr 1746
6. *Bath Journal* 11 and 18 May 1747. This engine had been presented to the city by Dr Bave.
7. Abbey Vestry minutes cited in *Bath Chronicle* 11 Aug 1951 p.16; Bath Council Minutes 29 Jun 1747
8. *Bath Journal* 9 Apr 1753 and 30 Jun 1755; *Bath Advertiser* 13 Mar, 15 May, 5 Jun 1756; *Bath Journal* 19 Jul 1756. Another stable fire in which smoke killed three horses was reported in *Bath Journal* 21 Nov 1757.
9. *Bath Advertiser* 6 May 1758; *Bath Journal* 28 Jul 1760; *Bath Chronicle* 5 Feb 1761 and 14 Jun 1764
10. See in particular Sun Fire Office, *Register of Policies* (Guildhall Library, London)
11. E Nugent Linaker, 'A history of the Bath Fire Office', *Sun Alliance & London Group Gazette* v.2 no.12, 1971, pp. 10-11; *Bath Chronicle* 18 June 1767 and 14 Mar 1771; Sydenham Scrapbook (Bath Central Library) f. 763; Somerset Record Office DD/BK 3 (19) names the 12 directors. For 'fire plugs' see Bath Council Minutes 28 Oct 1766
12. *Bath Chronicle* 10 Jan 1771
13. *Ibid* 6 Feb 1777; Sydenham Scrapbook f. 759
14. E. Nugent Linaker, *op. cit.*; Edmund Rack, *A Disultory Journal ...* (Bath Central Library) 23 Dec 1779
15. E. Nugent Linaker, *op. cit.*; in *Bath Chronicle* 29 Apr 1779 and 7 Aug 1794 Fords advertise their fire engines
16. Edmund Rack, *op. cit.*, 13 Feb 1780
17. *Bath Chronicle* 6 Jan 1785
18. *Ibid*. 22 Sep 1785
19. *Ibid*. 14 Dec 1786; *Bath Journal* 11 and 18 Dec 1786. For the insurance obligations of Corporation lessees see Bath Council Minutes 30 Jun 1777
20. *Bath Chronicle* 26 June 1788 pp. 1 and 3; 17 Dec 1789; 25 Sep 1800. In addition Bath Life Annuity and Assurance Office was established – *ibid*. 17 Nov 1791
21. *Bath Journal* 8 Feb 1789
22. *Bath Chronicle* 3 and 10 Sep 1789
23. *Ibid*. 3 and 10 Sep and 1 Oct 1789
24. *Ibid*. 18 and 25 Aug 1791
25. *Ibid*. 8 Nov 1792
26. *Ibid*. 5 Apr 1798
27. *Ibid*. 6 and 13 Feb 1800; *Bath Journal* 8 Feb 1800
28. *Bath Herald* 8 Feb 1800 and letter from 'Candidus' in *ibid*. 23 Mar 1800
29. *Ibid*. 15 Mar 1800; for the context see Steve Poole, 'Radicalism, loyalism and the "reign of terror" in Bath, 1792-1804', *Bath History* v.3, 1990, esp. pp. 132-3
30. *Bath Chronicle* 21 Mar 1782
31. E. Nugent Linaker, *op. cit.*; Bath Council Minutes 6 Oct 1806 and 5 Jan 1807; Gye's *Bath Directory* (1819) p. 15

TREVOR FAWCETT

33. THE FIRST SDNQ MINUTES, 1917. No minutes of Council meetings appear to have been kept from 1888 until 1917. For the latter year the minutes survive, written in long hand on three sheets of lined paper. As the first record of the deliberation of your committee, it may be of some interest. Some of the problems – the cost of printing and the shortage of subscribers, for instance – are perennial ones. It will be noted that, apart from Mr. Wildman, every member is a clergyman, Mr. Saunders' initials were, in fact 'G. W.'

Som & Dors N & Q

Annual Meeting of Council

Minutes

The meeting was held at Newton Surmaville on Monday 23rd July, 1917.
Present –

The Rev. Prebendary E. M. Bates Harbin (in the chair), The Very Reverend the Dean of Wells, The Rev. S. D. M. Creed, D.D., The Rev. Canon C. H. Mayo (Dorset Editor) and the Rev. G. S. Saunders (Somerset Editor).

Letters of regret for non-attendance had been received by the Chairman from the Rev. Prebendary W. E. Daniel, and W. B. Wildman Esq. The Chairman expressed the pleasure of the Council that the Dean of Wells had consented to become a member. The Chairman read a letter from the Rev. J. W. Weaver, announcing that from ill-health he had found it necessary to resign the Somerset editorship, which he had held since 1890 succeeding Mr. Hugh Norris. The resignation was received by the Council with great regret: and the Chairman was requested to write to Mr. Weaver to express their warm appreciation of his work as Editor, and their hope that his health might be restored.

The Chairman announced that the Rev. G. S. Saunders had consented to take the post of Somerset Editor now vacant; and the Council gave Mr. Saunders a hearty welcome. Canon Mayo presented the accounts for 1916. The receipts were £83.16.9 an increase of £14.3.2. on those of 1915. The payments were £66.2.11, an increase of £2.18.8 from 1915, total £70.12.7½. The result was that the deficit which was £10.19.0½ on 1st January, 1915, and £4.9.8½ on 1st Jan 1916, had now become a surplus of £13.4.1½. In addition there was also a reserve fund invested in consols of the nominal value of (Face value of certificate £130.4.1½. [After 'deficit', the original minutes run ' of £4.9.8½ had turned into a balance of £13.4.1½. There was also a reserve fund of calculated at the present price of consols'. This was likely meant to be crossed out when the new figures were written up, but the writer omitted to do so.]

The printers Messrs. Sawtell of Sherborne had written to say that the price of paper had increased so much that it would be necessary to raise their charge for printing each number from £12.15s. to £14, including the usual two plates and that the quantity of paper required for the year must be ordered at once, as stocks were very low. The terms being considered reasonable, were agreed to.

The Chairman stated that it had been customary to vote an honorarium to the Editors for their services at the completion of each volume, but that it had been dropped since the war. It was unanimously resolved to disburse an honorarium of £5 to each editor.

It having appeared from the accounts that Canon Mayo had paid for the 'Dorset' illustrations in the current volume, he was heartily thanked for his kindness.

A discussion took place as to the possibility of increasing the number of subscribers, at present amounting to about 240. Canon Mayo gave an account of some previous efforts to circularise the inhabitants of both counties likely to be interested in such matters, which had not been very successful. The Chairman undertook to mention the matter at the Annual Meeting of the Somerset Arch. & Nat. Hist. Society to be held the next day.

The Dean of Wells advocated the insertion of articles dealing with folklore, dialect, and the incidents of local life and thought, as likely to interest a wider circle than the purely historical and antiquarian articles.

MICHAEL McGARVIE

34. FRIENDLY SOCIETIES IN EAST SOMERSET IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. In her study of West Country Friendly Societies, published in 1964, Margaret Fuller identified some 12 friendly societies in the nineteenth century in the area of East Somerset covered by the Wincanton Poor Law Union. Her research was largely based upon surviving pole brasses.¹ The Wincanton Union consisted of some 39 parishes, of which two were in Dorset. Research in other sources, most notably the local press, the records deposited in the Somerset Record Office and the Annual Reports of the Registrar and Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, suggests that there were at least 35 societies in this area. The exact number is difficult to ascertain for a number of reasons. In the first place, considerable secrecy surrounded some of the societies in the early years of the century and so only a passing reference remains. Secondly, a number of the societies, as shown below in column (e) divided their assets every few years and it is difficult to see in some cases when one era ends and another begins. Thirdly, slightly different titles may well apply to the same society, for example, the Queen Camel and District Friendly Society was sometimes referred to as the Sparkford, North and South Cadbury and Queen Camel Friendly Society.

The extent and progress of the Friendly Societies in the Wincanton Union may be seen on pages 139-140. It is clear

that the local societies fell into two broad categories: those which met in a public house and usually shared out their funds every seven or ten years as a means of attracting members; and those which met elsewhere and were often under honorary management or patronage, but could still divide as the others [see columns (d) and (e)]. The larger affiliated orders, such as the Ancient Order of Foresters and the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, tended to penetrate the West Country much more slowly because of the higher subscriptions, and so the local societies were the ones to which the agricultural labourers turned.

There were two main advantages for this group of workers, the first being the benefits offered which could help them to avoid the hated Poor Law, and especially the Workhouse. The North Brewham Society was "formed for the Purpose of Assisting each other in cases of Sickness and Infirmary" and in return for weekly contributions,

"If any member shall be with sickness, lameness, blindness or any other ailment, so as to render him incapable of working or of following his trade or occupation ... he shall be paid five shillings per week for the space of two months and three shillings per week after ..."

The cost of medical attention was also to be met out of the society's funds.

The Henstridge Friendly Society stated,

"We, the members of this society, taking into consideration the many casualties incident to human nature, have thought fit and convenient to provide for the comfortable relief of each other in time of distress."

In addition to paying six shillings for 15 weeks, this society paid a pension of three shillings per week to any member over the age of seventy years.²

It was noted with great approval in one local newspaper that the Milborne Port United Friends provided "a fund for sickness and death, together with medical and surgical attendance."³ The sums expended by the societies could be a significant drain on their assets, for example, in 1854 the Queen Camel and District Friendly Society paid £35.8s. to sick members and £49.7s. on deaths and in 1867 £88.11s.6d. to thirty five sick members.⁴ At a time when a pauper's funeral was regarded by many as a disgrace, the death benefits of a friendly society were well-received and the funeral became a ceremony in itself.

"Mr. W. Vicker, a useful and respectable inhabitant of the town, having,

after a protracted and severe illness, sunk under the weight of his infirmities, his remains were on this day consigned to "that bourne from whence no traveller returns" and he being a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, in the Manchester Unity ... they resolved to pay their last tribute of respect to his memory, and to accompany his remains to their last resting place in public procession, attired in deep mourning, wearing black sashes and gloves, and aprons trimmed with black ..."⁵

In addition the great attraction of a Dividing Society was that it could provide a welcome sum of money from time to time, for example, when the Charlton Horethorne Friendly Society divided in 1850 members received nearly £7 each.⁶

The second advantage of the friendly societies was the conviviality which they offered. The early societies tended to meet in inns and throughout the century some 18 out of the 35 societies in the Wincanton Union met in inns and hotels. In fact it was a requirement of membership that some money was spent in the inn at each meeting, for example, both the North Brewham and Henstridge Friendly Societies required members to spend two pence at each weekly meeting. It was only later in the century when alcohol was increasingly seen by some as a waste of money and cause of poverty that other locations such as schoolrooms were favoured. [see column (d)]

Although the warmth and comradeship of the weekly meetings mattered a great deal, the climax of the year was the annual feast day, which was usually around Whit Monday. In 1863 one newspaper noted in relation to Wincanton that Whit Monday

"is always held as a general holiday both for rich and poor of the town – a day held sacred by the peasants of the neighbourhood as that on which they may feast on the good things of life."

On this occasion the 300 or so guests consumed 300 pounds of meat, 450 pounds of baked potatoes and 200 pounds of plum pudding.⁷

This was the day on which the members of the societies demonstrated their unity and pride of association. Through the years the local press gives many accounts of the activities of the day: usually it was a parade to Church, followed by dinner and then dances, sports and games.

"On Monday last, the members of the Old Bell Friendly Society, of which most of the principal gentry are honorary members, paraded the town with flags and banners, preceded by a good band of music ...

The party having made the circuit of the town, proceeded to the Church. The members afterwards dined together at the Blue Ball Inn" (Bruton, June 1843).

In Queen Camel in 1854 the day started with "some merry peals from the church bells," followed by Church, dinner, toasts, songs and music until the society processed the district from 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. In Milborne Port the society always processed to Church at 10 a.m. with a Brass Band. In Templecombe the vicar who was to preach was, "taken to the church in state for the service," and the Henstridge Society had strict rules for the end of the feast day:

"The Band at the Annual Meeting to beat off with the "retire march" through Henstridge for the observance of order precisely at 11 o'clock in the Evening."

Henstridge obviously took the day very seriously for in 1854 it was reported,

"The inhabitants seemed to vie with each other in decorating their houses and entrances with arches etc. composed of boughs, evergreens, flowers, flags, banners etc."⁸

A prized possession for each friendly society was its banner. When, in 1868, the Wincanton Friendly Society spent £35 on a new banner it was described as follows:

"9ft by 10, the ground is green silk, the facing silver and gold and red silk; on one side are the emblems of good will and industry (two labouring men grasping hands), whilst a beehive is a prominent feature. The motto on this side is the old motto of the society "In God we trust." On the reverse side the angel of mercy distributes her beneficences, the good Samaritan is seen pouring oil and wine into the wounds of the suffering traveller, and the motto is "Go thou and do likewise."⁹

The East Somerset Friendly Societies seem to have been well-supported by the principal inhabitants of the towns and the local gentry in the rural areas. For them the societies had a number of advantages, not the least of which was the concept of self-help. On the second anniversary of the Milborne Port Friendly Society Sir William Medlycott commented that he

"would continue to support the society as long as they were united in endeavouring to promote their own welfare."

The following year he added,

"it gives me pleasure to see around me the members of an institution, which has for its object the relief of the sick, the old, and the infirm."¹⁰

In addition, the rules of the society made it clear that certain types of behaviour were unacceptable and this moral aspect

appealed to the gentry. The North Brewham Friendly Society refused to grant any benefit if the cause of the problem derived:

“from resistance to the laws, from fighting, the venereal disease or any species thereof, wrestling, stage playing, gambling or the like ... And for the discouragement of profaneness and immorality and the preservation of good manners in the Society ... if any member shall during the hours of meeting swear, curse, lay or offer to lay any wager, come into the Society Room disguised, in liquor, use any abusive or uncivil language ... shall forfeit threepence.”

Involvement in fighting would lead to a fine of 2s.6d.¹¹

As column (f) shows there were never great numbers in each society. The national societies such as the Oddfellows attracted few members because of their high subscriptions which placed them beyond most agricultural labourers, whereas the Ancient Order of Foresters, which charged lower rates, did much better. The small numbers and the economic plight of many labourers help to explain why some societies were inherently unstable.¹² The exact relationship between the friendly societies and the Poor Law is difficult to ascertain because of the limited evidence available. Only one Return was made to Parliament from the Wincanton Union and this showed that in 1881 there were 29 paupers in the Workhouse who had ceased to be members of societies; 20 had failed to maintain their contributions and for 9 the society had broken up. Overall, the value of friendly societies was well recognised by contemporaries.

“It seems impossible to deny that the accumulation by bodies composed largely, and in many cases exclusively of working men, and the administration by them, for their own benefit, of the large sums ... shows a very remarkable growth of thrift and forethought amongst our working masses.”¹³

1. M. D. Fuller, *West Country Friendly Societies*, (1964).
2. Somerset Record Office, Q/R Friendly Society Rules and Regulations.
3. *Western Flying Post*, 15 January 1848, (hereafter, *W.F.P.*).
4. *W.F.P.*, 13 June 1854; S. R. O. D/P q.ca. 23/8 Queen Camel District Friendly Society Statement of the 51st Annual Account.
5. *W.F.P.* 20 January 1844.
6. *W.F.P.*, 25 June 1850.
7. *W.F.P.*, 2 June 1863.
8. *W.F.P.*, 3 June 1843, 13 June 1854, 17 May 1845; Fuller, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 and 111; *W.F.P.*, 13 June 1854.
9. *W.F.P.*, 12 June 1868. One flag of the Wincanton Friendly Society is now on display in the Wincanton Museum.
10. *W.F.P.*, 17 May 1845, 6 June 1846.
11. S.R.O., Q/R Friendly Society Rules and Regulations: North Brewham Society.
12. 4th Report of the Royal Commission on the Friendly and Benefit Societies, 1874, Parliamentary Papers 1874 XXIII pt. 2, p. 441 and 442.
13. J. M. Ludlow and Lloyd Jones, *The Progress of the Working Class, 1832-1867* (1867), p. 125.

APPENDIX

Friendly Societies in the Wincanton Union

<i>Name</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Years when active</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>	<i>Nature</i>	<i>Max. No. of members, with Year</i>
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
Ansford, F. S.		1878-1900			44 1879
Blue Ball F. S., Bruton	1818 (?)	1858-1900	Blue Ball	Dividing 8 years	167 1875
Old Bull F. S., Bruton	1761(?)	to 1869	Old Bull		19 1846
Sun Inn F. S., Bruton		c. 1828	Sun Inn		
Castle Cary F. Benefit Society	1861	1861-1891	National School	Dividing	121 1870
Castle Cary United Britons	1833	1833-1894	Britannia Inn to 1869, then Town Hall	Dividing 7 years	212 1878
Charlton Horethorne F.S.	1840 (?)	c. 1850	Kings Arms	Dividing 10 years	
Corton Denham F.S.	1867	1867-1873			88 1873
Henstridge F.S.	1818	1818-1900	New Inn and Fountain Inn		159 1850
Henstridge F.S.	1853	1853-1895	Ash Inn	Dividing 10 years	104 1887
Horsington Provident and F.S.		1874-1896			105 1874
Lovington F.S.	1836 (?)	c. 1836			
Milborne Port F.S.	1843	1843-1872	Town Hall	Dividing 10 years (?)	91 1850
Milborne Port United F.S.		c. 1848	Temperance Hotel		
North Brewham F.S.	1828	c. 1828	Bull Inn		
North Brewham F.S.	1853	1853-1900	Red Lion		130 1879
North Cadbury and Compton United F.S.	1890	1890-1895			58 1891
North Cadbury Benefit Society	1855	1855-1857	Catash Inn		
North Cadbury F.S.	1836 (?)	1837-1875		Dividing	80 1875
North Cheriton F.S.	1841	Dissolved 1870			64 1857
Penselwood Benefit S.	1847	1847-1891	Hunter's Lodge Inn		

<i>Name</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Years when active</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>	<i>Nature</i>	<i>Max. No. of members, with Year</i>
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
Queen Camel and District F.S.	1836	1836-1893	Mildmay Arms to 1870s, then Schoolroom	Dividing 10 years	280 1864
Shepton Montague F.S.	1853	1853-1891	Schoolroom	Dividing 10 years	250 1858
Shepton Montague F.S.	1881-1890		Schoolroom		
Templecombe Benefit S.	1835	1835-1867	Room over Ironmonger's Shop		
Wincanton United F.S.	pre 1820	to 1899	National Schoolroom	Dividing 10 years	205 1869
Yarlington F.S.	1862	1862-1889	Stag's Head	Dividing	85 1880
Ancient Order of Foresters "Sons of Briton"	1863	1863-1900	Blue Ball, Bruton		135 1887
"Court of True Britons" 1863		1863-1900	Britannia Inn, Castle Cary		147 1887
"Amity Court"	1865	1865-1891	Milborne Port		116 1878
"Court Stavordale Priory"	1866	1866-1900	Dolphin Hotel to 1867, next National Schoolroom and then Foresters' Hall, Wincanton		412 1899
Manchester Unity of Oddfellows Loyal St. George Lodge"		c. 1846	George Inn, Castle Cary		30 1846
Loyal Camelot Lodge"		c. 1899	Queen Camel		
"Loyal Brue Lodge"	1843	1843-1845	Old Bull, Bruton		50 1845
"Loyal Kale Lodge"		c. 1850	Wincanton		

- (a) The name given here is the one generally used although there were often variations.
- (b) Some of the societies may be older than the date given; for example, the Milborne Port Friendly Society may well have been founded in April 1753 and then re-established in December 1843.
- (c) This column covers the years where a reference has been discovered. Some of the societies may well have existed for a number of years before the first date given, but secrecy meant that few written records were kept. In addition, the survey covers the nineteenth century and some societies continued into the twentieth century; for example, the Ansford Friendly Society lasted until about 1924, the Blue Ball Friendly Society in Bruton was still in existence in 1909, and the Henstridge Friendly Society was finally dissolved in 1944.
- (f) This column shows maximum numbers and the year, but the records are very incomplete because secrecy ensured that many societies did not disclose their numbers, especially early in the century.

P.W. RANDELL

35. THE LEPER'S HOSPITAL AT BATH. Whilst researching the history of St. Mary Magdalen's Hospital, Bath, I came across the Leper's Hospital, by the Hot Baths (also called the Poor Folk's House). Several historians state that this Hospital was founded by John de Feckenham in 1576, owned by the Magdalen Hospital and demolished in 1804. Further research however, has shown that only the first fact is correct. There has never been any real evidence that the Hospital was owned by the Magdalen Hospital. The claim of ownership seems to have come from three sources: the demolition of Magdalen Hospital property near the Cross Baths, the origin of the Magdalen Hospital as a leper hospital and lack of apparent means of support for the Leper Hospital.

The 1820 Charity Commissioner's enquiry for the Magdalen Hospital revealed that in about 1804 the City Corporation 'pulled down an old ruinous tenement or dwelling house, near the Cross Bath' for which they paid £200 to Dr. Roberts the Master of the Magdalen Hospital.¹ This fact was repeated later by the Rev. Shaw when discussing possible links between the Magdalen Hospital and the Cross Baths² and seems to have been then interpreted by James as indicating that the Magdalen Hospital owned the Leper Hospital.³ The Bath City Corporation's archives show that it decided to purchase a property from the master of the Magdalen Hospital on 11 July 1804 [*Minutes*], paid £200 for it on 21 November 1804 [*Accounts*] and the property purchased was to the south of the Hot Baths [*Deed, 28 Nov. 1804*], some distance from the Leper Hospital.⁴

The main evidence for the existence of the Leper Hospital is as follows:

In 1576 the Chamberlain's accounts record as expenditure: 'delyvered to Mr. Fekenam, late Abbott of Westminster,⁵ three tonnes of timber and x foote to builde the howse for the poore by the whote bathe xxxiij.s.iiijd, to hym more iiij C. of Lathes at x.d. the C. iijs.iiijd.' The Leper Bath is assumed to have been created either at the same time or soon afterwards, with the accounts mentioning it probably in 1584 and certainly by 1593.³

The Bath Corporation's 1641 survey⁴ of its property does not include the Leper Hospital, but neither does it include the Leper or Hot Baths, though the City owned these. The Hospital is mentioned in the description of another property (out of whose land it seems to be carved) as an adjoining 'house used for lodginge of poore people'.

In 1691 Guidott's illustration of the Hot Baths includes a detailed

plan of the Leper Bath and the adjacent Hospital.⁶ This shows several people in beds in the Hospital, some covered by sheets, some in straw. His plan also shows that the line of the footpath to Nowhere Lane, has a kink around the Leper Bath, suggesting that the Corporation surrendered sufficient land from the corner of its adjacent plot to both accommodate the Leper Hospital and the footpath diverted by the Lepers Bath. This in turn suggests that the Leper Bath was built as part of the building of the Leper Hospital and dates from about 1576.

The 1743 *Enquiry into Charities*⁴ does not mention the Leper Hospital, though all the other Hospitals are involved in the enquiry. In particular it is not mentioned during the enquiry into the Magdalen Hospital.

In 1743 John Wood clearly links the Leper's Hospital and Bath: the Bath was created for the "lame and diseased poor People" expelled from the Hot and Cross Baths, after Dr. Turner's 1562 writings. It was "accommodated with a small Room for the bathers to strip and dress themselves in, which in Process of Time was called the *Leper's Hospital*. The Leper Hospital is a Building of eight feet six inches in Front, to the East, on the Ground Floor, fourteen Feet in Front above, and thirteen Feet in Depth; but yet it is furnished with seven Beds, for the most miserable of Objects, who fly to *Bath* for Relief from the hot Waters; This Hovel stand at the Corner of *Nowhere Lane*; and is so near the *Leper's Bath*, that the Poor are under little or no Difficulty of stepping from one Place to the other."⁷ The guides of this period refer to both the Leper Bath and Hospital.

The last quarterly payment to the Leper Hospital recorded in the Chamberlain's accounts occurs on the 28 December 1773. The Corporation's archives unfortunately contain no document detailing the acquisition of the Leper Hospital.

The Chamberlain's accounts show that the Hot Baths were redeveloped between September 1773 to November 1774. This involved demolishing the old bath and turning it into a tank for the new bath to the east of it. A new road went over the site of the old Hot Bath, and the Leper's Bath must have been demolished at the same time. Maps of the time also show the abolition of Nowhere Lane. Hetling House was purchased to turn into the pump room for the Hot Bath. Ten feet away would have been the Leper Hospital, which now had no function with the loss of the leper bath. It would have been seen as undesirable for the new gentrified area.

An indenture dated April 1774 for the property described above in the 1641 survey, also refers to the adjoining "House used for lodging of poor people that frequent the Lepers Bath".⁸ This deed is for the surrender of the property to the city council, presumably in order for it to be demolished and was probably written some time before it is dated. This property last appears in the rate books for May 1773, but not in that of August⁴, suggesting it was either empty or demolished by this time. Guide books after this time do not refer to either the Leper Baths or Hospital. For example, Cruttwell's 1777 *New Bath Guide* discusses the new Hot Bath and the new Pump Room (in Hetling House), but does not mention the Leper Hospital.

In 1791 Collinson states "Adjoining to the Hot bath, ... *was the Leper's Bath* ... and close to it *was* a small hospital, called the *Lazar's Hospital*, being dedicated to St. Lazarus, and erected for the use of leprous patients about AD1138 by Robert the first Bishop of Bath and Wells"⁹ [there is no evidence for the 1138 founding of a Leper Hospital].

A map showing the planned redevelopment of streets around the Hot Baths in 1804⁴ shows no land or building identifiable as the Leper Hospital.

The evidence from the above is that the house was a two storey building, on the corner of Nowhere Lane, which was built on a site probably cut out from land owned by the City. It and the Leper's Bath were probably built as a planned unit. It was immediately adjacent to and to the south of the Hot Bath Pump Room (which is still standing on the corner of Hetling Court). The Leper Hospital was almost certainly not a recognised charity. It was demolished in 1774 at the time that the Hot Baths were redeveloped and the Leper's Bath demolished.

Leper houses were a feature of medieval England. Most were founded by 1300, and the largest number (56) were founded between 1250 and 1300.¹⁰ The waters of Bath were always seen as a cure for leprosy with the legend that its founder Bladud was cured of leprosy by its waters.⁷ One must assume that in Bath lepers were always allowed to enter the city to bathe in the Cross or Hot Baths. They probably stayed at the Magdalen Hospital.

Nationally there was a great disappearance of leprosy after 1300. However in the south-west leprosy seems to have continued in places as several new houses were opened around Exeter in about 1530.¹⁰ It is generally accepted that leprosy died out in England over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though some skin conditions were being called leprosy much later than this.

Leland, describing Bath in 1540, states that the Cross Bath was "much frequented of People diseased with Lepre, Pokkes, Scabbes, and great Aches,"¹¹ though later writers say the Hot Baths were also used by lepers. Dr. Turner¹² in 1562 states that the waters of Bath can cure 'lepre' but bemoaned the mixing of bathers especially those with sores and leprosy with other bathers. It is felt that this helped provide the impetus for the Leper's Bath, which was formed from the outflow of the Hot Bath.

The *Register of Bath*, published in 1694¹³ contains over a hundred cases of cures, and lists several with 'leprosy', for example:

Case 8: 'Orlando Pain long troubled with a filthy *Leprosy*, sent to the Bath, and maintained there by Thomas Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, all the Winter 1690, in Fourteen Weeks use of the *Hot* and *Lepers* Bath, received *Cure*.'

Case 33: 'Elizabeth Smith, a *Leper*, with skin covered over with Scales, received *Benefit* by the same Bath, and went away with a *clean* Skin 1693.'

Collinson⁹ states that leprosy was a complaint for which the Bath Waters were useful: he says that of 196 patients treated from 1776 to 1782, 119 were cleansed and 51 were much better. The cases cited above suggest that these 'lepers' were actually suffering from other skin conditions such as psoriasis or eczema.

There is some evidence to show how the residents of the Leper Hospital were maintained. Thus, a description of Bath in 1725 states:

'There is also a Bath for Lepers, or *Lazars*, into which none goes, but such as the Physicians suppose to have a Leprosy, or something resembling it ... the diseased Persons, who are bathed in it, being poor, have a small allowance for their support from the Town, but are chiefly relieved by the generous contribution of the Company every Season. This Bath, the Hospital, and the Company, draw Beggars hither in such Multitudes, partly for Cure and partly for relief, that it is become a Proverb here: The *Beggars* of Bath, as a Place famous above others for them.¹⁴

The clear context of the Leper's Bath means that this is referring to the Leper Hospital and not Bellott's Hospital. The City Chamberlain's accounts show frequent payments to the Leper's Bath, but do not name the Leper Hospital or House for the Poor, apart from the 1576 contribution to Mr. Fekenam and the payment for a key 'for the poorefolkes house at the bathside' in 1589. The evidence, however, is that other references to the Leper's Bath in the accounts include references to the Leper Hospital, and that the Hospital is included within the term *Leper Bath* in the accounts. For example:

There is a payment in 1599 for the 'setting up of 2 rafters and eaves board at the lepers bath', though the Savile map of 1600¹⁵ shows the bath unroofed. The Leper Hospital was

roofed. Payment is made for 'straw for poore to lie on at the Leopards Bath' in 1665. By 1690 this is a regular payment. No other bath receives payments for straw or any other materials for the bathers. The Leper Hospital used straw for the bedding of the residents, as shown by Guidott in his 1691 illustration. Similarly later Alderman Bush is paid £1.1.3 'for blankets for the poor people at the Lepers Bath' (1723/3), and £3.6.1 'for things for the poor at yr Leper's Bath' (1736/7).

Later on there are several payments (1736/7, 1738/9 and 1748) of funeral expenses for people from 'the Lepers bath', but no such from any other bath, including the Hot Bath which was the 'poor folks bath'. The expenses make more sense if the payments are for people who died at the Leper Hospital, the references in 1738/9 illustrating this particularly well: £1.0.0 is received 'of Mrs. Rice being money that was left in her hands by a poor person that died at the leper's bath'; 5s paid 'the nurse at the Lepper's bath for burying a woman and other expenses'; and 6s paid to 'Thomas Caines the Church dues for burying a body from the Lepper's hospital'. These refer to the same burial, as the expenses of a simple 'for burying of a person from the Leper's bath' is normally about 16s.

In 1720 Lady Moyer made a gift which was accepted by the Corporation 'the interest to be annually applied for the use of the poor resorting to Billet's Hospital in this city'. From 1725/6 this interest of £30 annually is labelled 'for the use of the poor at Billet's Hospital and the Leper's Bath' and this becomes the formula normally used. From 1729 there is a series of frequent payments to the Leper Baths, which become regular with time, being clarified in December 1747 as: 'Ann Ball for the lepers £2.10.0, for her quarter's salary 12s.6d.' This becomes combined as a quarterly payment of £3.2.6 that during 1769 and 1770 is sometimes stated to be for 'the Leper's Hospital' and sometimes for 'the Leper's Bath'. If the Leper Bath had a nurse it was the only one to do so. The only other nurse paid by the chamberlain during this period was the nurse of Bellott's Hospital. In addition from 1770 & 1772 there is a payment of £10 as 'Mrs. Court's legacy to the Leper's Hospital'.

The evidence is that the Corporation made occasional payments to support the Leper Hospital, and that these increased after 1720 when they were placed in charge of an annuity of £30 that was spent on the poor of the Bellott's and

Leper Hospitals. This culminated in the payment of £10 annually for the maintenance of the Lepers (approximately 6½d. daily for a seven-bed hospital) and £2.10s. annually for a Nurse, which was a salary comparable to that of the nurse at the Bellott's. Presumably the nurse lived at the Leper Hospital living on the upper floor, whilst the poor lived on the ground floor, if Guidott's drawing is to be taken literally. As Thomas Cox states, the poor must have also begged for enough money to live.

The link of the Bellott's and Leper Hospital through the City's beneficence and Lady Moyer's bequest, and the use of the term 'Leper's Bath' for the Leper Hospital probably explains the note by Warner in 1801: 'The ancient Leper's Bath ... seems to have been merged in Bellott's Hospital, since a room in that building is now appropriated to the use of patients afflicted with the horrible disorder of leprosy'.¹⁶ The Bellott's initially excluded Lepers³ and the City seems to have appropriated a room for lepers after the Leper Hospital was demolished, but unfortunately the records of the Bellott's are poor and do not confirm Wood's statement that a room was allocated for lepers by 1801.

Through all this research there has been no unequivocal evidence for who owned the Leper Hospital. It is however probable that it had the same status as the Lepers Bath: on land owned by the Corporation but built by charitable gifts. The Corporation contributed at times to both and treated both as the same institution. The inmates though were mainly funded by the charity of visitors through begging. We are unlikely to ever have the evidence to confirm this but it seems the most probable explanation.

1. *Sixth Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry concerning certain Charities in England and Wales*. (British Parliamentary Paper 1822 [12] IX I p. 557).
2. Rev. W. Stokes Shaw: 'Notes on the Chapel and Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen, Bath'. *Proceedings of the Bath Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club* 1870-2 (2/1), 99-110.
3. P. R. James *The Baths of Bath in the Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Centuries* (1938).
4. At the Bath Council Archive Office.
5. For more details of John de Feckenham, see his details in *D.N.B.*
6. Thomae Guidotti: *De Thermis Britannicus* (1691).
7. J. Wood *An Essay towards a Description of the City of Bath*. (First ed. Bath: W. Frederick, 1743); also on pages 200 & 306 of Second ed. 1749, reprinted 1969.
8. Bath City Archives: Furman Bundle 24.
9. Rev. J. Collinson *The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset*. Emphases by underlining are added.
10. R. M. Clay: *The Mediæval Hospitals of England* (1909).

11. E. H. Bates 'Leland in Somersetshire; 1540-42', *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, vol. 33, 68 (1887).
12. William Turner *A book of the Natures and properties as well of the Bath in England ...* Cologne (1562).
13. Thomas Guidott *The Register of Bath ... containing an account of cures ...* (1694).
14. Thomas Cox: *Magna Britannia and Hibernia, antiqua & nova*, in 6 volumes, (1720-31); Somerset Section 731.
15. J. Manco 'Henry Savile's map of Bath', *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, Vol. 136, pp. 127-39 (1992).
16. Rev. R. Warner, *A Modern History of Bath*, p. 289, (1801).

P.K. CARPENTER

36. DATING A SURVEY OF BRIDPORT TOWN CENTRE. In the archives of the Bridport Museum there is a survey which shows the T-junction formed by West, East and South Streets in the centre of the town. For each building the frontage is given in feet and the main resident is named, except for the inns where only the name of the inn is provided. Unfortunately the date of the survey is not given but Downes Street (built 1795) is shown and the Methodist Chapel (built 1838) is not shown, so the survey must have been done at some time in the 43 years between these dates. An attempt has been made to reduce this time by comparing the names on the survey with the relevant entries in the Churchwardens Ratebooks over a six year period. It is known that the rate collectors followed the same route through the town each year so that by comparing sections of the rating lists with the survey it is possible to find the year or years giving the best fit. This has led to a reduction of the uncertainty to a period between 14 Aug 1823 and 3 Feb 1825, with 1824 being the most likely year. A detailed explanation follows.

The survey is divided conveniently into three parts.

- 1 The north side of West and East Streets (23 names)
- 2 The south side of East Street and the east side of South Street (17 names)
- 3 The west side of South Street and the south side of West Street (9 names)

If the names on the survey are listed sequentially they follow the direction taken by the rate collectors, which also corresponds with the order of names in the rating lists.

Preliminary comparisons suggested that the most likely year lay between 1821 and 1827, there being unfortunately no list

for 1824. An analysis is given in Table 1, which shows that the Aug 1823 rating list has the highest number of names corresponding to the survey at 42 (86% agreement), with the Feb 1825 list only two names behind at 40 (82% agreement). Thus the survey appears to have been carried out between the rating lists of 14 Aug 1823 and 3 Feb 1825, a 16 month period. Since the year 1824 occupies 12 of these months it seems likely that the survey occurred in that year, but this can only be verified if further information comes to light.

Table 1. Corresponding names in rating lists and survey

Rate collection date	Sep 1821	Jul 1822	Aug 1823	Feb 1825	Sep 1826	Oct 1827	Number of names in survey
Parts of 1	12	15	18	19	17	16	23
survey 2	8	12	15	13	11	10	17
3	5	7	9	8	6	6	9
Totals	25	34	42	40	34	32	49
Percentages	51	69	86	82	69	65	

To obtain the percentages each figure in the *Totals* row has been compared with 49, the total number of names in the survey. The general trend is for the totals to fall away either side of 1823 and 1825.

In order to illustrate the method used the survey is compared with the relevant sections of the 1823 rating list in Table 2. The names of innkeepers in the rating lists agree with those in Pigot's 1823/4 Directory with one exception, the New Inn, which has a landlady, Elizabeth Battiscombe, in the directory.

Table 2. Comparison of survey with the 1823 rating list

Survey part 1	1823 rating list	Notes
T. P. Risdon	T. P. Risdon	
Brown	Geo. Darby	
Slyfield Thetcher	John Slyfield	
Jno. Denziloe	John Denziloe	
Jno. Hadden	Thos. Colfox	
Bazaar		<i>A shop, perhaps?</i>
Walker	Geo. Walker	<i>End of rating list</i>
Llewellyn	Chas. Llewellyn	<i>Start of rating list</i>
G. C. Chick	G. C. Chick	
J. Bennett	Jos. Bennett	

J. & S. Bennett
Dr. G. L. Roberts
J. V. Selwood

Wm. Stephens
Stephens
Bank
Langfield
R. Stevens
M. Fowler
Woodward
Lovelace

Dove
R. Turner
Beale
Cleak

G. L. Roberts
John Selwood
6 names
Wm. Stephens
Wm. Stephens & Son
Saml. Gundry
Jno. Langfield
Raymond Stephens
Wm. Tucker
Jas. Woodward
Robt. Lovelace

Downes Street

*13 foot gap
Innkeeper*

Jos. Sprake
Robt. Turner
Wm. Beale
Jno. Cleak

18 out of 23 names agree with part 1 of the survey

Survey part 2

Bull Inn
Thackall

Brown
Ford
Hine
Dally
Selwood
Edwards
Golding
Craze
Denziloe Ellis

Cawley
Restarrick
Greyhound Inn
Squire
Pring
Haddon
Robinson
Cross Keys

1823 rating list *Notes*

Thos. Tucker *Innkeeper*

Wm. Thackall
Robt. Knight
John Thomas
Thomas Brown
Thos. Russell
Geo. Hine
Widow Dally
Abm. Sellwood
Thos. Edwards
Geo. Golding
Richard Crase
Mary Ellis
Thomas French
Fanny Densiloe

Jas. Cawley
Wm. Restarrick
Hy. Saunders

Innkeeper

No name in rating list

—
Sarah Pring
John Haddon
Simon D. Robinson
Thos. Chambers *Innkeeper*

15 out of 17 names agree with part 2 of the survey.

Survey part 3

Swan
Wm. Chick
Andrews
Joyce

1823 rating list *Notes*

Martha Rollins *Innkeeper*
Wm. Chick
John Andrews
Geo. Joice

Gully	Jos. Gully	
George Inn	John Newell	<i>Innkeeper</i>
Warr	Wm. Warr	
Carter	Chas. Carter	
Bonner	Geo. Bonner	
Roberts	Robt. Roberts	
Hallett	John Hallett	
New Inn	Jas. Edwards	<i>Innkeeper, directory gives</i> <i>Eliz. Battiscombe</i>

9 out of 9 names agree with part 3 of the survey.

J. SEYMOUR

37. WEASEL WORDS. Anyone interested in the way vocabulary evolves would do well to consider *weasel*. Not only does this word still prosper in its basic sense as a noun, but it has quite recently produced offshoots along the lines of *to weasel*, as in 'to weasel out of one's obligations'. And then there is the well-known expression *weasel word*, which was first recorded in the USA in 1900, and means 'an equivocal or ambiguous word that takes away the force or meaning of a concept being expressed'. If the connection between this expression and its sense seems obscure, the commentary given by Colonel Roosevelt in 1916 will prove helpful, for, after accusing President Wilson of using 'weaselwords', he explained that a weasel 'would suck all the meat out of an egg and leave it an empty shell'.¹

What strikes one again and again about this sort of figurative usage is that the weasel is inextricably associated with guile and furtiveness. Indeed, there are many who feel there is something uncanny about the animal. The aim of this article is therefore to go beyond weasel words as defined above, and to consider words *for* the weasel and sayings about it in an attempt to show how its reputation is rooted in tradition.

In this, our best source of information will be relevant works on dialect, and of these the most recent is the *Atlas Linguarum Europae* (henceforth *ALE*), published over more than a decade from 1975 to 1990.² Given that dialects are generally on the wane, the farther back we go in time, the more numerous and diverse we can expect the words for a particular concept to be. Thus where *ALE* gives variants of *weasel* and *vairy* as relevant names for *Mustela nivalis* in the southern counties of England,³ the *Survey of English Dialects* (henceforth *SED*), which goes back three decades and more,⁴ gives not only *weasel* and *vairy*,

but also *kine*, *puttice*, *white-neck*, *white-throat*, or variants thereof.⁵ Unfortunately, Joseph Wright's monumental *English Dialect Dictionary* (henceforth *EDD*), which was published nearly ten decades ago, at the turn of the century,⁶ has never been reworked as a thesaurus, and consequently, as is the way with dictionaries, it proceeds from word to concept rather than, thesaurus-wise, from concept to word. This means that unless we read its six volumes from A to Z, we cannot know precisely what and how many words for the weasel, or any concept, it contains. The most we can hope for is, while browsing, to light upon a relevant entry.

One such is Dorset *beal*, 'a small kind of weasel'. This is of particular interest, since it is one of the fairly numerous items that are presumably unique to *EDD*, having been submitted by correspondents rather than, like most of the other words in the dictionary, extracted from already published material. The correspondent in this instance was one C. K. Paul, and his/her citation is as follows: 'One of them guinea-pigs has been bitten by a beal.' Paul continues: 'Beal is certainly the recognized word in the valley of the Stour – I think also in "the Vale". To make sure of "beal" being correct I applied to one of the ancients, whose opinion is as follows: "There is three sorts: weazel, stoat, and beal, but all belong to the same spicey" [species].'

Now it might seem that, in pinpointing this little-known Dorset word *beal*, we have proceeded from the general to the particular and painted ourselves into a very obscure provincial corner. Nothing could be further from the truth. In his etymological note to *beal* Wright gives a hint of the word's wider connections. He links it with the Old French antecedents of *belle*, the feminine form of *beau*, 'beautiful', and adduces French *belette*, formerly *bellette*, 'weasel'. He goes on to give comparable French and Danish dialect words for the animal, all of which mean 'pretty', along with a Bavarian form meaning 'pretty little creature'.⁷ Our word thus turns out to be by no means unique. Even the Dorset informant's view that there are three 'sorts' belonging to the same 'spicey', namely weasel, stoat and beal, is very typical of folk taxonomy.⁸

From all this we see that it is important not only to view dialect words in their wider, if possible transnational, context, but also to consider what sort of thinking gave rise in the first

place to the choice of one word rather than another for a particular referent. A linguist would say we need to consider how words are *motivated*. In fact, linguists and folklorists have long been particularly interested in words for the weasel, since many are noa names, that is they are motivated by taboo, by a deeply rooted urge not to name directly or otherwise get involved with anything felt to be sacred or uncanny. Seen thus, to call the weasel 'pretty' or 'beautiful' is not merely to refer to its obvious aesthetic appeal, but to avoid mentioning its real name, whatever that may be, for fear of invoking its presence. The true names of many other creatures were once subject to a similar ban, leading to comparable circumlocutions. Thus our word *bear* originally meant simply 'brown one', and in Russian and older Welsh that animal is called 'honey-eater' or the like.⁹ Noa terms are of course not confined to animals. Consider for instance why there are so many alternative names for the Devil, or why the fairies are appeasingly referred to as 'the good people'.

If we were to collect still current dialect names for the weasel and plot them on a map of Europe, we would be able to establish patterns like the one hinted at by Wright, when he saw *beal* as just one member of a 'family' of names linked by the basic meaning 'pretty, beautiful'. Moreover, if we were to place this information in the context of prehistoric and subsequent name-giving practices, we would be able to relate each 'family' of names, such as the one signifying 'pretty, beautiful', to particular attitudes in particular periods, much as an archaeologist might assign objects he had discovered to the relevant periods of prehistory with their characteristic attitudes that helped shape the objects. This is precisely the sort of thing *ALE* sets out to do. Having collected current names for, say, the weasel over much of Europe and plotted them on maps, which of course show up 'families' of names where these exist, it provides commentaries on the families and their members, assigning each to a particular name-giving 'stratum' or 'layer'.

Thus for the weasel Mario Alinei lists and comments on 1. kinship names, such as those signifying 'godmother' and ultimately connected with totemism, the most archaic form of religion; 2. names such as the dialectal Russian *domovoi*, 'domestic genius, hobgoblin', signifying magical beings and thus testifying to the originally sacred character of the weasel;

3. names referring to ritual offerings once presumably made to the weasel in its ancient magico-religious character; 4. taboo, or noa, names; 5. names of other animals given to the weasel for whatever reason. Although I have spoken of name-giving 'layers' or 'strata', this classificatory system does not imply a strictly chronological sequence throughout. Taboo names, 4, can for instance be synchronic with those listed under 1 and 2 above, and the weasel might be named after another animal, 5, for reasons associated with taboo, 4.¹⁰

What we have here is a powerful interpretive tool, as will be clear from the following illustration. In eastern Spain there is a whole family of names for the weasel literally signifying 'bread and cheese', 'bread and milk' and the like. Alinei shows how such names are to be explained in terms of 3 above. Earlier attempts at interpretation had, for instance, suggested that they rested on a comparison of the brown-and-white colouring of the weasel with the brown and white of bread and milk respectively, even though other creatures, which were not brown and white, shared such names. In fact, all these creatures, the weasel included, feature in children's rhymes, in which they are offered such food as a bait, or as an incentive to stay away. Moreover, it is known that in Lower Brittany bread and cheese or similar offerings were at the beginning of the nineteenth century still being put out for weasels so that they would not take poultry. What happened is that, from rhymes accompanying the placing of such offerings, reference to bread and cheese or the like will have 'rubbed off' on to the animal for which the offering was intended.¹¹

We now return to Somerset and Dorset and some other southern counties of England. *Vair* alias *vairy* for 'weasel' was once widespread in the south-west, as *EDD* shows,¹² but by the time of *SED* *vairy* occurred only in one Devon location and parts of Somerset,¹³ while according to *ALE* *vairy* is restricted to west Somerset.¹⁴ What is obviously happening here is that the standard word *weasel* is taking over. To cut rather a long story short, Alinei sees *weasel* as a taboo name, signifying something like 'living being', or perhaps originally 'little being living under the earth',¹⁵ This is an interesting hypothesis about a name which has long puzzled linguists. But it is with another hypotheses of his, one that tacitly assumes the identity of *vairy* with *fairy* in the sense of 'magical being'

and thus places it in category 2 above, that I wish to take issue. The first point we have to note is that, where we meet the word *vairy* for 'weasel' in south-western dialects of English, it usually begins with a *v*, whereas in those dialects *fairy* nearly always begins with an *f*. On the face of it, then, the two words are completely separate in form as well as in meaning. Alinei, however, briefly citing J. D. A. Widdowson on the well-known lenition of *f* to *v* in the south-west, seems to take it for granted that the two words are the same.¹⁶ It is of course perfectly true, as William Barnes already points out, that in Dorset, for instance, *feed* occurs, or occurred, as *veed*, *fall* as *vall*, *foot* as *voot*, and so on. But, to quote Barnes further, 'the Dorset does not hold *V* for *F* in words that are brought in from other and not Teutonic languages. We must say *Factory*, *false*, *family*, *famine*, *figure*, in Dorset, as well as in English.' Unfortunately, though, Barnes's rule fails by his own testimony in the case of *fairy*, since in his *Glossary* this turns out to be *veäry*, which thus comes close in form to his *veäre* for 'weasel'.¹⁷ Moreover, as Udal points out, in west Dorset this *veäre* becomes *veäry*, 'and it is believed that you can never succeed in catching or shooting a weasel, because it at once changes into a fairy and becomes invisible'.¹⁸

At this point we need to look at the history of *vair* alias *vairy* for 'weasel'. It goes back through Old French *vair* to Latin *varius*, the original reference being to the variegated fur of animals such as the squirrel or the weasel. Etymologically, then, it has no connection whatever with *fairy*, which is ultimately the Latin *fāta*, 'the Fates', nor is there any sign of confusion between the two in literary English since their adoption from French over six centuries ago.¹⁹ The fact remains, however, that for countrypeople in west Dorset, but perhaps also in other parts of the south-west, *vairy*, 'weasel' was both homonymous with *fairy*, 'magical being' and came to be associated with it in meaning.

The question is: What significance are we to attach to such a folk-etymological development? On the one hand we can regard it as something adventitious, comparable, say, to the doctrine of signatures, which, because part of a plant happened to be heart-shaped, pronounced it good for the heart. Seen thus, to trace *vairy* for 'weasel' back to some primordial magical being would be like tracing fairies back to the Bible because

in Sussex the local pronunciation of the word as *farisees* coincided with that of Pharisees, thus leading countryfolk there to confuse the two ideas 'in the most hopeless manner'.²⁰ On the other hand we must not lose sight of the fact, which we invoke towards the end of this paper, that the name, or the choice of a name, for something might on occasion be invested or reinvested with an inherited sense of something magical once surrounding that thing. Thus, as Alinei himself shows, Italian *befana*, 'witch arriving on the sixth of January', derives from the Christian Latin *epiphania*, which it obviously reinvests with a pre-Christian, pagan meaning.²¹ Here the case is clear. But how can we *prove* that *vairy*, the primary meaning of which is 'weasel' even if it was here and there associated with fairies, preserves in this association a core of pre-Christian meaning? In such matters scholars tread on dangerous ground. Robert Hunt perhaps set the trend, when he argued that, because around Polperro the weasel was *fairy* [sic], in this we have 'evidence of some sort of metempsychosis amongst the elf family'.²² His observation continues to carry weight to this day, enshrined as it is in type and motif-indexes of international importance.²³

Overall, then, Alinei provides a stimulating framework for the interpretation of dialect words, but there are loose ends that need to be tied in or chopped off. For that matter, there are plenty of other loose ends elsewhere. In discussing Dorset *beal*, for instance, we did not ask why this form is apparently unique in its lack of a diminutive ending. Compare the French *belette* and its kin. And we omitted to discuss a possible connection of *beal* with Welsh *bele*, meaning 'marten'.

For other questions there are partial answers or hypotheses. For example, Martyn Wakelin fascinatingly sees *white-neck*, apparently unique to Cornwall and Devon, as modelled on Cornish *conna-gwyn*, likewise 'weasel', literally 'white neck', but regards Devon *white-throat*, with its analogue in Somerset, where it stands for 'stoat', as a separate development, repeated as far afield as Suffolk.²⁴

Then there is the question of Gilbert White's 'little reddish beast, not much bigger than a field mouse, but much longer, which they call a cane'.²⁵ *Cane* for 'weasel, as yet unrecorded for Somerset and Dorset, is well attested for Hampshire, but farther east, in Surrey, Kent and Sussex, it recurs, confusingly,

as *kine*. Thus a Sussex lady who had been giving a lesson on Pharaoh's dreams, presumably in Sunday school, 'was startled to find that all the boys supposed that the far and lean *kine* were weazels'.²⁶

Now in their form *cane* and *kine* are unlike any other words for the weasel we have yet encountered, but if we follow Alinei's example and consider meanings as well as forms, we shall perhaps wish to bear in mind taboo names that refer to the animal as a dog. Take the Welsh *gwenci*, literally 'white dog', or East Anglian *mouse-hound*.²⁷ The Latin for 'dog' is *canis*, and a 'dog-Latin' version of this might well be *cane*. My hypothesis is that this form was invented, on the basis of Latin *canis*, to serve as a euphemism or noa name. Surely a rather recent development, one might argue, even assuming it is a plausible one. But this is not the point. There would have to be a reason for 'inventing' such a name as *cane*, and we might see the reason in that those who hunt or fish or otherwise belong to closed and close-knit fraternities are particularly given to circumlocutions, basically for reasons of superstition.

For example, in a Middle English poem the hare was 'the animal no one dare name', and at least until quite recently a comparable taboo continued on the Isle of Portland, so that the local paper carefully avoided the word *rabbit* in its Portland edition, and Portlanders referred to the animal as *Wilfred* or *one of them furry things*. Farther north, on the Fifeshire coast, the ordinary word for a pig is, or was, *cauldie*, which was short for 'cauld iron', this being a propitiatory formula to be used should the ill-omened word *pig* be blurted out.²⁸

All this will perhaps make some of the above-discussed circumlocutions for the weasel more understandable. It also endorses what Alinei points out more than once: that modern dialects frequently represent an archaic, uninterrupted, oral tradition capable of taking us farther back than ancient literature can, and that even where a dialect word is not ancient, its motivation can be, thus providing us with a key to the past. All the less justification, then, for the patronizing and dismissive attitudes to dialect one so frequently meets with today. What we have left of vernacular English – and that of Somerset and Dorset is no exception – is a treasure-house scarcely as yet explored or exploited. Let us at least give it the respect it deserves.

1. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1989), 20, 54.
2. *ALE* = *Atlas Linguarum Europae* (Assen/Maastricht, 1975-90). The relevant map is no. 28 in vol. 1, second fascicule (1986), and the commentary on this is Mario Alinei, 'Belette', *Commentaires, deuxième fascicule*, vol. 1 (1986), pp. 145-218.
3. Alinei, pp. 162 and 201.
4. *SED* = *Survey of English Dialects* (Leeds, 1962-68).
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pt. 2, 438-439 (IV.5.6). Since *puttice* appears to be ultimately the French *putois*, 'polecat', I shall disregard it for present purposes.
6. *EDD* = Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary* (1898-1905; rpt. London, 1970).
7. *Ibid.*, 1, 204.
8. Cf. Alinei, p. 145.
9. Stephen Ullmann, *Words and Their Use* (London, 1951), pp. 75 ff.
10. Alinei, pp. 147 ff.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 168-171.
12. *EDD*, 6, 366.
13. *SED*, as note 5.
14. Alinei, pp. 162 and 201 and *ALE*, as note 2.
15. Alinei, p. 182.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
17. William Barnes, *A Glossary of the Dorset Dialect with a Grammar* (1886; rpt. St. Peter Port, Guernsey, 1970), pp. 8 and 114-115.
18. John Symonds Udall, *Dorsetshire Folk-lore* (1922; rpt. St. Peter Port, Guernsey, 1970), p. 237.
19. Simpson and Weiner, 19, 402 and 5, 676 and 778.
20. *EDD*, 2, 284.
21. Alinei, p. 168. Cf. Richard Beitzl, *Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart, 1974), 'Befana', p. 71 and 'Bercht', pp. 75-76.
22. Robert Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*, 3rd ed. (1881; rpt. London, 1930), p. 82. Here the information that in Cornwall moths were called *pisgies* is in my view more to the point.
23. Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, rev. ed. (Bloomington and London, 1955) 3, 42; Ernest V. Baughman, *Type and Motif-Index of the Folktales of England and North America* (The Hague, 1966), p. 205, Motif F234. 1. 14. 'Fairy in form of weasel'.
24. Martyn F. Wakelin, *Language and History in Cornwall* (Leicester, 1975), pp. 200-201.
25. Gilbert White, *The Natural History of Selborne* (1788; rpt. London, 1906), p. 40 (= Letter XV to T. Pennant, 30.3.1768). See also the note at p. 269, according to which *cane* alias *kine* refers to the smaller, female, weasel. The question of different names for male and female needs to be looked into.
26. *EDD*, 1, 504 and 3, 443; *SED*, as note 5.
27. Alinei, pp. 190-191 and 184-185; *SED*, as note 5; *EDD*, 4, 180. The latter also gives *mouse-hunt* and *mouse-hunter*, but *mouse-hound* looks like the primary form, at least in view of Dutch *muishond*, mentioned in Alinei, p. 184.
28. Iona Opie and Moira Tatem, *A Dictionary of Superstitions* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 192-193 and 307-308; Martyn F. Wakelin, *English Dialects: An Introduction*, rev. ed. (London, 1977), p. 79.

J. B. SMITH

38. THE BISHOP OF BATH'S MINT AND SILVER MINES. A mint was established at Bath following the 928 Parliament of Grately. It was granted to the bishop, then John de Villula, and his successors, in 1089, the grant being confirmed in 1097 and 1101. A Papal Bull of 1190, held at Wells Cathedral library, again confirms it.

In his study of the Bath mint Grinsell points out that the number of moneyers, and therefore the volume of coinage, was reduced following its transition from royal to episcopal hands in 1089, coinage apparently ceasing altogether by 1158¹. Andrew had noticed the tendency of a number of mints to decline in output once in episcopal hands,² and perhaps for this reason Grinsell was happy that the Papal Bull of 1190 confirming the bishop's right to a mint simply did so in case it should re-open. But this assumption is worth reconsidering in the light of documents relating to the Bishop's silver mines on Mendip, and in the light of a surviving silver ingot from the Tower of London.

A charter of 1189, some four decades after the last known products of the Bath mint, grants to the then Bishop Reginald and his successors the right to mine lead on Mendip. The Papal Bull confirms this, as does a charter of 1324. The Mendip lead ores were rich in silver, and there is no doubt that the Bishop's servants extracted this. When these mines were first worked for the church is far from clear. There are no Saxon records of silver mining on Mendip, the only indication from anywhere in the area being the word *leadgedelf*, lead-delvings, on a boundary perambulation of 882, relating to Penpark Hole, now in Clifton, Bristol. There is no mention in the Domesday Book, but it seems reasonable to suppose that mining had begun some time before the charter of 1189, and that in making grants of this sort Richard I was simply extracting money for his crusading activities by charging landowners for doing what they already did.

The letter of c.1310 which follows, shows clearly that the bishops did extract silver from their lead.³

Know, my Lord, that your workmen have found a very good lode on the Mendips, east of Priddy, and one which can be worked with no trouble, being only 5 or 6 feet below the ground. But the workmen are very often thieves, secretly separating the silver from the lead and hiding it, stopping work when they have collected so much, then decamping with it. Because this has happened frequently, your bailiffs are now taking the ore down to

your estate at Wookey, where there is a smeltery. The workmen smelt the ore there, under foremen appointed by your steward. Your steward, bailiffs and workmen believe there to be a great deal of silver in the lead, because of its whiteness and ring, and ask you to send as soon as possible an expert on whose opinion they may rely. I have seen the first pig of lead smelted there, of great size and weight, and when struck it rings almost like silver, and so I agree with the others that if it is faithfully worked the lode should prove of immense value to yourself and to the neighbourhood. If a trustworthy foreman can be obtained, it would be more efficient to smelt the ore where it is dug, because of the cost of transporting such heavy stuff (down to Wookey).

Clearly this silver needed to be marketed, and one has to ask how. There has long been a small silver ingot in the Tower of London, struck with London penny dies of 1278-79. This has hitherto been catalogued as a trial plate, for the Trial of the Pyx, and as the earliest of such plates to survive from the Royal Mint. A trial plate is a sheet of metal, until modern times of gold or silver, of as accurate a composition as possible, and struck with the dies of the coinage to be made to that particular standard. Pieces were cut off this plate at regular intervals, and random samples of the appropriate coinage judged against them. Spufford pointed out that the 1278-79 piece was in fact not a trial plate, but an ingot, whose original weight had been a mark, that is 13s.4d.⁴ Such ingots, both of gold and silver, and struck with coinage dies, are well-known from records, here and abroad. The mint of Genoa commenced production of gold ingots in 1237, and that of Venice in 1269. But so very few have survived that their place in commerce before the introduction of national gold coinage is often overlooked. England had no regular gold coinage until 1344, there being nothing larger in general use than the silver penny. When the gold noble was introduced, it was of 6s.8d., half a mark, thus showing clearly its relationship to the preceding ingots. The mark was long remembered: an inventory of 1445 at St. Cuthbert's, Wells, lists a gold ring worth 5 marks.

Taking this into account, we have to ask if the reason for the reduction in coinage output by the Bishops of Bath, was simply because they found it more economical to produce ingots. Spufford notes that coin was frequently recycled into ingots, more acceptable in trade, and this acceptability would have further motivated a silver producer to mint ingots. In this context it should be remembered that a Bishop of Bath and Wells might be an influential courtier and a figure of international standing, with a commensurate expenditure. The

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, holds a gold locket given by Bishop Reginald, 1174-91, to Queen Margaret of Sicily, probably on the marriage of William II of Sicily to the Princess Joan, daughter of Henry II.

A linguistic issue also arises here, for in late medieval English and Latin a mint was not only a place at which coins were struck, but also a place at which ingots were struck. This usage survives in place-names in the tin-mining towns of Cornwall, where "Mint Street" shows the street in which the mint for ingots stood, the purpose of such mints being to produce ingots of standard weight and purity, partly so that they could be relied upon in trade, and partly so that the correct taxes could be levied on the amounts of metal mined. The verb "to coin" was also used to describe the action of marking an ingot.

In summary, the author suggests that the episcopal mint at Bath may have survived well beyond the 1150s, but for currency ingots rather than coin, and that a significant market existed for such ingots until the introduction of regular gold coinage in the 1340s.

1. Grinsell, *The Bath Mint* (1973), 33-5.
2. Andrew, *The Numismatic Chronicle* (1901), 107-112.
3. Gough, *The Mines of Mendip* (1967), 49-50 [*My translation*].
4. Spufford, *Money and its Use in Medieval Europe* (1988), 216-7.

N. DU QUESNE BIRD

39. WITCHCRAFT IN DORSET.

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| 1527 Maturin Bensart | French physician living in Sherborne accused of necromancy & creating images of people for casting in metal | SDNQ, XVII, Pt. CXXXVIII, Sept, 1923, p. 291, citing <i>Brewers Letters and papers of King Henry VIII</i> , vol II pp. 1670-1. |
| 1560 Cecilia Lambert | Living at Gillingham Manor, accused of witchcraft. | SDNQ, II, Pt. X, pp. 62-3, citing Court Rolls of the manor of Gillingham. |
| 1564 Agnes Mondaye | Accused of bewitching Mistress Chettell so that she was 'in peril of her life'. She was apprehended and a search was ordered 'in her howse or other resorting places for all such things that may tende to wichecrafte'. | Notestein p. 385; <i>Acts Privy Council</i> , n.s., (1896), vol VII, pp. 200-201; Davies, p. 70; SDNQ, XVIII, Pt. CXLVI, Sept, 1925, p. 156. |

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| 1566 | John Walsh | A cunning man from Netherbury, confessed to witchcraft. Examined before a commission appointed by the Bishop of Exeter. Outcome unknown. | <i>The Examination of John Walsh</i> (London, 1566), reprinted in Davies, pp. 54-67. |
| 1569 | Ellen Walker | ‘Johane Ellesdon, widow, upon her othe, hathe declared before us that Ellen Walker is a wytche ... and ... James Lugbase hathe declared before us, that the said Ellen Walker did saie unto ... Johanne Elsdon that she could witche her no more’ | Roberts, p. 523, quoting the Lyme Regis records. |
| 1573 | Tregonwell family | Mention of a woman ‘comenlie taken, reputed and named ... to be a witch.’ Tregonwell family lawsuit, Milton Abbas. | <i>SDNQ</i> , XVII, Pt. CXXX, Aug, 1921, pp. 67-69, citing Star Chamber Proceedings I, 20/99, 25 June, 1581. |
| 1585 | John Meere | Examination of John Meere, a student of the Temple, accused of witchcraft against Mrs. Best in order to gain sexual favour. | <i>Cal. State Papers Dom.</i> , 1581-90, pp. 246-7. |
| 1604 | Joan Guppy | Guppy, a healer, accused of bewitching Margaret Abington, a neighbour. She was attacked and ‘blooded’. She was found innocent. | PRO. Star Chamber 8/149/24, 2 Dec & 9 April, 1604, & Exchequer, E 163/17/5, 22 July, 1606; Davies, pp. 26-32, & photocopy 633 at DCRO. |
| 1616 | Thomas Tyher | A Charminster healer who used his knowledge to gain sexual favours and advantage. | PRO, PC 2/9/163; Wiltshire R.O., Churchwardens’ Presentments, 1616-17. Davies, pp. 69-70. |
| 1638 | Mary Shephard | Accused by Jane Coward of causing her paralysis by witchcraft, and by Anne Crew that she caused the paralysis of Edward Gill. Committed to Assizes. | <i>Proc. DNHAS</i> , vol V, pp. 1-15; DCRO, D 320/X.4. |
| 1645 | | A sick man at Evershot found money under his door and was able to buy sheep and pigs, and recover his health. Witchcraft suspected. | Richard Baxter, pp. 46-7. |

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| 1655 | Alice Abram or Browning | A widow of Tolpuddle accused. Outcome unknown. | Ewen lists this case from PRO, Assi 24/1. |
| 1660 | | General order to J.Ps 'that the business concerning the witchcraft & consultation with the devil & evil spirits in Sherborne ... bee with all speede examined.' | <i>SDNQ</i> , vol 1, Pt. VII, Sept, 1889, p.225, citing Assize Records, Dorchester, 10 Sept, 1660; DCRO, PE/SH: CW. 128. |
| 1687 | Deanes
Grimmerton | Accused of bewitching Nathaniel Scorch, and for causing the death of Elizabeth Tillman. Found not guilty. | Davies, pp. 33-39; PRO, Assize 23/3 & photocopies, 173/1-5 at DCRO, <i>SDNQ</i> , vol XXVIII, Pt 278, pp. 142-146. |
| 1687 | Elizabeth Hengler | Acquitted on a charge of witchcraft | Inderwick |
| 1700 | Margaretta Way
& Anne Grantly | Accused of practising witchcraft on Frances Gallaway so that she was 'much consumed, wasted, pined, and lamed in her body'. Found not guilty. | Inderwick |
| 1804 | Susan Woodrowe | Suspected by Rev. William Ettrick, her employer, of bewitching his child, causing illness & death among his animals and bees, & destroying his garden produce. | C. Hole |
| 1840 | Betty Trayte | Accused by William Way of bewitching him and appearing in his dreams. He applied for protection. | Roberts, pp. 528-9 |
| 1884 | Sarah Smith | Accused by Tamar Humphries of overlooking her. Attacked and blooded. | Davies, p. 18. |
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- | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Baxter, Richard | <i>The Certainty of the World of Spirits</i> | London, 1691 |
| Davies G. J., (ed) | <i>Touchyng Witchcrafte and Sorcerye</i> | Dorset Record Society, 1985 |
| Ewen, C. L'Estrange | <i>Witch Hunting and Witch Trials</i> | London, 1929 |
| Hole, Christina (ed) | <i>Witchcraft at Toner's Puddle</i> | Dorset Record Society, 1964 |
| Inderwick, F.A. | <i>Side-lights on the Stuarts</i> | London, 1888.
Page references are to the second edn, 1891 |

- Notestein, Wallace *A History of Witchcraft
in England from 1558 to 1718* Oxford, 1911
- Roberts, George *The Social History of the
People of the Southern Counties
of England in past centuries* London, 1856

G. J. DAVIES

BOOK REVIEWS

Goodwin Tim, *Dorset in the Civil War, 1625-1665*, (Dorset Books, 1996, pp. 264, map & illus, £17.95). Bayley's magisterial work on the Civil War in Dorset is well known but long out of print. With that sturdy volume still on the shelf, the challenge facing any modern author is to re-interpret the documentary material, synthesise and incorporate the best of what has been published since 1910, when Bayley wrote, add substantially from the new material which has been made available since Bayley's day, and place a vigorous assessment of Dorset's role in the Civil War before the readers. A study of that magnitude and depth is a formidable undertaking, but it has been accomplished in other western counties. One immediately thinks of *Somerset* by T. G. Barnes (1961), which earned praise for its scholarship and insight, and more recently there have been admirable studies by Mark Stoye, *Loyalty & Locality* (1994) in Devon, and Anne Duffin's publication in 1996 of the gentry in Cornwall. In those cases the authors made extensive use of national archives and privately held papers, and produced texts which had important implications for the whole history of Stuart England.

Tim Goodwin has made a very brave effort to replace the now creaking text of Bayley, and he has produced a pleasant and readable text which many will enjoy. He has carefully trawled the documents available within the county, listed books which he has consulted, and compiled a very useful list of articles – mainly of local origin – directly relevant to the Civil War period. Hopefully, this publication has opened the way for a more comprehensive study which will make full use of other repositories, like the British Library, the Bodleian, and the Public Record Office, and which will investigate privately

held material which might illumine some of the allegiances and loyalties at the local level. If Tim Goodwin is the author who will attempt that, then I feel that he has already made a most convincing beginning.

G. J. D.

Lesley Abrams, *Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury: Church and Endowment Studies in Anglo-Saxon History VIII* (The Boydell Press, 1996. Pp xx + 380, 7 maps, £55.00). It seems unlikely that a more thorough analysis of the early records of the endowment of Glastonbury Abbey could ever be made and the general editor's commendation of this work as 'a milestone' in understanding the evidence of Domesday Book seems thoroughly justified. The sources for the abbey's early history are, it has been said many times, both complex and sometimes deliberately misleading, and those who have used them have often, as Dr. Dumville writes, been guilty of wilful fantasy. There may also have been fantasy in creation. No such charge could ever be made against Dr. Abrams, whose meticulous care and impartiality will, in a sense, be her own undoing in the minds of many readers who may be tempted to seek for clear answers where there are none.

Dr. Abrams first states her aim ('The Problem') and then gives a detailed description of her sources, from complete charters to the tantalising descriptive titles which are all that survive of many grants, together with references to individual gifts noted by William of Malmesbury for which no other source is available, and ending with those Glastonbury estates mentioned in Domesday Book, most still held but others somehow lost or exchanged.

There follows the meat of the book: more than 220 pages of survey and analysis of the estates, arranged alphabetically and supported with full references (themselves rather curiously numbered, but perfectly clear), providing 'histories' of the holdings which stretch from Glastonbury westwards to Braunton and Okehampton in Devon, northwards to Westbury on Severn in Gloucestershire, north eastwards to Ashbury and Compton Beauchamp in Berkshire, and southwards to Abbotsbury and Christchurch.

Dr. Abrams then attempts to get behind the endowment grants to estate exploitation and tenure, to questions such as whether Glastonbury monks were concerned with cash incomes and food renders; whether there was more pressure on estates after Dunstan's reforms of the 10th century; whether tenants and powerful monastic officials came early or late; whether the record supports the theories of estate reorganisation propounded by archaeologists. Lack of answers does not invalidate the questions.

In a real sense this is an interim statement. Dr. Abrams acknowledges that any new information might drastically alter any one of her estate 'histories', but the mass of information here presented is a fine platform for further work. A final chapter raises questions of interpretation and definition and indicates where progress might be made: more work on place-names, especially to offer more certainty in some identifications; more work on Domesday meanings, such as the proper interpretation of hidage; more thought on what a 'grant' actually means. There is an index of charters and of the manuscripts used; the 'histories' themselves must be the beginning of a reader's research into individual places and serves as an index to the whole.

R. W. D.

James Stokes, *Records of Early English Drama. SOMERSET* (2 vols). (University of Toronto Press, 1996. Pp. 1141, £130.00). James Stokes first appeared in the Somerset Record Office 16 years ago on behalf of REED (the acronym for the above work) and has now completed this truly monumental achievement. He has undertaken the research for the whole of the historic county, excluding Bath, for which his co-author, Robert Alexander, has been responsible, but the whole county has been treated as a single entity. REED's aim 'is to find, transcribe, and publish external evidence of dramatic, ceremonial, and minstrel activity before 1642'. In simple terms, this included itinerant professional entertainers and local communities alike and covered music, drama, dancing and the various traditional customs – patronal revels, Robin Hood and May, etc., games, satirical skits, church ales and bull- and bear-

baiting, Somerset having the dubious distinction of having more recorded baitings than any other among the eleven volumes already published in the REED series – not altogether surprising, given the attitude of a churchwarden at Isle Abbotts who advocated the replacement of bear baiting in place of church rates.

In the first volume of 447 pages, sub-titled 'The Records', Mr. Stokes has managed to identify relevant extracts from no less than 150 towns and parishes in the county, which he has set in alphabetical order. The extracts are drawn from diocesan and capitular court records, churchwardens' and corporation records, local quarter sessions records, public record office sources and some private archives. They date from the 13th cent., with the bulk naturally enough coming after the Reformation, the cut-off period being set for the beginning of the Civil War. In the second volume, 'Editorial Apparatus', Mr. Stokes has brought together the different sources of entertainment described in the previous volume, but has looked beyond in the context of changing situations, religious, political and social.

Hitherto, Mr. Stokes has been solely and directly responsible for the selection of the sources and his several explanatory series of introductions, but for the remainder he has been bound by REED's editorial conventions, which give the impression that nothing can be left to chance. Thus, all the extracts given in the first volume re-appear under three different headings, 'the documents', 'translations' and 'endnotes'. There are, admittedly some differences, but, as a whole, they are unduly repetitive and, in the case of the bibliographical detail of measurements, not obviously necessary. In the English Glossary there are also 13 variant spellings entered under bearbaiting and 23 under bullbaiting, but none could be classed as out of the ordinary. In addition, the text in the 1st volume could have been reduced considerably (and hence the cost) without damage (see for example, the many pages under the Bridgwater accounts where on average there are only 6-8 lines per page. Proof reading also, which appears to be impeccable, must have been unduly prolonged by the fussy requirement to mix roman and italic characters in the transcriptions where abbreviations have been extended.

These are minor irritations, however, and we should not be

deflected from the undoubted scholarship provided by Mr. Stokes, to whom we will be permanently indebted. It is dangerous, I know, to suggest that a work of this complexity can be described as exhaustive, but Mr. Stokes has so closely observed the many manuscript sources he has consulted and, in particular, the diocesan records, not the easiest to unravel, that the reader will have every confidence that no significant material will be unearthed, short of the ultimate repair of the diocesan act and deposition books.

D. M. M. S.

NOTES

WEYMOUTH PINE. The intriguing account by J. B. Smith (*SDNQ*, XXXIV, Part 344, p. 71.) of naming 'Lord Weymouth's pine' can be extended further back in history. *Pinus strobus* according to recent research¹ should be referred to a George Weymouth, merchant, who discovered it in Maine nearly a century before the 1705 date when it was known to be cultivated extensively in England. John Evelyn the diarist wrote to the Royal Society in 1701 about damage, during the winter of 1683-4, to his 'pine which bears the greater cone' and a pre Linnaean name for *Pinus strobus* was *Pinus virginiana*, *conis longis*.

Lord Weymouth planted large numbers at Longleat thus perpetuating the association with the Dorset place name. The Earl of Islay, later Duke of Argyll, in 1720 began cultivating an enormous range of exotic trees at his Whitton, Middlesex estate. By 1760 Weymouth pines 'near 50ft high' were reported and they were known at the time to have reached 150 feet in America. Argyll's nursery run by James Lee supplied plants to other landowners setting out their landscape gardens. The Whitton estate has disappeared under houses and is only remembered now by street names like Park and Argyll Avenues.

1. Douglas Chambers, *The Planters of the English Landscape Garden* (New Haven & London, 1993) p. 85.

ANITA FURSEY

TRENDLE (*SNDQ*, XXXIV, 124). The term was once widely used in referring to round or circular objects. *the Oxford English Dictionary* lists six different definitions: 1-A circle, a ring, a coronet; a circular disk, orb; a ball, globe. 2-A Wheel. 3-A suspended hoop or wheel on which tapers were fixed, forming a chandelier, used in churches on certain occasions before the Reformation. 4-A vessel of flat rounded form, a round or oval tub used for various purposes, a circular trough or tray used by bakers. 5-A bundle of (partly cleaned) wool 'trended' or wound up. 6-Applied to various round or rounded objects (the identity of which cannot always be ascertained).

As described in the third version, Yeovil's churchwardens' accounts of the sixteenth century contain several references. The first occurs in 1542, when 1s.10d. was paid 'for Weke Yarn and makying the Trendle'. Two years later 'for the new makying of the Trendle this yere', 7s.6d. was charged, as well as a penny more 'for a Key for the Trendle' – almost certainly a handle used in winching the device into position. A further sum of 5s.8d. was expended on '12lb of Bullen Wax for the Trendle'.

Elworthy's description of a Trendle or Trundle is 'a large oval tub some five or six feet in its greater axis, used for many purposes, but chiefly for 'scalding' pigs.¹

'Trendle', or 'Trundle', Ring in Somerset lies on an exposed slope of the Quantock Hills, half a mile east of and above Bicknoller Church. This is an earthwork, roughly circular, consisting of a bank of loose stones with an outside ditch.² While in Wiltshire the circular earthwork, 'Chisenbury Camp' was commonly referred to as 'Chisenbury Trendle'.³

1. F. T. Elworthy, *West Somerset Word Book* (1886).

2. *Victoria County History of Somerset*, II, 506.

3. G. E. Dartnell & Rev. E. H. Goddard, *Wiltshire Words – a Glossary of Words used in the County of Wiltshire*.

LESLIE BROOKE

TRENDLE (*SDNQ*, XXXIV, 124). Mr. A. M. Hughes and Hazel Eardley-Wilmot have also contributed to this Query. The former also cites the *OED* definitions and refers to instances in the churchwardens' accounts of Croscombe in 1476 and Yatton in 1493. He has also found a late quotation in Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874; ch. xxxiii in modern editions). The latter draws attention in her *Yesterday's Exmoor* (1990) to a bequest by Joan Hill of Withypool in c.1776 of her 'largest trendle.' This she defines as 'a tub for storing meat; alternatively called *trundle* in an 1852 sale list (*trunnel* still being in use on Exmoor)'.

ASKERSWELL RESOLUTIONS, 1798 – The plans made in Dorset in 1796-98 to evacuate the coastal districts in the event of a French invasion have been detailed in articles by M. Turner in *SDNQ*, vol 31, pp. 347-349 (1984), as also elsewhere by Professor W. E. Minchinton¹ and, mostly fully of all, by Professor Ian Beckett². The four principal farmers at Askerswell in 1798 however anticipated that there would be much confusion when large numbers of animals were concentrated at rendezvous points, and then driven inland, as the orders required, which no doubt prompted them to record the following³:

We, the undersigned inhabitants of, and occupiers of lands within the parish of Askerswell in the County of Dorset, do hereby declare our concurrence with the Plan recommended by the Lieutenancy of this County for the Security and Defence of the Country, and have this first day of June 1798 resolved: First – that we will use our accustomed Mark on our Sheep, with the letter 'A' as the general Mark of the Parish.

Secondly – that we will mark our Cows and other horned Beasts with the Initials of our Names, and the letter 'A' as the General Mark of the Parish, burnt on the right Horn – and our calves with the same Marks on the right fore-Hoof – and our Pigs with the Marks on the right fore-Hoof.

Thirdly – that we fix on Eggardon Hill as the Place of Rendezvous for our Cattle and Wagons. (*signed*) Edward Way; Joseph Stone; Thomas Chick; John Way.

1. *Proc. DNHAS*, 77, 162-173 (1955).

2. *Buckinghamshire Rec Soc* 22, Introduction (1985).

3. Dorset CRO D1/117430/4.

MURDER IN SELWOOD. In 1391, William Whete, Prior of Stavordale, near Wincanton, was murdered by Robert Russel. One would have thought that the violent death of a prominent ecclesiastic a notorious event, the memory of which would have lingered, if not in local history, in the folklore and literature of the area. The only record of the event so far discovered, however, is the inquest preserved in the Public Record Office (C258/28 684). This curious footnote to the annals of Stavordale, sparse enough by any yardstick, deserves to be better known. I am grateful to Dr. John Harvey for his translation from the Latin. Roundhill is an extant place-name. It was a grange of the priory and part of its Rectorial Manor of Wincanton.

Inquest taken at Roundhill (*Rownylle*) in the tithing of Wincanton before John Burcy, coroner of the lord king for the County of Somerset, on Monday next after the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary in the 15th year of the reign of Richard the second [11th September 1391] upon the view of the body of William Whete, late Prior of Stavordale, by oath of 12 free jurors namely: John Strode, Peter Paele, Walter Parker, Hugh Helyere, John Mylword, John Bigge the elder, Walter Mylword, John Bigge the younger, Geoffrey Faukes, Edward Saymor, Reginald Smyth and John Warynere, who say upon their oath that Robert Russel, forester of Selwood, on the Saturday [9th September] next after the feast aforesaid in the year abovesaid, feloniously slew William Whete, the said Prior of Stavordale, and is a common destroyer of the people.

They say also that Edmund Flory and John Poleyn, foresters of the same place of Selwood, are maintainers and harbourers to the same death of the aforesaid Robert Russel and of two other strangers there whose names are unknown. And these two are also destroyers and maintainers [of those guilty of the death] of the aforesaid William the Prior, etc. And it is found by Edmund Berd as they present [*? part of last line missing*].

Richard, by the Grace of God, King of England and of France and Lord of Ireland, to his Coroners of Somerset, Greeting. Willing for certain reasons to be informed upon the tenor of the indictment made before you concerning the death of William, late Prior of Stavordale, upon the view of the body of the same Prior whereof Robert Russel, forester, and John Polayn, forester, are indicted as is said. We command you to send the tenor of the aforesaid indictment to us in our Chancery under your seals, clearly and openly and safe and sound without delay and this soon. Witness myself at Westminster the 10th day of December in the 15th year of our reign [1391].

Dillyngford [Chancery clerk]

MICHAEL McGARVIE

QUERIES

THE WADHAMMS OF MERIFIELD. Ms A. Crabbe of 119 Wilderness Road, Earley, Reading, is hoping to discover the true identity of the lady represented on the Wadham monument in Ilminster church and the 'surpriser of the army of the Scots joined with the flower of flowers', an enigmatic phrase which may provide a clue.

'William Wyndham, she adds, in his Presidential Address in 1934 (*Proc. S.A.N.H.S.*, vol 80) refers to this monument, which is said to represent the figures of Sir William Wadham and his mother, Joan, daughter of Wriothlesley. At the time of his address it is unlikely that he was aware that Joan was Sir John's second wife – the *first* marriage not being recorded on the Wadham College pedigree. Sir William was born *c.* 1391, but in the Feet of Fines in 1403/4 we read "to John and Joan and their male issue; if John died without male issue by Joan, then after the decease of Joan to remain to Robert". Robert was Sir John's eldest son (by Maud) who died before Sir John wrote his will in August 1412. If Sir John and Joan were without male issue in 1403/4, then Joan was not the mother of William. On this evidence I believe it was Maud, Sir John's first wife, who was the mother of Sir William and it is she who is buried in the tomb with her son, William.

John Wadham died in *c.* 1411/12 and was buried at Branscombe and Joan survived her husband. If Sir John was not buried in the Ilminster tomb, as the inscription leads us to believe was intended, I think it very unlikely that Joan would have been interred there.

The inscription on the Wadham tomb, previously pronounced unreadable, has now been translated by Dr. Peter Franklin:-

"A fine? tomb has this worth – nothing will come from a little tomb?

My mother was born and is buried, as they both are.

They had the summit of wealth, virtue and prudence, because they led a modest life.

Baseness is conquered by piety, God releases men from death?

But I thought it ought to be mentioned in the course of this inscription,

That the heart is grieved to close up in devastation that such people are buried

These two were joined in marriage and must be considered together, therefore the two,

The surpriser [perhaps forestaller] of the army of the Scots was joined with the flower of flowers."

(*Surrounding border*) Together with William Wadham, their son ...

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