
NOTES & QUERIES

FOR
SOMERSET AND DORSET

EDITED BY

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

HERRICK

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ISSN 0049 1306

Annual Subscription £5 (U.S.A. 30 dollars or £5 if paid in sterling), payable in advance. Two parts annually, post free.

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Subscribers are reminded that from 1st January, 1993, the annual subscription is £5 (\$30 for subscribers in the U.S.A. or £5 if paid in sterling).

Subscriptions should be paid in advance in January.

Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset has been published in unbroken sequence since 1888. Two parts are issued annually.

The Editors will consider contributions of short notes, queries, and articles not exceeding 2,500 words, on the history, archaeology, genealogy, folklore, and literature of the two counties. Transcripts/translations of documents are especially welcome.

All contributions should be clearly typed.

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Off-prints will not be provided, but authors wishing to have additional copies of the issue in which their contribution appears should inform the Editor at the time of acceptance.

Advertisements (whole width of page per issue): whole page £12; half page £8; quarter page £6; inch space £4; payable in advance to the Secretary/Treasurer.

Back numbers: £2.50 each plus postage.

48. BURYING A PEER, 1904. A vivid picture of the preparations needed to bury a great magnate in Somerset in the early 20th century emerge from some notes made by William Cooper. Cooper was agent for the Marston Bigot estate of the Earl of Cork and Orrery near Frome from 1877 until 1904. His aides-memoire are now at the Somerset County Record Office.¹

The funeral was that of Richard Edmund St. Lawrance Boyle, 9th Earl of Cork and Orrery (1829-1904). He had been Master of the Horse to Queen Victoria and three times Master of the Royal Buckhounds. As well as being a Liberal Whip in the House of Lords, Cork was Lord Lieutenant of Somerset from 1864, an active local magistrate and said to have kept in touch with every aspect of county life in Somerset.

Cork had married in 1853 Emily Charlotte de Burgh, daughter of the Marquess of Clanricarde and niece of the Prime Minister, George Canning. They brought up a family of nine at Marston House which had been the property of the Boyle family since 1641. In later years with Lady Cork an invalid, the family lived mainly in London.

Cork used to come down to Somerset for the occasional weekend. He was at Marston House in June, 1904, when he mingled with worshippers at the church and rode around the estate with his agent. So it was a shock when he died at his house in Mayfair 'with painful suddenness' on 22nd June.

Cooper's first warning of the impending demise came in a telegram from Cork's son and heir, Viscount Dungarvan, sent at 6.30a.m. on the 22nd: 'Regret to say his Lordship is slowly sinking', followed by another at 8.11: 'Regret to say his Lordship died this morning. Make preparations for funeral Monday. Am writing. Dungarvan.'



The letter was written the same day from 22 Ryder Street:

Dear Sir,

I regret to say that his Lordship died this morning happily without pain. I shall be obliged if you will make preparations for the funeral on Monday. The body will probably come down on Saturday. Kindly have it placed in the Library. Tell the gardener to have flowers in the rooms. Also I should like the grave to be lined with flowers, the same as was done at Mr. Boyle's funeral. Mr. Boyle and myself will probably come down Saturday.

A second letter the same day informed Cooper that

it has been found necessary that his Lordship's body will have to be sealed up almost at once by the doctor's orders so it will probably arrive at Marston tomorrow night so kindly have the library got ready. The grave had better be dug the same side as Major Boyle's leaving space for her Ladyship alongside thereafter.

Major Boyle was Lord Cork's brother who had died in 1901. Mr. Boyle was Cork's younger son Robert, later 11th Earl of Cork and Orrery.

The Rector of Marston, Canon E.J. Harford, was in London and after calling on Dungarvan wrote to Cooper from 47 Lennox Gardens:

I have just seen Lord Dungarvan who asked me to let you know that he wished the Funeral to be conducted just as his brother's was. The coffin placed I think in the library & carried by the Marston employees to the church through the garden. I come home tomorrow & will call at your house as I pass between 6 & 7. Dear Lord Cork had a presentment that he would not live long & some 6 weeks ago pointed out to me the exact spot where he wished to be buried. Lord Dungarvan comes down on Saturday to Marston. His father's end was sudden but he did not suffer any pain. I'm sure we all feel that we have lost one of our best friends by his death.

The same day Dungarvan sent orders that Cooper was to 'give permission to all who wish to attend funeral'.

The problem of seating the likely throng in St. Leonard's church at Marston was exercising the minds of both agent and rector. Canon Harford wrote to Cooper on 27 June:

Can you give me any idea of the number of relatives & friends coming Monday by special train? If you cannot, I expect you will agree with me that no one shall be admitted into the little church before they are seated. It only holds about 100. For the servants of Marston House we will retain seats +2 of my daughters will be present. The Marston people will be admitted as far as possible. Willy Hartopp, Foxcroft & other squires ? will be there. I am having the churchyard put in order as far as possible in so short a time but all hands are Haymaking.

Harford added that mourners could come through 'Lord Cork's door', presumably the private entrance to the Lady Chapel, now blocked up.

In the meantime, Cooper was writing notes to himself as to what was to be done: 'Bier from old church if thought well; men to replace earth; police – top lodge, front house, church, Cooper office [now Park Cottage]; photographer Bell [from Frome] yes; say 70-80; coronet remove'. He drew up a list of bearers who were to be Thomas Millard, Samuel Cornish, George Wheeler, Henry Wheeler, George Mills, Albert Trimby, Jesse Elliott and John Sleet. He was to follow the coffin with John Cooper, carpenter, James Woodrow, keeper, Pierce [head gardener], Symington, Macklin [stud groom], keepers and other servants. Cooper jotted down brief 'arrangements for body': 'station, removal, reception, where place – library, removal grave, moss & flowers, carriers, announcement to public, clergyman's instructions, invitations, police 4 or 5'.

Cooper was inundated with requests to attend from members of organisations with which Lord Cork was connected. The Wilts and Dorset Farmers Association wanted to attend 'the funeral of our much esteemed first President' but got into a muddle about where they should meet. W.J. Harvey, of Harvey & Woodland, printers, asked about floral tributes and for a ticket if one were required; he also offered to help by copying lists. Mr. W.R. Kent, a solicitor, inquired if attendance by the Board of Guardians would be 'agreeable to the family'. Revd. R. Gordon and Major Sheppard wished to be present on behalf of the Literary Institute 'of which his Lordship was so long the honoured President'. Mr. Bell, Frome photographer, wanted to take pictures of the grave.

Eventually all the problems and requests were dealt with and the funeral on 27 June seems to have gone without a hitch. There is a succinct account in the diary of Revd. W.A. Duckworth, of Orchardleigh:

I drove in brougham to Marston at 12.20 – funeral of Lord Cork at 12.30 – we meet at Marston House ... walk down with Horner [John Horner, the Squire of Mells] in black procession behind the bier bearers – Canon Harford, the Dean & Bishop (Kennion) divided the burial service – luncheon afterwards.

A much longer account appeared in the *Somerset Standard* of 1 July 1904. It remarked that 'the whole arrangements, which

were ably carried out by Mr. W. Cooper, the agent, were marked by complete simplicity'. He must have been mightily relieved when the special train left Frome at 2.45 bearing the mourners back to London. But it was not all over: on 28 June came a telegram from Cork's son-in-law, R.K. Hodgson saying 'left dressing bag in bedroom. Please send it up by train today'.

1. S.R.O. DD/X/COO 4.

MICHAEL McGARVIE

49. ALEHOUSE GOSSIP AND CHURCH REFORM IN SOMERSET 1539. Three entries in the State Papers for 1539 give an indication of the atmosphere of fear and suspicion that prevailed at a time when the great monastic houses were being suppressed, the Pope's rule over the Church had been abolished and changes in doctrine were leading to alterations in liturgy and practices within parish churches. Above all, the government of Henry VIII, led by Thomas Cromwell, was desperate to avoid civil unrest or open protest. This explains their concern to be kept informed of opinion in all parts of the country. The three episodes described here illustrate the way in which Church reform was promoted within parishes by a few active supporters, while the majority of clergy and parishioners wisely avoided expressing any opinion. Whatever their private thoughts, most followed without protest every twist and turn of government policy.

The first example comes from an alehouse at Ubley. The alewife was Agnes Filer aged 40, the wife of Nicholas Filer. On the afternoon of 18 Mar 1539 Edward Loxton of Ubley had come to the alehouse and called for a pot of ale. He appears to have been the only customer, and 'tarryed drynkyng the space of an howre'. When asked what news he had, Loxton replied that 'we shall have warre, and furder he sayde that he heard saye that my lord Cromwell was gone awaye, and so entered ynto communycacion till he had drunk his ale and then he departed from thens'. Two hours later John Brady of Ubley, servant to Sir Henry Capel came to the alehouse and called for a pot of ale. Sir Henry Capel was the local justice of the peace. He had inherited the manor of Ubley where according to John Leland, he had 'an old meane maner place'. He also possessed property at Wrington and at Wyke in the parish of Yatton. As a

loyal servant of the Crown he was soon to acquire more property from the dispersal of the estates of Glastonbury abbey. When the alewife recounted Edward Loxton's remarks, John Brady replied that Loxton was 'a naughtie and false knave so to brute abroad any such things'. He insisted that Agnes Filer should come to his master, Sir Henry Capel, and repeat what she had told him. Any talk of civil war or suggestion that Thomas Cromwell was about to fall from power was treated seriously. Capel sent a report to Cromwell and the unfortunate Edward Loxton was arrested and brought before a group of Somerset justices. He was sent to prison 'for words spoken against Lord Cromwell'.¹

Sir Henry Capel was also involved in the second incident. Another of his servants, John Smythes of Wrington, reported to his master on 20 Apr 1539 that the curate at Wrington, John Lyle, refused to comply with the Royal Injunctions of 1538. Lyle was said to have refused to amend his service books as ordered. He had not substituted the name of the King for that of the Pope, and refused to remove the name of Archbishop Thomas Becket from his books of prayers and legends. Depositions were taken and sent to Cromwell from Henry Bowman, 'syngyng priest of the parish of Wrynhton', and from John Smythes, Thomas Browne and John Ketyngale, all of Wrington. They agreed that Lyle had many times been ordered to 'correct and amend his Masse bokes, portuses and other bokes belonging to the parish Church of the said towne of Wrynhton according to the King's Injunctions'. Lyle had replied that 'the things contained in the books were well enough' and refused to comply.

Evidently Capel and his servant Smythes, were foremost in putting pressure upon Lyle, Smythes stated that a few days earlier he had entered the chancel of the church at Wrington, had examined the service books, and found that they remained unchanged and uncorrected. The other witnesses also stated that they had been offered money by Lyle to persuade John Smythes not to give evidence against him. Lyle's fate does not appear in this record, but since the depositions were sent by Sir Henry Capel directly to Thomas Cromwell, it is unlikely that he remained much longer as curate of Wrington.²

The third incident involved John Divale who was curate of Wincanton. He was also reluctant to adopt the new ideas as

ordered by the Royal Injunctions, and his refusal was likewise reported directly to Thomas Cromwell. In addition, Divale was accused of other faults. Three local men, William Draper, John Sparke and Robert Pytt, who are described as 'carvers' wrote to Cromwell to complain that Divale was much given to 'dicing, carding, booling and playing at the cross waster, with such other unthrifty games'. Cross waster was a form of fencing, and it will become clear that Divale was a man well able to defend himself. The three critics also complained about Divale's conduct as parish priest.

'He will in noe wyse declare unto his said parishioners the word of god according to his dewtye and as hee is bound to doo, but utterly dispyseth and is redy to undo all those that are gladde and willing to have the Scripture and god's worde set forth and preched unto them or else to rede it themselves, and calleth them heretycks.'

Because of Divale's refusal to preach, his critics had invited John Warde, the parish priest of Castle Cary to preach to them. Warde had exhorted them to read the New Testament in English. His advice reflects the controversy which followed Henry VIII's Injunctions of 1538, urging regular preaching, discouraging images and pilgrimages and requiring the clergy to provide '... one book of the whole Bible in English, and the same set up in some convenient place within the said church that you have cure of, whereas your parishioners may most commodiously resort to the same and read it'. This was Coverdale's 'Great Bible' which was based on the translation of William Tyndale. Ironically, it was only in 1537 that Tyndale had been executed. for his work in translating much of the bible into English.³

In response to Warde's support for the English Bible, Divale sprang to the defence of the old order. At Mass on Good Friday 1539 he 'came into the pulpit and preached'. He advised his parishioners to 'give no credence to these new fangled fellows which rede these new books for they be heretyks and knaves and pharisees' and he likened them 'to a dog that gnaweth on a mary [marrow] bone and never cometh to the pith'. He directed his attack at one of the principal supporters of reform in the Church, Hugh Latimer, who at this time was bishop of Worcester. Divale was reported to have said that 'he trusted to see the bishop of Worcester burned and all the new books in England about him, and he defyed him and the New Testament in English, and sayde that he wolde keepe the olde use, and the

olde Lawe whyle he lived'. Much later, under Queen Mary, Bishop Latimer was indeed burnt for his Protestant beliefs.

Divale had another potent method of defending the old order at Wincanton. This was his skill at fencing. He was alleged to have declared that 'if any man will preach the New Testament ... he is redy to fight with him'. His critics complained that he 'applieth in such wise his school of fence so sore continually that he feareth all his parishioners therewith'. Divale's critics also complained to Thomas Cromwell, with evident exaggeration, that the whole district was so scandalised by this priest that 'we poor men are not able to abide in their country and get a poor living as aforetyme we have'.⁴

Their letter does not appear to have had an immediate effect, and Cromwell himself was to fall from favour and was executed in 1540. The controversy illustrates the fierce debate which occurred beneath the surface over the religious changes in many parishes but which only occasionally is apparent from the surviving records. All three examples show the nervous concern of the government to be kept informed of any possible sources of revolt, and to stamp out any discontent before it could spread.

1. Public Record Office E36/120 ff 109-110. For details of Sir Henry Capel see Rev. J. Collinson, *History of Somerset*, (Bath, 1791), I, 207; II, 156-7. L. Toulmin Smith, *Leland's Itinerary*, (London, 1910), V, 105. Frederick Brown, *Abstracts of Somerset Wills*, 3rd Series, (1889), 124.
2. P.R.O. E36/120 ff 105-8.
3. David Daniell, *William Tyndale*, (Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 333-357, 374-384. This Bible was a new edition of Matthew's translation and is the source of the version of the psalms in the *Book of Common Prayer*.
4. P.R.O. SP1/151 f 91.

J.H. BETTEY

50. THE CRANBORNE ABBEY RELIC LIST. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Top. Glouc. d.2, the Founders' Book of Tewkesbury abbey (c.1500-25), contains five distinct but interrelated sections. Of these, the first (fols 2r-5r) and fourth (fols 8v-42r) are historiographical, the second (fol. 5r-5v) and fifth (fols 42v-45v) extracts from a narrative cartulary and the third (fols 6r-7v) a document, the 'Great Charter of Tewkesbury'. The only published section is the self-contained chronicle of section four, which was copied from another manuscript (BL MS, Cotton Cleopatra C.III, fols 210r-224v) by Roger Dodsworth for inclusion in the *Monasticon Anglicanum*, whence Robert Atkyns translated it into English

as an embellishment to his *Ancient and Present State of Glostershire*.¹

This fourth section has long been used as a source for the history of Cranborne abbey (later Cranborne priory), which became a cell of Tewkesbury at the beginning of the twelfth century.² Recently, section one has also been recognized for information it contains concerning pre-Conquest land grants to the monastery.³ The brief section two contains a list in Latin of relics given to Cranborne by Æthelweard Meaw, the abbey's founder (or re-founder), which does not appear to have been scrutinized, however (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Top. Glouc. d.2, fol. 5r-v; also British Library MS. Additional 36985, fol. 6r). A preamble to this list explains that Æthelweard, suffering from a mortal illness, bequeathed many gifts to Cranborne. Ornaments and relics are particularly mentioned, but only the latter are itemized. The transaction occurred around the year 980, probably in conjunction with his act of foundation (or re-foundation, as the case may have been). The list, which is written in an archaizing hand pretending to a later twelfth or early thirteenth-century date, is printed below, along with a translation. Original orthography and capitalization have been preserved, abbreviations silently expanded, and colons inserted between items, as in BL MS. Additional 36985. A double backslash indicates the division between fol. 5r and 5v of Top. Glouc. d2.

In primis legauit de cruce saluatoris non modicam partem: de lecto in quo natus est: de lectulo in quo infans nutriebatur: de lapide in quo sedit cum apostolis in monte Thabor: de calice saluatoris: de fune appposito collo eius cum tentus duceretur: de rupe montis Caluarie in qua crux domini sistebatur: de sepulchro domini: de terra quam calcavit in monte Oliueti cum ascenderet in celum: de sepulchro sancte Marie: de lapidibus quibus beatus Stephanus lapidatus fuit: de puluere omnium sanctarum reliquiarum que inquiri potuerunt in Ierusalem: quoddam os sancti Iuliani episcopi: quasdam reliquias de sancto Martino et de sancto Stephano nec non // de sancto Alexandro: et alia quedam, que longum esset enumerare: de minori etiam Britania, transmissas sibi reliquias nonnullas, ecclesie de Craneburnia delegauit.

(Especially, he bequeathed the cross of the Saviour, not a small piece: the bed in which he (Christ) was born: the cradle in which he was nourished as an infant: the stone on which he sat with the apostles on Mount Tabor: the saviour's chalice: the rope placed around his neck when he was being led along: rock of Mount Calvary in which the Lord's cross was set: the Lord's sepulchre: earth he trod upon on the Mount of Olives when he ascended into heaven: the Virgin Mary's sepulchre: stones with which the blessed Stephen was stoned: dust of the relics of all the saints that could be sought in Jerusalem:

a certain bone of Saint Julian, bishop: certain relics of Saint Martin and of Saint Stephen, also // of Saint Alexander: and various others, which it is too time-consuming to enumerate: he also bequeathed to the church of Cranborne some relics sent to him from Little Britain.⁴

The early fourteenth-century relic of Glastonbury abbey (BL MS. Cotton Titus D.vii, fols 2r-13v) begins with a similar catalogue of 'the relics that concern our Lord Jesus Christ especially' ('DE reliquiis que specialiter tangunt Dominum nostrum Ihesum christum': fol. 2r-2v).⁵ This includes some, but not all, of the items attributed above to Cranborne: portions of the Holy Sepulchre, the stone which Christ stood upon at the Ascension, pieces of the True Cross, and rock from Calvary wherein the cross was set. It also includes a fragment of the Virgin Mary's sepulchre (fol. 11r), a stone with which St Stephen was martyred (fol. 4r), and relics of Sts Stephen and Alexander (fol. 4r).⁶ Such secondary relics of Christ and the Virgin Mary were, in fact, widely owned. The True Cross and Holy Sepulchre in particular were dispersed throughout the medieval Christian world. In each case, the relics specified here should be understood as fragments, whether or not they are listed as such. Cranborne is most unlikely to have claimed possession of any one of these items entire.

What became of the relics is not specified, but it seems likely that most or all of them were translated to Tewkesbury when the convent of Cranborne relocated under Abbot Gerold, a process completed in 1105. While no Tewkesbury relic list with which Cranborne's may be collated appears to survive, monks of the abbey were certainly responsible for the Founder's Book (sections one, two and five were compiled during the thirteenth century, four during the fifteenth). Such inventorizing of the relics therein suggests a concern to demonstrate longstanding ownership of items still belonging to the monastery. If the relics had been alienated or lost, they probably would not have been catalogued in this way (or alternatively, a preexisting list would not have been incorporated into the Founders' Book). They may be compared with the gifts of land to Cranborne singled out for mention in sections one and two of the Founders' Book, which in each case remained in Tewkesbury's possession into the late Middle Ages.

Whatever the ultimate fate of these relics, the list by which they are known provides a unique glimpse into the devotional culture of one of Dorset's, and England's, more obscure

Benedictine houses. It also demonstrates something that cartularies often fail to reveal, *i.e.* that spiritual gifts as well as temporal were considered necessary for the foundation of a religious institution. Æthelweard Meaw's bequest would not have disgraced the sacristies of the grandest churches, and while Cranborne did not flourish long, the founder's generosity continued to nourish Tewkesbury's estate until the Dissolution. It is for this reason, no doubt, that the list has survived.

1. W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel (VI vols in VIII, 1817-30), II, 59-65; R. Atkyns, *The Ancient and Present State of Glostershire* (II vols, 1712), I, 725-37. The text of Cleopatra C.III is less full than that of Top. Glouc. d.2, however.
2. See for example T. W. W. Smart, 'The Ancient Connection Between Cranborne and Tewkesbury', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club*, VIII (1887), 29-37; *VCH Dorset*, II, 70-1.
3. *The Electronic Sawyer*, nos 1658:1, 1658:2 (at www.trin.cam.ac.uk/sdk13/chartwww.eSawyer.99/LostCharters/Lostcharters1.html).
4. *i.e.* Brittany.
5. See J. P. Carley and M. Howley, eds, 'Relics at Glastonbury in the Fourteenth Century: an Annotated Edition of British Library, Cotton Titus D.vii, fols. 2r-13v', in J.P. Carley, ed., *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition* (2001), 569-616.
6. Probably the third-century Roman martyr of that name, one of the so-called 'Seven Brothers'. He was apparently the most widely-recognized of saints with the name Alexander in medieval England.

JULIAN M. LUXFORD

51. WIMBORNE MINSTER AND HOLT MARKETS AND FAIRS IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD. Among the records at the Dorset Record Office are two leases, one for the weekly market and annual fair in Wimborne Minster and the other for the annual fair in Holt. Both these deeds include schedules of fixtures used for these events giving a rare insight to this crucial early modern activity, which goes largely unrecorded. Research on the retail sector during seventeenth-century Wimborne shows very few independent retailers outside the market area of the town [from the Town Hall situated in the modern square, Market Street (now the High Street), Cook Row and the Corn Market].¹ The weekly market played a crucial role in retailing in the town with the majority of shopkeepers holding stalls and booths in this market area. These would have included local farmers, bakers, butchers, victuallers and cheesemongers selling food and drink, and tanners, clothiers, haberdashers, hatmakers, drapers and shoemakers selling their goods and wares.

The town market is first recorded in the Close Rolls in 1218 when the weekly market was temporarily moved to a Monday from a Sunday (showing that the market pre-dates 1218). In

1224 it was ordered that the market should take place outside of the cemetery. During the pre-Reformation period the Dean of the College held the rights to the market and fair in the town and leased it to the churchwardens. The fifteenth and sixteenth-century churchwardens' accounts give frequent references to the market, held on a Wednesday, including those from whom, they received rents and details of repairs to the stalls and stands. Following the dissolution the market was granted to the Welsteed family, who continued to lease the market and fair to the churchwardens. In 1586 the right to the market and fair was granted to the Hanham family who also continued renting it out to the churchwardens. The chief rent paid by them to the Dean, the Welsteeds and the Hanhams remained at £1 13s during the sixteenth century. The number of stalls varied from 15 in 1527 to 26 by 1586 and then a dramatic fall of 13 by 1597. This was the last year that the churchwardens held the market. By this stage the churchwardens were receiving an income of £3 5s 3d, compared to nearly £8 in 1593. The chief rent was halved to 16s 8d and may indicate a crisis in the market during this time.

The Hanhams continued to lease out the market and fair to individuals though no record survives until 1704. In this year Sir John Hanham leased the rights to Richard Reekes the elder, a tanner who paid an entry fine of £6 and an annual rent of £10.² Unfortunately the tolls and profits that Reekes made are not recorded. The recital clauses show that by the 1670s the King family was holding the lease and following the death of Joan King and the lease was granted to the tanner Richard Lovell and later to his widow Mary. As can be seen by the schedule transcribed below as well as 90 market boards and 25 pairs of trestles with ample poles and forks, two of the shambles were enclosed and included a lock and key to the door. The schedule also includes a number of market weights and a stone with iron ring for tethering. Part of the condition of the lease was that Reekes had to maintain all the market stuff, which presumably was the reason for the schedule being written. The lease also refers to a room to store the equipment being built on the end of the church house.

The churchwardens' accounts and this schedule suggests that the market and fair were quite large, though it is difficult to find similar evidence for other market towns during the period.

Inhabitants from the surrounding parishes such as Shapwick, Horton, Chalbury, Hinton Martel and Canford Magna would have journeyed to the weekly market and evidence shows that in the 1780s Samuel Crane travelled from Bloxworth, some 10 miles away, to use the market.³

As well as the weekly market, four annual fairs took place in the parish, one in the town (31 Aug), two on Pamphill Green (18 Oct and 29 Dec) and one on Holt Green (25 July). This was an opportunity for local and regional buyers and sellers to trade. The Pamphill fairs were relatively small with an annual rent of 14s compared to the Holt fair of £4. It is difficult to compare the size of the town fair because the rent of £10 included the weekly market. The Holt fair was granted by Henry III to the de Lacy family in 1286 and held at Holt Green. It was held by the Duchy of Lancaster during the sixteenth century and was passed to the Bankes family in 1636. In 1680 they granted a lease to the blacksmith John Webb alias Moores.⁴ As well as the rights to the profits, tolls and tokens it included a newly built Fair House erected at Holt Hill. This building is still recorded on a map of 1774/5.⁵ He had to maintain the house and fair goods and was granted an elm a year to carry out the repairs. An inventory was drawn up and transcribed below.

The material suggests a large annual fair with over 330 table trestles ranging from 6 to sixteen feet long, covering the large green at Holt. It is clear from the schedule that butchers attended the fair with one long slab table and 15 short ones being provided. It is likely that livestock such as cattle, sheep, poultry and pigs were sold as well as cheese, eggs, grain, cider and ale. It is also probable that items such as leather and cloth were sold as well as finished goods such as shoes and clothing. It is probable that retailers and buyers came from east Dorset and west Hampshire, possibly further afield, making this an important regional agricultural event.

For many, the fairs were seen as a nuisance and were often disorderly. In 1539 the Court of Star Chamber in London heard a case concerning a fight between the servants of Sir Giles Strangeways and Sir Edward Willoughby at the town fair resulting in 24 injuries including one of the priests.⁶ By the mid nineteenth century complaints were frequently raised and in 1876 the Wimborne fairs were finally abolished, leaving just a cattle and corn market.

A Schedule of such markett & faire stuffe as belongeth to the markett & faire of Wimborne Minster now in the custody of Mary Lovell widow [1704]

Imprimis Three Lead Weights one weighing 56 lbs one other 28 lbs & the other 4 lbs

Item One Stone with an Iron ring Weighing 52lbs

Item 7 stockes and fourteene Plankes

Item Nynety markett boards 25 paire of tressells 26 poles and 100 forkes

Item Two of the shambles inclosed with boards & a Lock & Key to the doore

A Schedule of Fayer stuffe [at Holt Fair] mencioned in the Lease [of 1680] hereunto annexed is as followeth viz.

Imprimis seaventy two payr of tresles good and bad.

Item fourteene short boards some of them six and some eight foot long.

Item one and thirty boards betweene ten and twelve foot long.

Item one long slabb board and fiteene short ones for Butchers.

Item two hundred and two and twenty boards from twelve to sixteene foote in length.

Item a sufficient Quantity of poles and forkes for erecting standings and Boothes Answerable to the abovemenconed tresles and boards.

1. D.C.Reeve 'Wimborne Minster, Dorset: a Study of a Small Town 1620 to 1690' (unpublished PhD thesis 2000) pp. 111-113. A copy should be available at the Dorset Record Office by Summer 2002.
2. DRO D.1/MC 106.
3. A. Blad, *Samuel Crane 1746-1815, Dorset Farmer* (Bloxworth, 1999) pp. 36-37.
4. DRO D/BKL: 8B/103.
5. DRO D/BKL: Woodward Survey of Kingston Lacy 1774/5.
6. A Lindsay Clegg, *A History of Wimborne Minster and District* (Bournemouth, 1960) pp. 185-186.

DAVID REEVE

52. WHAT IS 'ALDERGLOSS'? The dialects of Somerset, Dorset and neighbouring counties have received a fair amount of attention over recent decades, one manifestation of this being Martyn Wakelin's linguistic study *The Southwest of England*, which appeared in 1986 as part of a series on world-wide varieties of English. By presenting fifty-five texts from as far apart as West Cornwall and West Hampshire, Wakelin aims to provide a broad description of south-western English from the mid sixteenth century to the present day, 'together with some remarks on the events, linguistic and otherwise, which shaped and developed it as a major variety of English speech'.¹ The result is a detailed and painstaking account based on carefully

presented samples, some of the more recent texts being transcriptions of tape-recordings made in the field. One of these raises a question here to be discussed.

The recording I refer to was made by the Finnish scholar O. Ihalainen at the Somerset village of Hambridge in 1975. Hambridge is five miles north-east of Ilminster, and the informant was a Mrs L. N., then aged seventy. She is described by Wakelin as an admirable representative of the traditional local dialect. The morphological and syntactical features of her clear and fluent reminiscences are not unusual for the area, and only a couple of lexical features stand out. One of these occurs in a part of the recording focusing on pigs and how they were looked after. The informant tells how, as girls, she and her sister had to collect acorns 'and pick what we call *aldergloss*, for to feed the pigs'. Wakelin includes the word *aldergloss* in his glossary. It is followed by a question mark and the comment: 'wild plant used for pig-food (untraced)'.²

There can be little doubt that the spelling *aldergloss* disguises *alderdrots*, a Somerset name for *Heracleum sphondylium* L. This has traditionally been fed to pigs and other animals, a fact which not only its Standard English names *cow parsnip* and *hogweed*, but also many dialectal analogues proclaim. South-western examples are *pig's bubble* (Somerset), *pig's cole*, *pig's flop* (Devon), *pig's food* (Dorset), *pig's parsnip* (Somerset and elsewhere), *rabbit's meat* (Devon, Somerset and elsewhere), and *rabbit's vittles* (Somerset).³ That all these are in good company is shown by Continental equivalents such as the French *pain de vache*, the Dutch *varkenskool* ('pig's cabbage'), and Italian *erba dal porco*.

Though perhaps less easy to decipher, other names point in the same direction. The Irish *meacan an chruidh* is for instance 'cow herb',⁴ while Cornish *lisamoo* is *les-an-môgh*, literally 'pig weed'.⁵ As for the Somerset name *alderdrots* that is under discussion, it has nothing at all to do with alders, except by secondary association. The primary form is *eltrot*, which may well be 'pig root', *elt* alias *hilt* being a now largely forgotten word for a young sow or pig.⁶

The fact that *eltrot* was no longer easily analysable as *elt* + *root* will have allowed popular etymology to set in. Wiltshire names show us the process at work. Thus we find *hiltrot* and *altrot* in some southern parts of that county, while *elder-trot* is

reported from Durrington, nine miles north of Salisbury.⁷ Compare also, from Broadwindsor in West Dorset, *eldrott* and *elderdrott* alongside *eltrot*.⁸ From at least some of these forms it is but a short step to the Somerset *alderdrots*. The fact that *elder* and *alder* are plant-names, and that the alder in particular seeks damp places not unlike those favoured by the *eltrot*, will have helped the new names to become established.

With *eltrot* we thus see a loss of motivation leading to remarkable creativity. Where the word remained unchanged, its opacity also meant that utilitarian associations could not interfere with poetic resonance. In parts of Wiltshire and Somerset, but also Dorset, *eltrot*, sometimes altered to *eldrot* or *oldrot*, was also applied to the cow parsley, *Anthriscus sylvestris* (L.) Hoffm.⁹ This seems to have been one of William Barnes's favourite plants, if we are to judge by the number of times he mentions it. He tells us for instance how 'eltrot flowers milky white,/Do catch the slanten evenen light', and how 'air did swaÿ, wi' softest strokes,/The eltrot roun' the dark-bough'd woaks'.¹⁰ Had the name been readily recognizable for what it was, it would surely have been barred from such contexts.¹¹ As it is, safe from any obvious trace of its porcine connections, it passes poetic muster, and can join the ranks of more obviously descriptive epithets, such as the Somerset *gipsy's umbrella*, the Devon *Honiton lace*, and the Dorset *Queen Anne's lace handkerchief*.¹²

1. Martyn F. Wakelin, *The Southwest of England*, Varieties of English round the World, ed. Manfred Görlach, Text Series, vol. 5 (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1986), p. vii.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 142-43 and 214.
3. Geoffrey Grigson, *The Englishman's Flora* (Oxford: Helicon, 1996), pp. 222-23.
4. Heinrich Marzell, *Wörterbuch der deutschen Pflanzennamen*, 2 (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1992), 828.
5. Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
6. Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary* (1898-1905; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 2, 249-50 and 3, 163-64; J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 5, 150.
7. Wright, *op. cit.*, 2, 250.
8. Leonard Studley, *My Story* (Broadoak, Bridport: Creed, 1990), p. 314.
9. Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
10. Francis R. L. Bath, *Flowers of William Barnes* (Dorchester: Friary Press, 1977), pp. 22-24; *The Poems of William Barnes*, ed. Bernard Jones (London: Centaur, 1962), 1, 126-27, 'I Got Two Fields', and 1, 377-78, 'The Two Churches'.
11. In fact, Barnes has *eltrot* alias *eltroot*, 'cow parsley', immediately after *elt*, 'a young sow or pig', in his *Glossary*, but gives no hint of an etymological link. See William Barnes, *A Glossary of the Dorset Dialect* (1886; rpt. St Peter Port: Toucan, 1970), p. 62.
12. Grigson, *loc. cit.*

53. CELTIC PHILOLOGY AND CHICKERELL, DORSET. Chickerell (SY 6480) is a village two miles west-north-west of Weymouth; it appears as *Cicherelle* in Domesday Book, *Chikerel* in 1227, *Westchikerel* in 1236 and 1242, and *Estchykerel* in 1285. The name has been problematic. Ekwall calls it 'unexplained', Mills 'obscure in origin and meaning'.¹

This note argues four things: that the name is Celtic; that it referred originally to the stream running past Chickerell into Radipole Lake; that this is a namesake of Crychell Brook in Powys; and that the form means 'little rushing one'. The early forms of *Chickerell* suggest a British origin, and resemble *Cyrchell*, as which Crychell Brook (SO 0872), six miles north of Llandrindod Wells, is recorded in the thirteenth century. Crychell Brook is a fairly powerful stream in a deep valley, and its name has been related to Welsh *cyrch*, which must originally have meant 'movement forwards; rush, attack, onslaught' (cf. Irish *crech* 'booty, pillage; pillaging expedition').² The same sense is probably found in *Cyrchan*, perhaps meaning 'little rushing one', the old name of a stream near Carey (SO 5631), between Hereford and Ross on Wye.³ As for the diminutive suffix *-ell*, this is familiar in Welsh, especially for rivers. Its Gaulish equivalent appears in the name of the Moselle, flowing from France into Germany.⁴

The stream near Chickerell is about a mile long, dropping a hundred feet from source to outlet. It is small but moderately rapid, so a Celtic name 'little rushing one' would suit it. The English would borrow this form in the seventh century, when they occupied the Dorset region. As regards phonology, Jackson dated the Brittonic sound-change *rc > rch* to the sixth century.⁵ This *ch* may be represented in Domesday's *Cicherelle*, while original initial [k] would be palatized to the *ch* of modern *Chickerell* in Primitive Old English.⁶ (The present name has perhaps been modified further by association with 'chick'.) Development to *Cicherelle* from a form in *-rch-* may be explicable by what (in the jargon of linguists) is called metathesis (the transposition of consonant sounds), with *r* shifting from its original place. This is a common phenomenon. It can be seen in English *third* (from Old English *thridða*) in contrast to *three*. Welsh *Crychell* from *Cyrchell* shows a similar change, and it occurs in related form in English *crocodile* as opposed to Spanish *cocodrilo* (both ultimately from Latin

crocodilus).

If the above is correct, then, *Chickerell* can be derived from unattested Old English **Circhell*, equivalent to Welsh *Cyrchell*, and meaning 'little rushing one', the stream below the village of Chickerell. As such it can be added to Lytchett 'grey wood', Winfrith 'white flood', and other Celtic toponyms in Dorset.⁶

1. Eilert Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edn (Oxford, 1960), 102; A. D. Mills, *A Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Oxford, 1991), 76.
2. R. J. Thomas, *Enwau Afonydd a Nentydd Cymru* (Caerdydd, 1938), 97-8; *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* (Caerdydd, 1950-2003), 806.
3. Thomas, 63.
4. John Morris-Jones, *A Welsh Grammar* (Oxford, 1913), 230; *Geiriadur*, 1209.
5. K. H. Thomas, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), 570-2.
6. Cf. Alistair Campbell, *Old English Grammar* (Oxford, 1959), 173.
7. Cf. Richard Coates and Andrew Breeze, *Celtic Voices, English Names* (Stamford, 2000), 294-5.

ANDREW BREEZE

54. THE HAYWARD: A MANORIAL OFFICIAL. As far as I know nothing has ever been written as a separate article about the name Hayward and its meaning. It can be found quite easily in books of names placed in alphabetical order but when all the references are gathered together the whole becomes more intelligible. The same process I imagine can be applied to any name.

Many readers will know that the name is occupational, and so like the Smiths and Wrights one Hayward is not necessarily related to another. According to scholars of early history, surnames were not common before the Norman Conquest. People were often known by a Christian name followed by some distinguishing features such as a place name or the colour of their hair or even some deformity. Even Saxon kings had such titles as Edwy the Fair (955-959), Harold Harefoot (1037-1040), or the better known Edward the Confessor (1042-1066).

Hayward as a surname is probably pre-Norman. C. M. Mathews lists the tenants of the abbey of Bury St. Edmunds soon after the Norman Conquest, in which the name of Hayward occurs three times, and, as the author says, seems, by that time, to have become established as a surname.¹ The spelling, of course, varied in spelling from Wihtric Heiward, to Godri Haiwart, and to Brihtmar Haiwards. The latter spelling survived into the 1600s in the parish registers of North Wootton and Lydlinch.

H. Barber, when considering the name 'Harvard', suggested that it was derived from 'Howard',² but I am inclined to the view that this is misleading, particularly since the author's research was based on East Anglia where there had been confusion in the past between Howards and Hawards. Even in the more recent records, like those of Births, Deaths and Marriages from 1837 onwards, the origins of any names Haward (Hayward without the 'y') is almost without exception East Anglian in origin. To add weight to my belief that Barber is wrong, he goes on to list Hayward under Norman names, and suggests Belgium as the place of origin (in his list spelt Hauwaert), and Harvard as of Flemish origin ('Heywaert'). I feel more inclined to the view that the name pre-dates the Norman Conquest and is Old English in origin.

The origin of the name certainly stems from an occupation associated with the manor.

... but the lord had not finished with his serf once he had served as reeve. There were still several other manorial offices which he might call on him to fill. The chief of these were those of messor (or hayward as he was often called) and that of beadle or constable. Although in many cases it is possible to separate the duties of these two officers roughly as these: the beadle was the policeman of the village, taking pledges, levying distresses etc., while the messor (hayward) was in charge of all those operations connected with the sowing and gathering of the crops. There is little in these two offices that made the holding of them by one man an impossibility, and we therefore need not be surprised to find that this is what actually happened on many manors.³

One of the fascinating aspects of the study of this name is that it was noticeable from reading lists of names from earlier periods, and even more recent lists of a hundred years ago, that the name was not spread evenly over the whole country, but showed up strongly in the west country, east Anglia, and Kent. This seems strange, for an occupational name as it appears to demonstrate that not all districts appointed a hayward. Possibly, some districts found that another officer could carry out both duties. Alternatively, the use of a hayward may have been peculiar to one district originally and may have spread over a long period of time. This would give support to Mr Corbett's theory of the extension of the West Saxon hundredal system to East Anglia in the time of Athelstan (924-939), or Edmund (939-946). This was the imposition of a royal administrative system upon districts of possibly communal origin.⁴ It would be interesting to know if a similar pattern of districts of origin

would emerge from a study of other surnames derived from manorial occupations.

The position and duties of the hayward are very well defined in Walter of Henley's *Hosbandrie* in 1250:

... the hayward ought to be an active and sharp man, for he must, early and late, look after and go round and keep the woods, corn and meadows and other things belonging to his office, and he ought to make attachments and improvements faithfully and take delivery by pledge before the reeve, and deliver them to the bailiff to be heard. And he ought to sow the lands, and be over the ploughers and harrowers at the time of each sowing. And he ought to make all those who are accustomed to come do so, and do the work they ought to do. And in haytime he ought to be over the mowers, the making and the carrying of the hay, and in August assemble the reapers and the boon-tenants and the labourers, and see that the corn be properly and cleanly gathered ; and early and late watch so that nothing be stolen or eaten by beasts, or spoilt. And he ought to tally with the reeve all the seed, and boon-work, and customs, and labour which ought to be done on the manor throughout the year.

The hayward received emoluments and rewards analogous to those paid to the reeve. His rent was excused or lowered; he got certain perquisites, such as a measure of seed corn from time to time, or a piece of meadow (a beadle-mead), or a number of sheaves at the harvest. He ate with other manorial officers during harvest, and this was paid for from the lord's purse.

The Lammas lands or meadows near the village were a vital part of the village economy and were carefully enclosed soon after Christmas until the crop had been taken off them in the summer. They were under the special protection of the hayward, whose job it was to see that the fences were not broken down, or that the villagers' cattle did not get into the growing grass, to impound straying animals, and to present their owners as offenders at the manor court.

At haytime the beadle would be going from door to door reminding the villagers that the lord had asked for a 'love-boon' on the morrow. This meant that everyone had to drop their own affairs to help with the lord's hay in the great meadow. After arrival the villagers were divided up into groups and placed in different parts of the field by the reeve and the hayward who would bustle about from place to place to see that all was well, and that work was beginning in earnest. At noon the hayward would blow his horn as a signal for a break for food and drink. At the end of the day the hayward's horn would be sounded again as a signal for cessation of work, whereupon the villagers would make their way towards the manor house for the good evening meal provided by the lord as a reward for their services.

H. S. Bennett also reproduces a woodcut from Queen Mary's Psalter (1553-58) entitled 'The Overseer's rod'. Apart from the rod the overseer is also carrying a cow's horn of the type probably used by haywards.

The hayward was also responsible for guarding the temporary enclosures. In the open field system the separate holdings, cultivated in strips, were protected during the growing season by moveable hurdles or hedge cuttings. When the field was restored to fallow, the hedge, composed of loose cut thorn bushes like a zareba, was removed and re-used to protect the next arable land. The hayward had to ensure that no animals wandered on to the crops, and could impound any straying cattle.

In 1899, Isaac Taylor commented that:

Hayward (a hedgewarden) should be such a common name is accounted for by the fact that formerly hedges were not, as now, permanent or quick-set, but were temporary, renewed every two years, protecting from the cattle that part of the common field which was in tillage. When the field was restored to fallow, the hedge, composed of loose-cut thorns like a zareba, was removed, or rather the thorns were shifted to protect the next arable land. These hedges were not private property, but belonged to the community, and the hayward was therefore a village official usually remunerated by an allotment in the common field or by a garth called the Hayward's Hamm.⁵

There are many examples of this form of remuneration still surviving in the names of fields on tithe maps and other documents. My family farm at Holwell near Sherborne has land known as 'Hayward's Mead', and 'Hayward's Common'. Because the land has been farmed by my family from the 1600s to the late nineteenth century, it suggests that those field names existed even before that date, and may well have been given as payment for services of the yeomen farmers who tilled that land who acted as haywards. Undoubtedly, there are many other examples in other parts of the country. The first volume of the registers of Long Sutton (near Somerton, Somerset) (1559-1653) close with the custom of the manor. Included among many interesting facts is a reference to eight tenants of the West Ward having eight arable plots called 'haywards plottes'.⁶ It seems most unlikely that there were eight haywards serving at the same time, but this could be an illustration of how entitlement to the use of land came about. The name, of course, may also be found associated with roads and bridges: 'Hayward's Lane', from Shillingstone to Child Okeford, and 'Hayward's Bridge'

over the river Stour. These may well have been names associated not with a particular family, but with a particular hayward who served the community. It may be that others with 'occupational names' might well find that their ancestors are remembered in such a way, and might hope, as I do, that one day I will come across an ancestor of mine who actually served as a hayward.

1. Matthews, C. M, *English Surnames*, (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1966)
2. Barber, H, *British Family Names: their origin and meaning*, (London, 1894)
3. Bennett, H. S, *Life of the English Manor (1150-1400)*, (C.U.P., 1977)
4. *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol III, p. 367.
5. *Notes and Queries*, ninth series, vol 3, Feb 1899, p. 145.
6. *Somerset and Dorset Notes & Queries*, vol 24, pp. 96-7.

GEOFFREY HAYWARD

55. THE ILL FATED VOYAGE OF THE *TICONDEROGA* 1852. On 4 Aug. 1852 the 4-masted sailing ship *Ticonderoga* slipped out of Liverpool, with 814 emigrants and 48 crew under Captain Thomas Boyle, heading for Australia. Most of the passengers were from Scotland and the North of England but a few families were from North Somerset, notably the Hando family of Hutton and the Horsingtons of Banwell. The *Ticonderoga* had been launched in New York State in 1849, and with two decks the passengers were crammed in like sardines. The Hando family were being sent 'Downunder' as they were a burden on the parish poor relief, time and again the records show 'cot cloth for Hando child'. I am sure the same was true of many of the passengers who were of the 'poorer classes'.

Unfortunately many passengers did not have a high standard of personal hygiene as they carried lice on their clothes and bodies. So it was not surprising that two weeks after leaving England, typhus broke out and it quickly spread through the ship. Of the other 'double-decker' sailing ships which sailed to Australia in 1852 the number of people dying in the voyages was as follows:¹

<i>Ticonderoga</i> :	850 passengers / 100 deaths
<i>Bourneuf</i> :	830 passengers / 88 deaths
<i>Marco Polo</i> :	934 passengers / 52 deaths
<i>Wanata</i> :	821 passengers / 39 deaths

The *Ticonderoga* entered Port Phillip Bay (south of Melbourne) on 3 Nov. 1852 and tied up at the jetty in what was later called Ticonderoga Bay, near the town of Portsea, and

there it stayed until late December. All the remaining passengers were put into the adjoining quarantine station where another 60 died plus eight members of the crew. The ship eventually berthed in Melbourne on 22 Dec. 1852.

Of the Hando family, the father William, mother Maria (née Slocombe) and two daughters died, leaving three sons; it is believed that a benefactor paid for their upbringing. All their descendants live on the eastern seaboard of Australia from Queensland to Victoria. The Horsingtons survived the voyage and their descendants live in southern Queensland. The Nepean Historical Society arranged a *Ticonderoga* gathering in November 2002, the 150th anniversary of the ship's arrival, when 500 descendants attended, and erected a monument bearing the names of all those who sailed on her.

Three further points of interest: of 15 families from the Scottish isle of St Kilda, only 15 individuals survived: a girl born during the voyage lived to the ripe old age of 92, dying in Sydney in 1944: William and Maria Hando's eldest son Robert and his new bride Eliza (née Kicke) had sailed out on the *Appoline* from Liverpool in July 1852 and arrived safely at Melbourne in October but his three brothers did not make contact with him when they arrived.

The following are the names of the other Somerset families who sailed on the *Ticonderoga*: Appleby, Bell, Collins, Evans, Gallop, Galt, Gange, Gillard, Hale, Horsington, and Maggs.

1. Major J.H. Welch *Hell to Heath*, (Nepean Historical Society, 1969).

KEN HANDO

56. JOHN OKER: AN ORGANIST OR A DYNASTY? One of the relatively few Wells Cathedral related persons to get a mention in the *Dictionary of National Biography* was the 17th century organist John Oker or Okeover.¹ It states that he was appointed in February 1619 (actually it was 1620²) and apart from his musical accomplishments it mentions three biographical details. Firstly he graduated with a degree of M.B. from New College, Oxford on 5 July 1633. Secondly, he married Elizabeth, the daughter of John Beaumont of Wells; this is known as the couple received a legacy under the terms of Beaumont's will of 1634. Finally, he was disciplined by the Dean in 1635.

More recently it has been suggested that there might have been two successive Johns. Colchester reviewed the evidence.³ The suggestion of two Okers is mainly based on a John Oker working at Gloucester Cathedral (which unlike Wells kept its organ through the Commonwealth period) from 1642. At the beginning of this period he married Mary, at Gloucester. At the Restoration he was appointed (or re-appointed) at Wells but died in 1662 or 1663. The Chapter then paid the widow to help support the education of their son, another John, who was one of the choristers. Colchester rightly pointed out that two wives might merely reflected high female mortality. He also reproduced signatures from 1641 and 1662 but decided that they were inconclusive.

This is an attempt to deploy further evidence mainly drawn from the property records but supplemented by the 1642 Protestation returns for Wells. The earliest reference is for 1627 when the Vicars Choral leased to John Oker 'gentleman, one of the Vicars Choral' a tenement in East Wells (now 61 and 63 St Thomas Street) plus a parcel of arable in East Wells field. The term was for three lives and the nominated lives were Elizabeth 'his now wife' and John and George, their sons. The phrase 'his now wife' would seem to imply either a second marriage for at least one of the parties, or a recent marriage, although the second seems less likely if they had a minimum of two children by this date. The reference to Oker as a Vicar Choral reflects the fact that the organist was automatically enrolled amongst the vicars. In 1635 the lease was renewed with one live substituted. George must have died as he was replaced by another son William.⁴

A John Oker signed the Protestation in the last week of February, or first week of March, 1642 as one of the Vicars Choral. Then in 1649 the Commonwealth Survey of confiscated Church lands mentions Oker twice. He is recorded as occupying a house in the Vicars' Close, the sixth from the chapel on the east side. Many of the former vicars still held property in the Close. Also Oker held the East Wells property on his lease of 1635.⁵ On this occasion the ages of the surviving lives were noted: Elizabeth was 50, John (the son) 24 and William 17. At the same time a Widow Oker was in possession of the Organist's or Choristers' house (now a ruin to the west of the cloisters).⁶ Presumably she had been settled there by 1642 when the

administration of the estates collapsed. Unusually she seems to have been living rent free as all others properties have an existing and improved rent but this only has the latter.

In Gloucester on 29 Sept 1650 'Oker, John son of John Oker gentleman late of Wells, Somerset' was apprenticed to Elizabeth Townsend, widow, for seven years to learn the trade of barber surgeon.⁷ Then in 1653-4 'John Oker (late organist)' was admitted as a freeman of Gloucester by gift.⁸

In October 1660 the reinstated Vicars agreed to a new lease of the East Wells property to John Okeover, gentleman, one of the Vicars Choral although the lease was not issued until the following June. The lives were John and his daughters Mary and Demeris. The tenement was said to have been late of Elizabeth Oker. In 1691 Mary Oker, widow, was granted the reversion after the death of her son John who was stated to be the son of the lessee of 1660/1. The new lives were her daughters Mary and Ann. So at some intervening date John, the chorister of 1664, had been substituted for his sister Mary. The Okers seem to have ended their association with Wells soon after as the house was leased to one John Hodges in 1705.⁹

None of this additional information is conclusive as it could be stretched to cover any of two, or even three, organists but not a single John Oker. There are grave difficulties if one attempts to argue for one man who married at least twice and moved to Gloucester for 18 years and returned to Wells but died shortly after. The main problems with this approach are firstly the existence of a Widow Oker by about 1642. It could have been his mother but she would have been very old and it would have been unique for the Dean and Chapter to allow her (as against the late incumbent's widow) to occupy an official residence rent free. This would be particularly generous as her son had both a house in the Close and a leasehold property. More seriously, a remarriage in Gloucester in 1642 seems impossible as the first wife was still alive in 1649. Next if there was only one John how were the Wells properties managed from 1642 to 1660. In part by Elizabeth Oker so if we discount bigamy we must postulate that his mother was also Elizabeth and she lived until almost 1660. Finally, there were two sons called John. Despite infant mortality this was rare if the first survived more than a few days and the earlier John certainly lived to at least 24.

Moving on to the extreme possibility of three organist John Okers, this must depend on the first John being a man of mature years when appointed at Wells. This is feasible as he had been traced to Ingatestone in Essex and had left his name carved in the organ loft at Winchester College prior to his arrival at Wells.¹⁰ He could then have arrived with a son approaching manhood. It would then be this second John who married Elizabeth Beaumont, leased the East Wells house and graduated from New College. His father died in around 1640 and the second John succeeded him while his mother was accommodated in the organist's house. By 1642 his son, the third John, was just old enough to seek his own position at Gloucester where he soon married. There church music continued. In Wells it stopped and in 1643 the organ was smashed. Nevertheless, the second John remained at Wells managing the family properties and probably caring for his mother and earning some money as a musician. He died in the 1650s and his widow, Elizabeth, managed the properties until her son returned at the Restoration. He died soon after but must have been in his late thirties so by the standards of the age this was not remarkable. This scenario does not rely on any doubtful explanations like two sons with the same name. The problem is with the evidence. If there were three Johns one might expect some references to John Oker senior or junior, or a document listing two of them together. None has yet been noted.

So the most plausible explanation is that there were two Johns who were organists. The first arrived in Wells and married Elizabeth Beaumont in the early 1620s. He died in about 1640 and was succeeded by his son, while Elizabeth was the widow allocated the organist's house. In 1642 the younger John moved to Gloucester and soon married which may suggest he already had links there. His mother managed the Wells houses for him until he was able to return in 1660. Although this is the simplest explanation of the facts it does have a problem. It concerns the possession of a house in the Close in 1649. How had the family contrived to retain it, more particularly as the 1649 survey states that Oker occupied it rather than just holding it?

It might be thought that there is an additional problem with either scenario in the youth of the younger John when he was appointed at Gloucester. This is a modern viewpoint. The 17th century saw many very young organists. The great Henry

Purcell was barely twenty when appointed at Westminster Abbey and Thomas Tudway about the same age when appointed organist at King's College, Cambridge.¹¹

So the additional evidence is not conclusive but pending further discoveries the best hypothesis seems to be that the *DNB* entry in fact covers a father and son.

1. Sir L. Stephen and Sir S. Lee (eds) *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1917), XIV, p972.
2. L.S.Colchester 'The first thousand years', in L.S.Colchester, D.Tudway Quilter and A.Quilter *A History of Wells Cathedral School* (Wells Cathedral School, 1985), p30 and D.S.Bailey *Wells Manor of Canon Grange* (Alan Sutton, 1985), p182.
3. Colchester 'The first thousand years' pp30-1.
4. Wells Cathedral Archives, Vicars' lease book for relevant year and A.J. Howard and T.L. Stoaite *Somerset Protestation Returns and Subsidy Rolls* authors, (Almondsbury, 1975), p125.
5. Somerset Record Office DD/CC 116013 p17.
6. Somerset Record Office DD/CC 111733-5 p2.
7. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society *A Calendar of the Register of the Apprentices of the City of Gloucester 1595-1700* (Gloucestershire Records Series 14, 2001), p12.
8. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society *A Calendar of the Register of Freeman of the City of Gloucester 1641-1838* (Gloucestershire Records Series 4, 1999), 2/67.
9. Wells Cathedral Archives, Vicars' lease book.
10. L.S. Colchester 'The first thousand years', p30
11. Sir J. Westrup and F.L. Harrison *Encyclopedia of Music* Collins, (London, 1976), pp436 and 567.

TONY SCRASE

57. THE SOMERSET PEASANTRY, 1846. Some time ago a local historian from the Bridgwater area brought to my notice a series of fascinating articles that appeared many years ago in the *Bridgwater Times* entitled "The Somerset Peasantry". They give a unique insight into the lot of the poor, living in parishes in the vicinity of Bridgwater (and some further afield), during the 1840's. The articles ran almost weekly from 22 Oct. 1846 to 29 Apr. 1847 and were quite unusual for that period in their use of investigative journalism. A 'roving reporter' who refers to himself simply as 'Your Inquirer' was employed to visit the various villages, to interview the 'peasantry' and to inspect their habitats. Investigative journalism was certainly not the norm for provincial newspapers of the time with most venturing no further than 'run of the mill' inquests, crimes, local gossip, news from the town hall and snippets from the 'Nationals'. It is intimated from one of the stinging replies to one of these articles that the idea for the series came from a similar set of articles run by a London based newspaper.

Most of the articles follow a set pattern. The parishes being covered each week are described 'warts and all' with details of local landowners, clergy and overseers. Charities, acts of generosity and wage rates are mentioned along with details of cases where the poor have been unfairly treated. The most fascinating part of the articles are the case studies which appear almost every week. These studies give the initials of a selection of the poor from each parish, details of their housing, any infirmities and any injustices they have suffered. The initials given are genuine and with a little spade work most of those mentioned can be identified by name, for example, 'W- J' of Goathurst is William Jenkins.

Some parishes escape without criticism. One of these is Enmore due largely to the efforts of Rev. John Poole, whereas other parishes, such as Cannington and Kingsbury Episcopi, come in for harsh criticism. One of the 'Inquirer's' intentions is clearly to shame local landlords and overseers into action and he achieves a measure of success as is evidenced by the case of Jemima Field of Westonzoyland. Letters sent in reply to his criticisms are varied in nature, some are quite reasonably argued such as that in the case of Goathurst - other letters are far stronger in nature. The accusations made are, that he doesn't know the full facts, that he shouldn't criticise landowners and that he has had the wool pulled over his eyes by various of the peasantry hoping that by exaggerating their poverty they might solicit a financial reward. The 'Inquirer' uses some articles simply to respond to the criticism he has received in various letters but he is in no way intimidated by the complaints of the gentry, and although admitting mistakes, at times he continues to hit hard at those who try and justify the poor state of the peasantry in their parish.

The following is a series of extracts from the articles and a schedule of villages covered; initials have been included for the 151 case studies although in some cases I have included the real names.

The Somerset Peasantry

In accordance with your desire that I should visit the various parishes connected with the unions in this county and inquire into the present condition and prospects of the labouring population during the ensuing winter, and also the average amount of outdoor relief afforded in the various unions, I on Friday last went to Othery, and relate in this letter

seven cases of the state of the peasantry in that parish. Had time permitted, from the number of persons mentioned to me, I have not the least doubt that I could have given you a long list of instances of extreme distress. But as my object is not to arrange a catalogue of distressed persons, but rather to show the prevailing state of the peasantry of this county from examples taken indiscriminately from the several districts, I deem the following amply sufficient for the purpose. From the almost entire failure of the potato in this parish, and the potato being here the staff of life to the working labourers, I fear that the severest destitution and distress must be the result in the coming winter, from the low rate of wages paid and the extreme high prices of all the necessities of life. The quartern loaf was charged 8d whilst in Bridgwater it was then charged 7½d. Soap, candles etc have during the past week risen one half penny per pound. Potatoes are 10s per bag and wheat is 8s to 9s per bushel. It will be observed that in No 6 the man said that he should be obliged to purchase horsebeans and peas as a substitute for potatoes. I was informed that one man had already been obliged to eat horsebeans from the want of other food. A labouring man related the following to me, as an instance of the little sympathy that exists on the part of the employer for the condition of the workman, but this I hope is not a general feeling. The man took a "job", and on entering on it agreed to purchase a bushel of wheat from the farmer. On the evening of the first day he wished to settle with his employer for this wheat. The farmer, however, refused, saying, on the Thursday following he should be at Bridgwater and would then ascertain the market price and charge the price for it. On his return on the Thursday evening, the man inquired the price of wheat, but his master had not heard! and said that the settling had better be postponed till the job was finished. The work was not completed for a few weeks, and during that time wheat had risen weekly, and the bushel was charged and paid for at the high price, not at the price at which the wheat was when the man had it.

The wages in this parish are 7s a week in Summer and 6s a week in Winter. The labourers are allowed four pints of cider daily. Work is also taken by the job. I have given only the initials of the names of the persons referred to in the following cases but have their names in my possession.

Othery

1. J- K- has a wife and two little children and his wife is near her confinement for her third child. When in work he earns 7s a week but his employment is very irregular. He pays £2 a year rent and lives in what appears to be a barn. The house is divided into two dwelling rooms, by a wall built as high as the wall plate on which the roof rests. There is no ceiling and the rooms are open to the roof. In winter the house is very cold and the inmates during the day hang before the window end door their scanty bedclothes in a fruitless endeavour to keep out the cold. The family are so bare of clothing that the wife washes her clothes and those of the children, dries them before the fire, and puts them on again having no change. The family have not

known the taste of meat or bacon for three months but have occasionally had a salt herring. They have had no potatoes for three weeks and on one occasion were obliged to use barley meal, not being able to procure potatoes or bread. They have had but three ounces of tea during the whole Summer. They have a garden. The early potatoes turned out good, but the later ones have all rotted in the ground. The husband was out of work last winter nineteen weeks. The wife then applied, against his consent and received two loaves of bread from the Union. During the last winter the poor woman occasionally burnt some bread, put it into the teapot, and poured boiling water on it "to keep up a little nature".

2. W- D- has a wife and three little children, the youngest a babe in arms, and another scarce able to walk. When he is able to work he gets about 6s a week, but suffers from bad health. He has a miserable mud dwelling, not yet completed on a corner piece of waste land for which he pays an acknowledgement of 1s per year to the lord of the manor. The roof of this dwelling is but slightly - very slightly - covered with straw, the walls are yet wet. The wall of the back of the house is not finished reaching only to about the height of the doorway. The remaining space to the roof is stopped up with hay and rubbish. To this dwelling there is no door. In its stead there is a slight straw screen which reaches neither the top nor the bottom of the doorway. The dwelling is divided into two rooms, but they are miserably small. It is situated at the bottom of a filthy lane which is a slough of mud and water knee-deep - a most unhealthy situation - and when the evening fogs arise there is no bay to their penetrating to the beds of these poor wretches. There is no garden ground to this hut. The husband when thrashing about three weeks since had a grist of seconds for which he paid 6s. This family never taste any meat. The husband was confined to the house with the measles for three weeks about six weeks since. The family were then allowed six loaves of bread and "a note for 4s worth of food to a shop" in the village. The poor family will suffer much during the ensuing winter from the want of sufficient clothing.

3. J- W- has a wife and one child and his wife is near her confinement for her second child. When at work he earns about 7s per week. His employment however is not constant. He pays 8s a year rent but intends putting up a mud cot on a waste piece of ground. In the house in which he at present lives, when there are hoar frosts at nights, he can see, whilst in bed, the white frost, "like a spider's web, all over the inside of the tiles of the roof - the tiles being turned completely white." This man says he cannot get sufficient potatoes for himself and family to eat, or anything else.

4. S- W- has no family. He rents a small mud hovel of only one room. When he can get work he earns 6d a day. Every Thursday he assists at pig killing. He then gets a "few victuals and at night 6d and a small bit of fry to carry home". Occasionally he has scarce anything to eat. This man has a wooden leg and belongs to Sherborne, he has no relief and will not go into the union. The farmers used to pay him 1s a day. He has at present a "job" to get up a small lot of potatoes, and I heard

the person for whom he was working previous to my seeing him, laughing at his incapability and saying he supposed it would take old Sam Willis a week to get up the potatoes, and from his manner I inferred that his merriment arose from the good bargain he had made and the length of time the poor old man would have the job on hand.

5. T- T- has a wife and seven children, the eldest of whom is a boy of 11 years, his wife has been confined a month and three days on Friday last, with the youngest. T- is in constant employment and earns 7s and his eldest boy 1s a week. The house he lives in is his own, built on the side of a lane, for which an acknowledgement of 1s yearly is paid to the lord of the manor. T- lays out his money in bread, candles, soap etc and the mother has the boy's earnings to provide tea, when she has any, or other little matter for her family. The family seldom get any meat. The husband rents half an acre of potato ground at £9 an acre. There are hardly any potatoes on it, and what there are will be consumed by Christmas. The wife does not know how they will get through the winter. The family are very bad off for clothing.

6. J- B- has a wife and five children. His wife is always ill. He is a thatcher and earns about 7s or not so much, weekly on anchild is a boy of ten years of age but earns nothing, having to attend his father when at work. Lives in the next house to the former person, which is his own and built in the same way as T—s. The man also rents half an acre of potato ground at £9 per acre. He will not have above four or five bags of potatoes above the quantity of seed he put in. As a substitute for potatoes during the winter he will be obliged to resort to horsebeans and peas. He seldom tastes meat.

Westonzoyland

20. P- F- whose husband is transported, has four children, the eldest of whom is a girl fourteen years of age and the youngest, also a girl is one year old. The woman has nothing but what she receives from the union. She pays no rent living in a house belonging to her mother-in-law. None of her children earn anything. The relief given by the union amounts to 3s and three loaves of bread weekly; this relief being equal to 5s per week. The family live upon bread and potatoes when they can get them but they never taste any meat; they are very bad off for clothing, having nothing but what they stand in. The cost of soup is 4d; candles 1½d, and fuel 1s 4d. This woman never gets any tea, coffee or sugar - as a substitute for tea using burnt bread. It will be seen that, after the articles enumerated above are paid for, there remain only 3s 2½d between five persons to satisfy the cravings of hunger, not 7 3/4d each per week.

Broomfield

Sir, Broomfield has not the blessing of a resident clergyman, who would be supposed to take an interest in the welfare of his parishioners, and promote objects that would have a tendency to alleviate the sufferings and forward the future moral advancement of the poorer portion of his flock. The living is in the occupation of the Rev R Crosse, who officiates for the clergyman of Kingstone, and leaves the

care of his parish to a curate, both gentlemen being non-residents. There are gentlemen in the parish of a benevolent character, and who at certain periods of the year bestow their charity on portions of their humbler parishioners; but these periodical acts if individual charity do nothing towards a general and lasting improvement in the condition of the peasantry. That this is the case is borne out by the miserable dwellings and low and destitute condition of the labourers throughout Broomfield - their miserable condition rendered more striking by the contrast afforded in the beautiful and romantic scenery of finely wooded hill and valley throughout the district. I should hope, sir, that my series of letters will set the minds of men of influence and station in the county to devise means to meet the evils which at present exist, and that they will stimulate them to the performance of a duty that has been too long neglected. I would particularly point attention to cases 25, 26 and 28. The wages in Broomfield are for farm labourers 7s and 8s a week besides three pints of cider. Some of the farmers have ceased to allow "liquor", but are paying 1s 6d in lieu of it, as I was informed, because cider now is dear, and 1s 6d is the average cost of the cider they have been allowing each labourer. When potato land is rented it is paid for at the rate of 20s for land sufficient to plant a bag of seed. An acre of ground requires nine bags of seed and therefore this "privilege" to the poor is granted at the rate of £9 per acre. The crop in the parish of Broomfield is miserably deficient - the potatoes being both small and very inferior. A man told me he had been obliged for the last two years to leave the potatoes in the ground, they were so bad and few as not to be worth the labour of taking up. Very few have been grown in either this or the adjoining parish of Goathurst during the past season. The population of Broomfield, according to the last census is 497.

24. J-K- has a wife and one child. He earns 6s week being chiefly employed on the roads. He pays £3 a year rent for a cottage of two rooms; there is a very good garden attached. His dwelling is in a very bad condition. During the late rain the water came in so fast that he was scarce able to lie in bed. The floor of the lower room had several deep holes in it, and the wife was engaged whilst I was there filling them with soil to prevent her child from tumbling about owing to its unevenness. This family gets 1½ lbs of bacon a fortnight, their only other food consisting of dry bread. They also use one ounce of tea weekly, a quarter of a pound of soap, and a quarter of a pound of candles and their firing costs about 11d a week.

25. *Anne Day* is a widow woman and has four children, the eldest of whom, a young man of about twenty four years of age, earns 8s a week and another 2s 6d when the weather permits of working. This woman earns generally about 3s per week and has also 1s for taking care of her mother-in-law, who is bed ridden, and receives 2s and a loaf weekly from the union. The rest of the cottage in which A-D-lives is 40s a year. It is a miserable mud hut, obliged to be supported by a number of props, the walls being considerably out of perpendicular. The rain pours into the bed of one of its inmates and he

was wet with it during the whole night. The tea consumed by this family is two ounces weekly, the soap costs 3½d and fuel 1s 1d. They seldom see meat and live almost entirely on dried bread. There are no potatoes to be bought in the neighbourhood.

26. *Sarah Allen*, a girl sixteen years of age, lives with J- M-, she having taken her in from charity. Sarah Allen when she can get work earns 4d a day; last week she had but one day and a half's work, and has never had a full week. The father of this girl died about twelve months since and her mother in May. After the death of the latter, having no hospitable roof under which to find shelter, she slept in the open air for upwards of a fortnight, and would still have been obliged to do so had it not been for the kindness of S- M-, who has provided shelter in her own humble dwelling for this miserable creature. The poor girl has scarcely any clothes to her back and no shoes to her feet, and has been refused relief from the union unless she will go into the house - refused even the assistance of a pair of shoes. Nothing but the charity of the village neighbours enables her to exist.

27. H- G- has three children; neither able to work. He earns 7s a week when the weather permits. The particulars of rent, &c are the same as in No. 24. He lives in the next house under the same roof.

Cannington

34. J- W- has a wife and seven children, four of whom are at home. The wife is unable to do anything, having received a chill since her confinement with the last child, who is about four months old. During the time I was in the house the poor woman was delirious. The husband, who is not healthy, earns 6s a week when at work. Out of this he pays 1s 6d a week rent for a house of two small rooms, in one of which all the family sleep. J- W- said "I only get dry bread from Monday morning to Saturday night, and God knows what I am going to do to get bread for the children to eat tomorrow, (Tuesday). I am obliged to lose today sir to wait on my wife." The union allows this family 1s 6d and three loaves of bread weekly.

35. H- E- a widow has five children, she does not earn on an average 2s weekly. Pays £4 4s for a house of two rooms. Union allows 4s and six loaves weekly. She is in the clothing club.

36. J- W- has a wife and seven children. He earns 7s, one child 2s, another 1s 6d, and the wife about 1s 4d weekly. Rent £3 10s for two rooms, all the family sleeping in one. Have scarcely any clothing or furniture. Wife is in the clothing club. The rain pours in through the roof so that the inmates are obliged to put vessels to catch it.

Westonzoyland

Jemima Field of the parish of Westonzoyland, widow aged 80 years, blind in one eye, and who has a daughter aged 42 years subject to fits and to which a share of the mothers attention is required. This poor woman and her daughter, during the summer season have been exerting themselves by walking from village to village and collecting a few eggs for sale; but in winter eggs being scarce and the labour being great, their trade is knocked up. The relief doled out to these two

women is 2s and two loaves a week and we are now assured that they are afraid to apply for additional relief, dreading that that they will not be considered fit objects unless TESTED with the union house, with which they have been threatened!!!

Goathurst

William Jenkins has a wife and 7 children, the eldest 12 years of age and the youngest nine months old. He had been out of employ for the past 9 weeks. One of his boys earns 2s 6d and another 2s a week. The rent of the cottage in which he lives is £3 3s a year but has not for some time been paid and he has in consequence received notice to quit. In this house there are two rooms up and two down and it is raised to *the relief of the poor*. There is a small garden attached and the family live chiefly on bread sometimes getting a red herring. They are all very bare of clothing. About 12 months since the man was obliged to sell his Sunday clothes to get a little bread for his children as they had been for the 24 hours prior to his so doing entirely without food. He then applied to the relieving officer for assistance and was refused it. The man has had from the Union for a few weeks, he having been ill, 5s and 6 loaves weekly, but this relief is now stopped, because, being recovered from illness he is considered a hearty man. W- J- has been in a benefit society for 16 years, but being unable to keep up his payments he has been struck out. The boys who go to work get between them a half quarter loaf, which serves both for breakfast and tea.

The reply in the edition of 10 December,

Sir, - I am induced to make some remarks on "Your Inquirers" report, in your paper of 5th November, respecting the parish of Goathurst; as he appears to have written it from information derived from persons he probably knew nothing of, and who have grossly imposed upon him. I fear your inquirer has undertaken a task for which he is not quite qualified, for, in reporting so favourably as he has of this parish, of the condition of its poor, and their being so generally well employed, he could find only one man who had not his full employment, and whose family were not so well off as the others, common sense would have suggested to him, one would have thought, that there must have been something in this man's character and conduct (to which I will not harshly allude) to make him an exception, and if he had enquired of his neighbours he would have been readily told what it is. I am speaking of W- J- and I can state from my own knowledge that this man has frequently been charitably employed by Col. Tynte at more than the general rate of wages in the parish as stated by "Your Inquirer", when no one else would employ him and he has asked for work, and when no other labourer would have been sought. "Your Inquirers" disqualification for his undertaking will also appear from a letter in your paper of this week. As to W- J's having received notice to quit his cottage, it was not altogether because of his rent "having not for some time been paid" though, if your inquirer had known the fact that he has never paid his rent like the other tenants of cottages in the parish, and that he owed three years rent (less 9s only) at last Michaelmas. I presume that he would not have considered his landlord

was not acting very hardly in parting with him for that reason. The cottages on the Halswell Estate are let at rents much below those of cottages in many other places in the neighbourhood and purposely so; and whenever an application is made for any repairs, "whitewash etc" it is attended to ...

The schedule of case studies from the various parishes:

1846

22 Oct Othery - JK, WD, JW, SW, TT, JB, TO

29 Oct Chedzoy - JP, GS, TC, UM, JR

Middlezoy - TB, TG, JP, EP, JK

Westonzoyland - SP, JP, PF, ER, FW, JR

5 Nov Enmore

Broomfield - JK, AD, SA, HG, EP, JP

Goathurst - WJ

Cannington - JH, MC, WB, JW, EE, JW

letter written by James Ling re JR of Chedzoy and SP and PF of Westonzoyland

12 Nov Stockland - WK, JF

Fiddington - TC, CG

Westonzoyland - Jemima Field and defence letter re SP

Westonzoyland - letter by James Ling re JR, SP, JP, PF, ER, FW, JR

Cannington - letter from resident

19 Nov Spaxton - IC, RG

Over Stowey - WC

Reply re case of Jemima Field - her poor relief increased

3 Dec Aisholt - GD, SG (or JG), JB, JC

10 Dec Stawell - WH, CH, TS

Moorlinch - WE, CJ, AA

Grenton - JW, RP, RS

Sutton Mallet

Westonzoyland - Fanny Fisher

Goathurst - facts about WJ

17 Dec Ashcott - JB, TP

Catcott - RD, SH, JT, GD

Chilton Upon Polden - EW

Shapwick

- Edington
24 Dec Cossington
Woolavington
Puriton
31 Dec Stowey - letter re charities
1847
14 Jan North Moor, N Petherton - CT, MF, JS, GP
21 Jan North Petherton (back lane) - WP, JC, ES, JS, WS
28 Jan Huish Episcopi - DB, GM, WA
4 Feb Kingsbury Episcopi - GK, HB, HG, MAJ, SD, RB,
SD, EP, HB, JT
11 Feb Somerton - PB, CG, AW, TM, JW, TR, AC, TT, MW,
RA, SH, JW, WS, JP, SN
18 Feb Kingsbury Episcopi - reply to Robert England re
findings on George Knight, Elizabeth Priddle, Henry
Bonning, Hannah Glover, Simeon Dimmock and James
Tilley.
25 Feb Wagg in Huish - JF, JC,
Pitney - AF
High Ham
4 Mar Langport - EM, JD
Drayton - JH, EA, WE, JP, GP, GS
11 Mar High Ham - defence of article which mentions Cabble
and Fido
18 Mar Curry Rivell - TW, AW, GW, GC, JA, JM, CW, JH,
GR, BB
Wick in Curry Rivell - JB, WA, AT, GS, BF, GG
1 Apr Fivehead - TF, JL, TE
Isle Brewers - TS, HG, TT, ST, RA
15 Apr Puckington - JV, JR, GW, RS
Barrington - JP, HD, MG
29 Apr Compton Dundon - FW, TD, TW, WC, SC
Long Sutton

PAUL MANSFIELD

58. A DISPUTE BETWEEN JOSIAH WEDGWOOD AND WILLIAM MORTON PITT. Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) has been called 'the most successful and original potter the world has ever seen.' It has generally been thought that he got his clay either locally, in Staffordshire or from Cornwall, but an interesting series of letters between him and William Morton Pitt (1754-1836) reveals that he also had a substantial quantity from Dorset. In a letter to Pitt in September 1792 Wedgwood told him: 'In 1766 the late Mr Calcraft sent me a sample of clay from Purbeck requesting me to try if it could be used in our manufacture. I did so, and giving a good report of it he referred me to Mr Hyde who had the land in lease. After some years use of this clay (now called the old blue clay) Mr Hyde sent me samples of your clay (now called new blue clay) of which he had likewise a lease. This also I brought into use, and thus both one and the other of these clays were introduced to a market by the same man.'

The carriage of the clay from Purbeck to Burslem in Staffordshire presented many problems as several of Hyde's letters to Wedgwood indicate: for example on 27 June 1770 he wrote:

It has given me much concern that I have Clay provided for You and am not able as Yet to get freight for it, owing to the great demand for Corn these three months past from this Port to Liverpool, and Until that is Over, I can't expect to get Clay carried at 7/- Or 8/- a ton when 15/- or 16/- per ton is given for Corn - I have wrote to London but this last Week for a friend to apply to the Cheese Ships from Chester and Liverpool to know if any would call in here in their Way, But to which I have rec'd no Answer - And hope shall Succeed. As soon as I am at Certainty will acquaint you.

This gives a good idea of why Wedgwood himself became active in promoting the improvement of roads and the making of canals. By 1784, Hyde had ships of his own for he wrote to Wedgwood, 'the freight is not to be reckoned as Small Vessal of my own bringing it and to which you are exceeding welcome as well as to every service in my power.' This was for the carriage of 100 tons of clay 'half blue and half white.' However five years later Hyde was beginning to run into difficulty.

The top ground that Lyes above the bed of blue clay requires so much Labor to carry away, and the vein so little when got to it, that besides the charge of the top Ground if a great part of the clay should prove bad its impossible the small quantity of good can answer. At this time of the Year when all my People are fully employ'd to take some away

from my present Work would lessen the Quantity there.

I will make a Survey of the Ground, and at any rate before the Season is over if 50 or 100 tons would be material I would endeavour to get it, and another Year prepare in the Winter by carrying off the top Earth so as to get as much as You would want for Yrself provided you think the price would not be too high, for supposing a Larger proportion of it to be bad, of course, the other would come at a dearer rate...

By the summer of 1791 Hyde was claiming that he had lost money by mining this clay and Wedgwood that he had lost even more by buying clay that was no good to him; 'only send good,' he told Hyde on 22 June 1791, 'I have store rooms full of bad.' A few weeks later Hyde wrote to Wedgwood that he has heard a rumour 'that the most respectable persons in the pottery have engaged to take all Mr Pike's clay to vest him with a power at their expense to search for other clay in direct opposition to ours...' and he assured Wedgwood that 'Mr Pike's clay also is nearly at an end.' To this Wedgwood replied a week later that 'if we were to tell you that we wished any one company to supply the whole pottery we should hardly expect you to believe us.'

It was then that Hyde began negotiating with William Morton Pitt, of Encombe and Kingston Maurwood, MP and very rich landowner, to supply Wedgwood with clay from his extensive acres. On 16 June 1791 Pitt wrote to Wedgwood that he and Hyde had appointed one Chifney as their agent and that he was on his way to Staffordshire to submit a plan for Wedgwood's approval. The plan was as follows:

Heads to be considered for the purpose of forming an Agreement between Josiah Wedgwood Esq. and others on the one part and William Morton Pitt Esq. on the other part.

1. Provided the whole of the gentlemen who are under agreement with Pike will assign their interest and concern in the same to Mr Pitt he will do his utmost to serve them with clay till 25 March 1793 (at which time Mr Hyde quits the management at Poole) and from that day forth during the term of eleven years he will covenant absolutely to serve them with whatever clay they may want at the rate of 37/- per ton laid down at Etruria wharf in good condition – if laid down at any other wharf or place more or less in proportion to the difference of canal freight.
2. Mr Pitt will have an agent in Staffordshire to attend to the wishes and wants of the manufacturers who will do his utmost to have clay delivered in good condition and sufficient quantities; but in order to do the latter fully he hopes and expects every gentleman will give him in writing at or near Lady Day the probable quantity he shall want in the course of the year; from which quantity it may be optional with him to deviate at will

provided the same is not done for sinister purposes or to injure Mr Pitt and provided also that he uses no other Purbeck clay or clay got from within ten miles of the isle of Purbeck in the county of Dorset.

3. Mr Pitt will have an agent at or near Poole to superintend the shipping, provide clay-sheds, supply boats, and give whatever aid and assistance may be requisite to render his plans effective and to serve the manufacturers in the best manner; and in order to ensure the qualities of the clays Mr Pitt raises and exports he will engage to have a person properly instructed for the express purpose of superintending that part of the business.
4. Mr Pitt's clay being at this time of marketable and highly approved character he will have no objection to samples being taken, and in case of a falling off in quality, any individual or individuals shall have an opportunity to determine his or their agreement by six months notice, if on complaint to Mr Pitt's agent for the time being, the clay is not raised to the same quality in three months. Should a second falling off happen, then a notice of six months shall determine each individuals contract finally and absolutely.
5. As, provided there should be a falling off in quality every individual has it in his power to determine his agreement: in order to secure Mr Pitt from the consequences of engaging to perform too much, it is therefore proposed that provided his mines shall be so far exhausted before the end of the term for which he engages, as to make the expense equal to or exceed what he received for the clay, he shall then have it in his power to determine the agreement by giving twelve months notice, but not otherwise.
6. The agreement determined in this way shall preclude Mr Pitt from opening any new mines on Purbeck for twenty years unless the cancelled agreement is allowed to revive and come into full force and effect, or the party or parties shall refuse to give force and effect to the same within ten days after applied to for that purpose.
7. In order to secure the Clay Co. against future monopolies Mr Pitt proposes to renew the agreement which shall be entered into, at the end of every four or seven years as shall be most agreeable. With this provision: should either party refuse to renew it, it might be fairly inferred intentions were hostile, and either would have opportunity to guard against the consequences seven years before hand. - whereas should Mr Calcraft refuse to renew Pike's lease or grant a new one to the Clay. Co. they will have only four years to guard against monopoly, or such advance in price as they now seem so much to dread.
8. Should Mr Pitt's offers be at this time refused, and such advantage of his interest taken as the moment may afford, it is presumed every individual of the Clay.Co will have liberty to forget this paper, its provisions and contents as Mr Pitt will not then have so much in his power but be compelled to be guided by the circumstance which may arrive.

Wedgwood seems to have been dilatory about accepting the proposals. On 10 January 1792 Chifney wrote to say that he planned to visit him again to discuss the carriage of the clay

and complaining that 'the cruel usage I meet with from the agent of the Duke of Bridgwater' (the 'Canal King') is beyond conception.' Concerning the 'plan' Wedgwood finally replied on 12 April 1792 that he could not as one individual comment but that he would consult the other members of the company and in the meantime any more information that Chifney could supply would be welcome. On 25 May Chifney wrote to Wedgwood that Mr Pitt was worried at not having had an answer to his plan and not having been called upon; a few days later he wrote again assuring Wedgwood that it had always been Mr Pitt's intention to give preference to Wedgwood's requirements but that 'having had no answer to the agreement Mr Pitt determined to sell to no one for less than 38/- per ton and to such as should not deal constantly with him for a much higher price' but Mr Wedgwood's will would be 'his guide for everything that can be requested in reason.'

By the end of July Morton Pitt was getting impatient and evidently suspected Wedgwood of making treacherous arrangements: 'whilst you are moving heaven and earth against Mr Chifney's plan and forming a kind confederacy against it you signify to me and to Mr Hyde that you approve of the plan itself and the agent. This conduct I do aver to be invidious and that it is unworthy, especially of a man so high in reputation in the world as Mr Wedgwood, to be guilty of such duplicity.' Wedgwood was understandably annoyed. He called the letter, 'the language of passion' and said that Mr Pitt accused him before hearing him; he continued that Mr Chifney had two plans, first 'the plan' which was agreed, and secondly 'the agreement' which was never approved; he then re-iterated what Morton Pitt accused him of: 'a design to seize upon your land, to bear from you the natural rights you have to the product of your estates and to transfer to myself the interest of the landowners, that I endeavoured to lull you into security, and deceive you into an idea that I was friendly to make you a more easy conquest, and that the vigilance of Mr Chifney had detected this deep scheme...' Although Wedgwood said that he is 'almost ashamed of denying these charges or calling upon you for evidence they are so truly ridiculous' he proceeded to do so in a letter of great length, rhetorical power and sound reasoning. It would be tedious to quote it all, but a few points are of particular interest; it appears that Morton Pitt had said that

'England and even Europe had not set bounds to my researches for clay; that I had sent even to Botany Bay and got specimens from thence so intent was I upon injuring the person for whom I was at the same time professing no small degree of respect ...To the first of these allegations I plead guilty; nay I will acknowledge an aggravation which you do not seem to be acquainted with. I have been for nearly forty years searching in different parts of the world for earths, stones and minerals such as had, or might be brought to have, some relation to the manufacture I am engaged in, and I still feel inclined to continue in this practice as long as I live. I have sent a messenger on purpose at the expense of several hundred pounds, upwards to three thousand miles after a clay pit... I must observe however that the affair of the Botany Bay clay has been misrepresented to you. It happens that I never sent there for clay or anything else but was favoured with a specimen of clay from thence by my good friend Sir Joseph Banks, and you may learn what use I made of it in Vol.80 of *The Philosophical Transactions* p.306 and the note on p.87 of the first part of Dr Darwin's *Botanic Garden*.'

Undoubtedly Wedgwood made a very good case and Morton Pitt's reply of 12 August 1792 was patronizing; 'having had a house full of company and many other engagements lately I have been prevented from answering your letter of 27th July till this moment. It would be extreme injustice if I did not give testimony to its ingenuity and to the great ability it displays; at the same time I can not find much argument in it or that you have in any degree cleared yourself from the accusation my letter contained.' Pitt accused Wedgwood of duplicity in continuing to deal with Pike and added 'that Mr Calcraft and I should not be very desirous of your company continuing to be clay merchants is natural enough, that we should prefer that the supply of raw material should remain in the hands of the land owners instead of our being in your power is equally natural and that you are not precisely the brother we should wish to have near us is also true...' Wedgwood explained that for his part he was fearful of the rumour of a monopoly being formed between landowners and the clay owners which the potters would naturally wish to prevent, and that he was dealing with Pike before Morton Pitt ever proposed any plan. Pitt replied that he knew of only one original plan, drawn up by Mr Chifney after conferring with his, Mr Pitt's, solicitors, and added insultingly that he had 'little leisure or inclination for a minute discussion of the exact import and precise meaning of the words Plan, Agent and Agency ... Wedgwood must ask Chifney or Hyde for the explanation of words!'

In his reply of 30 August 1792 Wedgwood protested at Morton Pitt's condemnation of him for invidiousness and duplicity and 'calling upon a respectable company of manufacturers to let plain dealing and sincerity take the place of art and duplicity,' and he continued that they

'brought no such charge against Pitt but said from the very beginning that they thought a division of power the safer measure, and as you still profess your wishes to be for the mutual benefit of both parties I hope we can not long disagree.

There can indeed be no danger to you with all your hundreds of acres of this clay; but we might at once have put ourselves into your power. However there is a way and not unknown to yourself to prevent either party from acquiring inordinate power of channels by which the clay is supplied to the pottery and to increase them has accordingly been our object; to diminish them has been yours. We, therefore, still wish success to the plan you at first announced to us, "a constant supply, open to every consumer" whoever the parties are that put it in execution, and if we must not be good friends with you on this plan the fault will lie with yourself...'

This is from the last letter in the sequence, and Wedgwood appeared to have had the final word but the dispute may have shortened his life for he died just over two years later at the fairly early age of 65. Several indentures of later years up to 1798 are agreements between Morton Pitt, John Calcraft and 'merchant Chifney of Liverpool' concerning the lifting of clay from the wastes of Purbeck and the carriage thereof. None of Josiah's three sons was interested in the pottery, though all were talented and inventive; John, the eldest, was interested in horticulture, and Tom the youngest in physics, metaphysics and photography. Josiah, the middle son, aspired to be a country gentleman and to that end he and his brother Tom in 1799 bought the estates of Eastbury and Gunville in Dorset, a short day's journey from Morton Pitt's estates. There Josiah was an innovative and enlightened farmer and landlord and planted many trees still there today. In 1803 he was made Sheriff of Dorset and must have been something of a thorn in the side of Morton Pitt. The friends of the Wedgwoods were such men as Coleridge and his brother George, Wordsworth, Sydney Smith, Thomas Poole and Sir Joseph Banks. However the Wedgwood sojourn in Dorset was short for Josiah soon found it impractical to run the pottery from so far away, sold up and returned to Staffordshire. With all England to choose from surely it had not been pure co-incidence that brought them to buy their

country property so near to Morton Pitt's wide estates?

This article is compiled from photocopies of transcripts DRO, 526/2 and 526/3. The original letters are the property of the Wedgwood Museum Trust (ref. E 11 30438 -30440, E 11 10058 -10061. and L 81 14332, 14333) Quotations are by courtesy of the Wedgwood Museum Trust, Barlaston, Staffordshire. I am most grateful for the help of Mrs Lynn Miller.

SUSAN RANDS

59. COMPLAINT AGAINST A CUSTOMS OFFICER, 1788. In August 1788 the Board of Commissioners of Customs, London received a complaint, signed 'Hon^{ble} S —', about Thomas Thorne, a Riding Officer in the Customs Service at Weymouth. The Commissioners forwarded the letter to the Customs officers 'for their observations and opinions' and 'to charge Thorne with what is here alleged'.¹

Happening occasionally to pay a Visit to Weymouth for the use of the Sea Waters, I took an opportunity to enquire into different Matters and things amongst those that struck my Observation was the great Smuggling carried on upon this Coast particularly from Portland Island as far West as Burton and find on further investigation that Thomas Thorne the Riding Officer at Chickerell on whose Station the greatest part of the Smuggling is carried on the different Parishes in his District being almost wholly maintained by that Illicit Practice is a very Insolent Inattentive Man to his Duty and instead of residing constantly on his spot his Constant Residence is at Weymouth. You may always find him over his Glass at a Publick House known by the White Horse at which House his horse is also kept it is true he rents a House in Chickerell Parish which he visits about twice a week, weather permitting The Smugglers knowing his time of coming Manages their Business accordingly well knowing his time of return to Weymouth they never fail to fix a Spy which as soon as they sees him fixed in the Publick House in Weymouth they then carry on the Smuggling without the least fear or interruption to the great Injury to His Majestys Revenue and the Encouragement of that accursed Illicit Practice. I could point out a good many Defects in this Officers conduct but let this suffice for the present. What I have above pointed out respecting his constant Residence at Weymouth as well as frequenting the said Publick House is well known to almost any person in this Place I have been told that if the Supervisor wants him instead of seeking him on his Station he goes to the House at Weymouth where his is sure to find him. The Smuggling on this Officers Station is carried on to a very Alarming and Wonderful Degree. If Y^r Hon^{rs} please to cause an enquiry into this Officer's Conduct you will find the Matters of what I wrote to be Matters of Fact and such as I am sure Thorne the Officer cannot contradict. I thought it my Duty to print out how the Revenue is injured on this Officers Station as I am a well wisher and a Friend for the Interest of the Crown.

PS. Thorne the Officer Sleeps and Boards with a Miss Hancock in Weymouth by the Year.

Many Riding Officers probably found it difficult to live near their place of duty because many small villages did not have empty houses available, or places to rent. James Saunders, a Riding Officer at Osmington, had the same problem in 1793. He rented the Osmington Vicarage, but on being served notice to quit he found that only in Melcombe Regis, where new properties were being built, could he find another house. He applied to the Commissioners to live outside the area of his patrol, and it was granted.² That Thomas Thorne lived in Weymouth was not, therefore, a cause for concern because Chickerell was within easy riding distance of the area that he had to patrol.

Thomas Thorne's father, Edward Thorne, had been a Waiter and Searcher for the Customs service, based at Abbotsbury. When Thomas Thorne joined the service he was given the post of Riding Officer, covering the coastline from Chickerell to Abbotsbury. Portland was not his responsibility; John Martin, a Riding Officer based at Wyke covered that area. On horseback, armed only with cutlass and pistol, they patrolled the coast gathering information about contraband goods and recording the movement of ships.³

The letter from London was passed immediately to Henry Thornhill, Supervisor of Ridings Officer at Weymouth. He immediately dismissed the charges and said that Thomas Thorne was 'a most Diligent and Vigilant Officer'. Although the returns of seizures made west of Weymouth are patchy and do not include all smuggled items, we know that in 1788-9, Thorne picked up 137 casks of brandy, mainly in the area between Puncknowle and Langton Herring. A 'cask' was a small barrel holding about 4 to 5 gallons, so that means that Thorne was responsible for picking up about 617 gallons of brandy. His share of that seizure would amount to at least £41. There is no record of the tobacco, rum or gin picked up, but smugglers always carried those goods, with brandy forming only a relatively small part of any cargo. Thorne, therefore, did have some success as a preventive officer. This complaint, to the Commissioners, even if it had some substance, was not an accurate picture of Thorne's approach to his duty.

However – perhaps because of the complaint – he was transferred to Weymouth as a Tide Surveyor shortly afterwards.⁴ His salary remained the same at £50 per annum (and that, incidentally, had not changed since the early 1730s!) His new post required him to intercept and board each ship entering Weymouth harbour, and securing the hold until Searchers could board. He was responsible also for the supervision of Tide-Waiters, Watchmen and Watermen. He continued to live at Chickerell, where he rented a house at £17 p.a.⁵

1 Public Record Office, Cust 59/81, Commissioners of Customs to Outports.

2 P.R.O., 59/19, Outport Records, Weymouth, May 1791 to March, 1794.

3 P.R.O., Cust 18/95; Cust 18/457, Quarter Bills of salaries due to Customs Officers.

4 P.R.O., Cust 59/18, Outport records, Weymouth, Aug 1788 to May 1791.

5 P.R.O., Cust 59/19, Weymouth.

GLANVILLE J. DAVIES

BOOK REVIEWS

Dulverton & District Civic Society, *The Book of Dulverton Brushford, Bury and Exford* (Halsgrove, 2002). Pp. 160, illustrated in black and white, £19.95 locally or direct on 01884 243242 or sales@halsgrove.com. The parish of Dulverton which includes Bury, Brushford and Exbridge, lies on the edge of the Exmoor National Park and is intersected by the River Exe and the fast-flowing River Barle. This book is the compilation of newcomers and well established members of the local community and as such the sense of ‘community’ is everywhere throughout this volume, and as such is predominantly filled with material from the 20th century. There are 18 chapters on varied topics including houses, estates and families, school days, hunting, farming, the armed forces, and the Heritage and Exhibition Centre. Many local characters are recorded including the eccentric Revd. J.B. Philby, Arthur Chilcott who often over indulged his desire for cider and was able to do an exceptional impression of Winston Churchill, the poacher Alec Passmore and John Ford the gentleman’s hairdresser.

The photographs are many and varied but a few of those which stand out include the school gardening class, the last train from

Dulverton in 1908, the Yeomanry on Winsford Hill in 1909 and the 'Patent Medicine man' at Bury. Apart from a few typographic errors and the poor reproduction of the Dulverton charter this is a finely produced volume which is particularly dominated by material on Dulverton. However this is a book which the local community should be proud of, especially for the depth in which the last 100 years or so have been recorded in great detail including the discovery of Edmund Valentine's tombstone in a cow shed.

A J.W.

Hilary Binding and W.H. (Ben) Norman, *James Date's Exmoor & West Somerset* (Halsgrove, 2002). Pp. 159, illustrated in black and white throughout, £19.99 locally or direct on 01884 243242 or sales@halsgrove.com. James Date, Watchet's first professional photographer, lived in Myrtle House, Swain Street in the mid 1800s and perhaps started trading as early as 1840 in the bustling harbour town. The introduction to this volume, written by Professor John Hannavy, brings alive the life and works of the prolific James Date, his studio and family. He describes how Date's studio would have been equipped with a range of what looked like instruments of torture, but were in fact clamps to hold his subjects in place; concealed behind crinolines or long coats, and behind tables, the adjustable stands could hold a head in place, offer a comfortable rest for a raised arm, or keep a recalcitrant child from moving. Details of the photographic process, different plate sizes and makes of camera are also included which will be of great interest to modern day photographers. Date was also an astute businessman offering many different products at varying prices at his business outlets, including *The Handbook to Watchet and Neighbourhood*, loose prints for scrap albums and views for use with a stereoscope.

There are some superb photographs of historical importance of Date and the tools of his trade and others of note include Watchet harbour, the broad-gauge locomotive, builders at the Orchard Wyndham estate lodge, Nettlecombe House, Comberow station with the West Somerset Mineral Railway workings, Cleeve Abbey, Higher Town Minehead and the harbour. Then there are photographs which capture the romance of the period such as the gentleman and the small boy fishing,

pictures of Combe and Myrtle Cottage, ice on the cliffs, and the view across Cleeve Bay. All of the photographs (apart from the introduction) are captioned by two experts on the history of West Somerset, and as an added bonus the publishers have included the complete contents of Elizabeth Date Davis's album which was given to her by her Grandpa.

Although the purist would not like to see the images cleaned and enhanced, I am sure there are those who may be put off by the appearance of some of the photographs, as they detract from the superb quality of the subject matter they record. The use of italic text for the captions is off putting although this is not a reflection of the intellectual content, only their appearance. For anyone with an interest in West Somerset this will make a fine gift.

A J.W.

Eric Olsen, *Shaftesbury Recollections*, (Tempus Publishing, 2003), pp. 128, numerous illustrations, paperback, £11.99. Those who have already taken an interest in the history of Shaftesbury will recognize the author as the person who, a few years ago, produced a very well researched book on the history of the town. He has now followed up this earlier work with a fine collection of early photographs taken in and around Shaftesbury. To the author's great credit, he has examined the photographs carefully and provided the readers with some interesting and well-informed captions. As one might expect, the most interesting photographs are those where there are people to be seen. The innocence of those who gathered around to stare in awe at the photographer is very appealing. In some instances, the children have been dressed in their best hats to stand and pose for the photographer and, in others, people 'casually' places themselves in strategic positions so that they will be captured in the photograph. The presence of the photographer must have excited an intense interest. But even where there are few people, the uncluttered, sometimes almost deserted roads that earlier generations enjoyed, are themselves a source of surprise. Even in more recent times the remarkable contrast between carnival processions as they were only fifty years ago, and present day carnivals, is virtually to peer into another age.

Gold Hill, of course, figures prominently and the photograph

on page 37 showing the cottages of Gold Hill around 1905 and some of the children posing for the camera, has an interesting caption. Eric Olsen points out that the inhabitants who lived there belonged to 'one of the poorer areas of Shaftesbury'. Nowadays, cottages on Gold Hill sell for £250,000. If we have a sense of wonderment at the life they led in 1905, how much more surprised would they have been to know how different our lives are.

G.J.D.

Hilary Binding, *The Book of Dunster: a changing community* (Halsgrove, 2002). Foreward by Walter Luttrell. Pp. 160, illustrated in black and white throughout, £19.95 locally or direct on 01884 243242 or sales@halsgrove.com. The dust jacket for this volume provides exactly the same introduction to this review by stating that 'Dunster must be the most written about, most pictured and most visited village in West Somerset'. But behind the picture postcard views is a world which was once all encompassed by the magnificent castle and its powerful occupants, which now is one which relies heavily on the tourist trade for survival. These changing fortunes are perfectly recorded by the author for this volume in the 'Halsgrove and Community Histories' series.

There are chapters on the early years, war and peace, the cloth trade, work and play in the 18th century, the 19th century, families at the castle, the church and its people, stories and customs, Dunster Marsh, shopping, growing up in the 1930s and '40s, life between the wars, growing things, special events, sports and organisations, and the present and future. Needless to say there is something for everyone in this book including some little used material brought to light for the first time: the biography of Edward Sweet, an 18th century businessman and the Mogg's pottery accounts. Faced with a mass of manuscript and photographic material it must have been difficult to decide what to leave out, but what has been included leaves the reader with a wide ranging account of one of Somerset's favourite small towns. Coherent, and easy to read, it is difficult to find anything to criticise about this volume, especially the scope of the work undertaken to record 20th century life in Dunster.

A J.W.

Margaret Smith (ed), *From Victorian Wessex : the diaries of Emily Smith, 1836, 1841, 1852* (Solen Press, 2003, pp. 175, line drawings, £12.99) available from Solen Press, 41 Friars Quay, Norwich, NR3 1ES, with cheques payable to M. Smith.

Dorset Record Office has some diaries of Emily Smith, and her daughters, but the 1852 diary was found some years ago in a Norwich bookshop by Margaret Smith's husband. Now, in this publication, Margaret Smith has done everyone a great service by piecing together the diaries of these years, and accompanying them with short commentaries and useful explanations.

The diary entries are those of Emily Smith (1817-1877). She was born in Paris and lived in Bath until her marriage to the Rector of West Stafford near Dorchester. Her diaries of 1836, 1841 and 1852 cover her marriage and the childhood of eight of her twelve children. Although she mentions visits to Ventnor and Madeira, her life centred around West Stafford, and her chief concerns were with family and friends. She moved in a society which included the Pinney family, the Churchills, the Revd Henry Moule, and Thomas Hardy. Indeed, readers will be surprised at the extent of her social connections, and will recognize many of the names mentioned. Perhaps the most poignant entries are those where she concerns herself with the health of her family and friends, and records the treatment they underwent in the hope of a cure. Victorians experienced suffering and reminders of death to a greater degree than we in this day and age. Family members and friends soldiered on while suffering from tuberculosis until they were too weak to continue. Doctors prescribed treatment that now seems bizarre - croton oil applied externally to cure inflammation of the lungs! - and visited even the desperately sick only occasionally.

The diaries give an intimate view of Victorian family life, and the commentaries of the editor, Margaret Smith, are unobtrusive, succinct, and well informed.

Altogether a most delightful journey into the Victorian period.

G.J.D.

NOTES

THE MEANING OF 'F' SEAT. Roger Heaton now feels, after extensive enquiries in the 'Regional Furniture Newsletter', and the opinion of Dr. York of the V & A, Dr. Browett and others, that 'F' in the auctioneer's list, when describing seats, must stand for 'false'.

We are grateful to all those who took the trouble to investigate this and who wrote to give their opinions. (*Dorset Ed.*)

THOMAS RACKETT'S ABSENTEEISM. In Part 356, Sept 2002, pp. 156-166, an article was published entitled 'Was Thomas Rackett guilty of absenteeism?' The article admitted that we do not know who wrote the letter to the Bishop, and to the Marquis of Lansdowne, denouncing Rackett for his persistent absence from his parish of Spetisbury. Immediately after the article was published, Dr. Michael Flame wrote to me to say that during his research he had read a copy of 'a letter from Okeden to Lansdowne which detailed Rackett's shortcomings'. He recalled that the letter was to be found in the papers of the Ilchester family which had been deposited in the County Record Office at Dorchester.

I am very grateful to Dr. Flame for this information. Ironically, Rackett, who had no idea who had written the letter, regarded Okeden as his friend. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find the letter among the Ilchester papers that have been catalogued. If anyone should come across the letter, we would like to publish it as a sequel to the article. (*Dorset Ed.*)

SOME ELIZABETHAN BUILDING TERMS REVISITED. Colin Brett's interesting note entitled 'Some Elizabethan Timber Building Terms' (*SDNQ* XXXV, 179-81) contains expressions that call for further comment. *Field of houses*, meaning 'a bay or the space between the major timber frames of a house', may for instance be compared with the nineteenth-century Wiltshire use of *field* to signify 'space or bay between beam and beam in a barn'.¹ *Somer* or *sommer* corresponds to modern *summer*, 'horizontal bearing beam'. The underlying sense is 'pack-horse', the link being that both referents are capable of bearing great

weights. The word *horse* has given rise to comparable metaphors, as in *saw-horse* and *vaulting-horse*.

According to Brett, *virses*, *virstes* or *firsts* are 'verge boards'. In fact, however, *first* means 'inward roof or ceiling of a chamber' or 'ridge-pole',² the latter sense probably being the relevant one in the present context. Compare Elworthy's West Somerset *vuss*, which he glosses: 'the ridge piece, or piece to which the rafters are fixed at the apex of the roof'.³ The consonants of Elworthy's variant displays typical west-country features, with initial *v* for *f*, loss of *r* by assimilation before *st*,⁴ and simplification of the latter cluster.⁵

First is an ancient noun descended from Old English *fyrst* and cognate with German *First*, 'roof-ridge',⁶ but by the nineteenth century it was apparently to be found only in some dialects. West Somerset *vuss*, mentioned above, may be compared with the synonymous Cheshire *first-piece* and Shropshire *first-pole*,⁷ in which *first* has essentially nothing to do with the adjective *first* in the sense of 'primary'.

1. Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary* (1898-1905; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

2. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).

3. Wright, op. cit.

4. Martyn F. Wakelin, *The Southwest of England* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1986), pp. 29-31.

5. Compare for instance *fuss* for 'first', *laass* for 'last' and *duss* for 'dust' in Harold Orton and Martyn F. Wakelin, *Survey of English Dialects*, 4 (Leeds: Arnold, 1968), 3, 808-10 and 881-82.

6. Simpson and Weiner, op. cit.

7. Wright, op. cit.

J. B. SMITH

ON THE SENSE OF *ROVELESS TENEMENT*. Several notes have recently appeared in *SDNQ* (e.g. XXXIV, 297, 442 and 443) on *roveless*, *roofless*, *roughless*, *rowlease* or *rollesse tenements* in Somerset and neighbouring counties. In the first-listed of these notes, Colin Brett suggests that, originally, *rollesse* and variants. were 'used in the West Country to describe a wasted or unprofitable land without a house'. In the last, on the other hand, he reaches the conclusion that by the second half of the eighteenth century *roveless* or *roofless* 'had evolved to describe land not having a house, but without indicating its condition'.

There seems to be an assumption here that the first element of these forms is *roof*, a word that can of course be used to signify 'house' on the *pars pro toto* principle, while the second represents the suffix *-less*, as in *faultless* or *mindless*. In fact the best key to the phrase in question is the version *rough-lease tenement*, as in documents from Deverill in Wiltshire from the period 1750-90. Here, the first element is *rough*, and the second is *lease* in the sense of 'pasture' or 'open land subject to rights of pasturage'. The Wiltshire place-name *Rowley*, which recurs in several other counties, is also relevant, though the second element of this is *lea* rather than *lease*.¹

Part of the confusion arises from the fact that in Old English *rûh*, meaning 'rough', 'uncultivated', the final consonant could vary, leading to further variations at a later stage, especially when the original sense and form had been forgotten. Compare the variation in the west-country place-names *Roborough*, *Rowberrow* and *Ruborough Hill*, all of which mean 'rough hill'.² The tautologous addition of *Hill* in the third of these demonstrates, incidentally, that the meaning of the second element had also been forgotten.

How, though, are we to explain the last part of the expression *rowless-thing*, which occurred in Wiltshire, and no doubt farther afield, for 'waste and unprofitable land'? I would suggest that *thing* here is a legal term for 'possession', '(piece of) property'. Thus, some Wiltshire woods called the Broyl of Collingbourne were referred to in a legal document as 'another *thing*', that is, 'another piece of property'.³ Given this meaning of *thing*, *rowless-thing* and *roofless tenement* are virtually synonymous.

1. George Edward Dartnell and Edward Hungerford Goddard, *A Glossary of Words Used in the County of Wiltshire* (London: English Dialect Society, 1893), rpt. as *Wiltshire Words*, ed. Norman Rogers (Avebury: Wiltshire Life Society, 1991), p. 258; Eilert Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edn. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), p. 394.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 396, 394, 389, 395.
3. Dartnell and Goddard, *op. cit.*, p. 135; cf. J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), pp. 17, 943, headword *thing*, sections 12a and b.

J. B. SMITH

QUERIES

An American researcher, Prof. Joel Eis at Grand Forks, North Dakota, is trying to prove that a former Somerset resident was the possible author of the first play in English in the New World. Here is a summary of what is known:

On 27 August, 1665, (a Sunday) two men performed a play called 'Ye Bare and Ye Cubbe' in a tavern in rural Virginia. It was written by a third man, one William Darby. A few months later they found themselves in court, required to perform the play and show the court the text because of the potential for the seditious content. It was definitely political in intent and therefore quite important.

There is no extant text.

The William Darby I am looking for is listed as having been indentured and transported from England in January 1659. Any William Darby in England after that date is not the right one, but this information can narrow down the field if it is connected to baptismal records already in hand.

In order to confirm the connection of William Darby, possibly of Somerset, to the region and/or clandestine theatre, Professor Eis is looking for a few specific facts:

1. Confirmed baptism or other information on a William Darby born in 1640 going to America in 1659; could be something in a family letter, for example.
2. Any kind of arrest record for a William Darby aged about 17-20 years old, in 1656-1658.
3. A quotable mention of illegal theatre in the town, with or without Darby connected, with source notation.
4. An arrest notation for William Darby for actually being involved in an illegal theatrical event, 1656-1658.
5. Any old family correspondence wherein a person was a member of the audience for the performance or the trial.

Joel Eis, 121 Chestnut Street, Grand Forks, North Dakota, 58201, U.S.A., e-mail: wanderfoot@aol.com.

CORRECTION

In Part 357, March 2003, pp. 213-215, 'Not Durotriges but Durotrages', the text should read 'and Lindiniaie' on line 9, and 'has been read C(IVITAS)' on line 14.

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