
holiday in the week, such a clash of spiritual observance and physical exuberance was inevitable, particularly in the highly charged religious atmosphere of the 17th century (D5/28/20/17, 21, 22).

One final example from Winterbourne Kingston, a Dorset parish within the jurisdiction of the Dean of Sarum, relates an incident in 1625, both amusing and poignant. Robert Gomer was presented for throwing snowballs in the churchyard at Dorothy Burley *'and beat her into the Church porch that she could not goe home'* (D5/28/25).

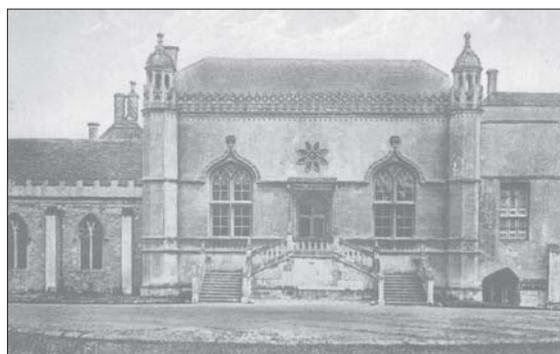
Despite being generally fairly complete and well-ordered, some misfiling of the church court and visitation papers has occurred, due possibly to jurisdictions sharing the same officers, as much as to later 'tidying up' of the papers. Files often have covers made up of original documents, often on parchment. One file from the Deans' court for 1628 had been wrapped in a damaged probate account presented at the court of the Archdeacon of Sarum in 1640, for the estate of a male called Taylor (his Christian name and parish are missing). Some detective work enabled it to be identified and to be placed with the related papers in the probate collection of the Archdeacon. The account mentioned a bequest from the will of John Burt of Shrewton to Nicholas, son of Mr Taylor. That will, which was proved in 1630, mentioned wife Margaret. The link with Shrewton narrowed the search which threw up an administration bond for Christopher Taylor, granted to his wife Margaret in 1640. With the bond was an inventory whose total value was the same as the sum given in the probate account. The Burt/Taylor association was confirmed by the parish register, which recorded the marriage of Christopher Taylor and Margaret Burt on 23 October 1631 (P2/S/194).

Steven Hobbs

CATHOLICS AT LACOCK

The Papists' returns of 1706 recorded 131 Catholics in twenty-five parishes in Wiltshire and in 143 parishes, there were no Papists. The parish of Lacock was one of the negative returns.

Elizabeth, Dowager Countess of Shrewsbury, a Catholic kinswoman of the Talbot family, occupied their seat, Lacock Abbey, on a lease arrangement during a period which included the minority of W.H. Fox Talbot, the 'father' of modern photography. She was herself of recusant background, a daughter of Lord Dormer. She brought her own household to the Abbey and during her tenancy she maintained a Catholic priest, the Rev. George Witham. She died in 1809, aged 85.



Lacock Abbey

A Wiltshire General Quarter Sessions documents records that the Countess appeared with others before Sir Edward Baynton, Sir James Long and James Montague,

esquire, at the house of John Awdry in the parish of Lacock, on 18 October 1791 and: 'did verbally take, make and subscribe the Declaration and Oath appointed to be taken, made and subscribed by persons professing the Roman catholic religion.'

Members of the Lacock household, who also took the Oath, were:

James Smith, *butler*
George Hunt, *footman*
John White, *under-butler*
Jane Elstone, *servant*
Hester Brown, *servant*
Margaret Tilbury, *servant*

also

Joseph Barnes, *butler to Mrs Porter of Lacock*

A register of baptism was clearly kept during the years 1792-1809; the original is unfortunately missing, but a transcript (originally made by the Rev. W. Vince Smith) is in the library of the Society of Genealogists and the register is endorsed from the Rev. Mr George Witham's papers. Entries have been reduced to standard form.

Not all the baptisms took place at Lacock; one was at Hartham, a nearby village, another at Cleavancy, near Wootton Bassett, and two at Chippenham. Possibly a few Catholic families may have moved into Lacock and the surrounding villages, due to the construction of the Wilts and Berks Canal. Work was started in 1795 on the Chippenham and Calne branches and the Foxham to Semington section included Lacock. The theory of new arrivals is supported by the baptism of Sarah Lee *'born on shipboard coming from Ireland.'*

Throughout the period of this register, marriages had to take place in the Church of England to be legal; but many Catholics had a Catholic marriage as well. If the Rev George Witham kept any record of marriages at the Abbey, it has not been found; but with the names of the Shrewsbury household and the list of baptisms, it was reasonable to search for at least two marriages in the local Anglican register. The following were found, both events taking place on the same day:

25 Sep 1809 Joseph Faulkner and Margaret Tilbury, both of Lacock.

Witnesses: George Witham, Henry Taylor

25 Sep 1809 George Barnes and Sarah Smith, both of Lacock

Witnesses: George Witham, Jane Smith

There were no local families named Witham, so clearly this witness is the Rev George Witham, Catholic priest. Nor were there any villagers named Faulkner or Tilbury, so Joseph Faulkner was an incomer and Margaret Tilbury surely the servant who took the Oath in 1791. Witness George Barnes was probably a relative of Joseph Barnes, who also took the Oath. Both witnesses and George Barnes and Sarah Smith were sponsors at the baptism of Moses Canton in 1793. Jane Smith was probably a relative of James Smith, butler to the Countess, and she also acted as a sponsor, as did Sarah Smith. James Smith acted twice and John Barnes three times.

Other marriages in the Anglican registers also have Catholic witnesses, including the following:

27 Apr 1807 George Moore and Mary Holmes, both of Lacock

Witnesses: Margaret Tilbury, Joseph Faulkner