

THE



RECORDER

THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WILTSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY

## EDITORIAL

The 2011 AGM was held in the modern and spacious Village Hall at Market Lavington on Saturday 11 June. After the usual short and concise business meeting and re-election of our four officers, John Chandler gave an illustrated talk on Market Lavington, explaining its origins, its layout and its growth over the centuries, and its place in this part of Wiltshire. The village sits on Anglo-Saxon origins, with a cemetery from that time just to the north of the churchyard. Its Royal Charter dates from 1254, with markets held right up until the beginning of the 20th century.

This talk was followed by the usual excellent tea and the chance to collect and examine the latest WRS volume, number 64, entitled *William Small's Cherished Memories*, edited by Jane Howells and Ruth Newman; Steve Hobbs also had a number of past Society volumes for sale. The venue was very conducive to mingling and to catching up with friends and colleagues. From here, members made their way to the Old Schoolmaster's House, built in 1846, which now houses a tiny village museum, crammed with an amazing collection of artefacts and bygones from the village and surrounding area. This was a source of fascination for all and proved a welcome shelter from the heavy showers which bedevilled the afternoon. Following this, a number of members were taken on an historical tour of the village by John Chandler, looking at features which he had mentioned in his talk, and noting houses of particular architectural or historical interest. Perhaps one of the most interesting places was the spring at Broad Well on the south side of the village. Until 1936 this was the main water supply for the village and John suggested that perhaps in medieval times, the settlement spread out south from the church to surround its water supply with a village green, the vestiges of which are seen in two surviving tracks, White Street and The Muddle.

The walk then followed a track parallel to the High Street, looking south to the downs of Salisbury Plain and north to the interesting backs of the High

Street houses, eventually emerging at the north-east end of the High Street, where members went their separate ways

*Sally Thomson, Editor*

## OBITUARIES

Medievalist, **Thomas C B Timmins**, who edited *The Register of John Chandler, Dean of Salisbury, 1404-1417*, died in 2011. He also edited for the Canterbury and York Society the register of John Waltham, bishop of Salisbury, 1388-1395 and William Melton, Archbishop of York, 1317-1340. His passing is worthy of reporting to members not only for his editorial work, which was of the highest standard, but because he has made a generous bequest of £3000 to our society, for which we are all extremely grateful.

**Janet Burnet Brown** of Lacock Abbey, a member since 1969, died in December 2011.

Our sympathy and condolences go to both families.

*Steven Hobbs*

## THE ENGLISH PRIZE

Arundell and Arundel: There is always confusion. When I was researching and writing the story of the Arundells of Wardour, (*The Arundells of Wardour, from Cornwall to Colditz*, Hobnob Press, 2011), many people asked, 'Are they the ones from Arundel castle?' or commented, 'I suppose you'll be dealing with lots of Dukes of Norfolk'. No, the families are quite separate except that in 1530 Thomas Arundell, founder of the Wardour branch of the Arundells of Lanherne, married Margaret Howard, granddaughter of the 2nd Duke of Norfolk and sister of Henry VIII's Queen, Jane Howard. There was no other connection between the families.

On 21st November 2011, the *Guardian* published a full page article about the 'Presya Ynglesa' or English Prize, the story of a ship named the *Westmoreland* which sailed from Leghorn to London in the autumn of 1778 but never arrived. The ship was laden with

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olive oil, anchovies and Parmesan cheese, but more importantly it carried a large consignment of pictures, sculpture and other works of art, purchased by British noblemen on the Grand Tour and destined for their mansions at home. The ship never reached London because outside Malaga on 7th January 1779, she was attacked by two French ships (France was at war with Britain), captured, and the cargo was seized by the Spanish authorities. Professor Jose Maria Luzon came across reports of this incident 10 years ago and has diligently researched the records and tried to trace the present whereabouts of the cargo. Much of it ended up in Spanish royal and noble collections; some even went to Russia for Catherine the Great. The Professor has organised an exhibition of many of the items entitled 'The English Prize'. It opens at The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford on 17th May 2012 (until August 27th). It then moves to New York.

The penultimate paragraph of the *Guardian* report caught my eye. 'On board was a collection of saints' relics, concealed (bound as they were for Protestant England) within a marble plinth. They had been hidden there by an English Jesuit based in Rome, John Thorpe, who was sending them to the EARL OF ARUNDEL [my capitals], a prominent English Catholic.' Alarm bells began to ring. Father Thorpe was agent in Rome for the 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour, not the Earl of Arundel. He was at best a lukewarm Catholic who before he became Duke of Norfolk in 1786, apostatised at the time of the Gordon Riots and left the Church. Between 1768 and his death in 1791 Thorpe oversaw the collecting in Italy of hundreds of pictures, prints and sculpture for the new castle at Wardour. The Lord's pride and joy was the castle's magnificent chapel, designed by Giacomo Quarenghi, and the finest Catholic church to be completed in England since the Reformation. It was consecrated on All Saints' Day 1776 and Thorpe continued to send items for its embellishment until the late 1780s. The acquisition of relics was a crucial element in the completion of the chapel. In this instance, the relics were those of St Clement and were sent to Lord Arundell by his friend, Pope Clement XIII. The article implied that the relics never reached England but were returned to the Vatican.

I wrote immediately to Catherine Wheeler, senior assistant curator at the Ashmolean to ask if there could be a mistake. She thought it was likely that the journalist had mixed up Arundel and Arundell. The only way to be certain was to look at the Thorpe letters in the Arundell papers in Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, covering the 22 years of their collaboration (WSA 2677/20/22/1-12). The collection benefits greatly from a summary of each letter made by Sir Howard Colvin in 1970 when the papers were still at Wardour. In addition, he arranged for copies to be made and added to the main collection of some Thorpe letters which have mysteriously ended

up at Ugbrooke, home of the 8th Lord Arundell's son-in-law, Lord Clifford and later one of his Trustees during his spectacular bankruptcy. The collection gives a superb insight to the methods of collecting works of art undertaken by British aristocrats as part of the Grand Tour. Thorpe's handwriting is reasonably easy to read. After a fairly short time I found the Bill of Lading for Case No 7 (where the relics were hidden) on the *Westmoreland* at Leghorn in July 1778 and numerous references in the letters to attempts to rescue the case from the Spanish authorities. Proof that the relics did indeed reach Wardour is given in a letter from Father Thorpe, written in April 1789, more than ten years after Case No 7 left Leghorn. Lord Talbot of Malahide, chairman of the Trustees of Wardour Chapel has confirmed that the relics are there today. The marble plinth may take longer to find!

It must be hoped that one day someone will give the Thorpe letters, which number over 150, the attention they deserve. Together with the many illustrations which accompanied them they would make a splendid topic for research and a popular book about collecting art works in the 18th century.

*Barry Williamson*

## THE FIRST WILTSHIRE COUNTY RECORD OFFICE?

It is well known that the Wiltshire Record Office was established and the first county archivist appointed in 1947. The wartime losses of archives had made people aware of the need to safeguard local records. At first storage was in the small lodge at the north end of the new County Hall.

However, it seems that the first Wiltshire County Record Office may have been set up some three hundred years earlier in somewhat similar circumstances – to safeguard the records of the Quarter Sessions (the predecessor of the County Council) from the threatened dangers arising from the English Civil War. The chosen repository was the vestry house at the church at Warminster.

The following extract comes from the Quarter Sessions Order Book for 1643:

*For custody of County records.* The court taking into consideration how the Sessions records of the county may be preserved and kept safe in this time of danger orders and appoints that Mr. Bennett and Mr. Coles deputy Clerks of the Peace shall with all convenient speed cause a strong chest to be made at the county's charge with two locks and keys for the safe keeping of the records and that the records shall be put into the chest and the chest placed in the vestry house of Warminster church and the keys kept by the deputy clerks that they may have recourse thereunto as occasion shall require. The court thinks fit that two or three years of the later bundles and the later books shall remain in their custody



*The launch at Cricklade, in September 2011, of VCH Wilts vol XVIII. Left to right: Dr John Chandler, VCH Wiltshire Consultant Editor; Mr Chris Atkins, town crier of Cricklade; Mrs Vicky Landell-Mills, Chairman of the VCH Wiltshire County Appeal Trust; Mr John Bush OBE, Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire; Mrs Jane Scott OBE, leader of Wiltshire Council; Mr David Tetlow, chairman of Cricklade Town Council; Dr Virginia Bainbridge, VCH Wiltshire County Editor. (Photograph: Dr Alex Craven)*

for the making up of the Sessions book and for the granting forth of the process of the court against such persons as are or shall be indicted or presented.

*Ivor Slocombe*

### **REVIEW OF VCH WILTSHIRE VOL XVIII: CRICKLADE AND ENVIRONS**

This latest volume of the extensive Wiltshire series of Victoria County Histories covers nine adjoining civil parishes in north Wiltshire amounting to the western half of medieval Highworth Hundred. The histories of these parishes are complex, particularly as some of them abut the boundary with Gloucestershire and have, at times, been part of that county. This makes for a difficult description of their development and politics over the centuries, but the editors have done a good job in what must have been something of a nightmare. Sensibly, Cricklade has been placed at the start of the volume; it is a small town and, as such, is and was the central focus of the area. This sets the base-line for the surrounding parishes, which all relate to Cricklade in one way or another.

The layout of each parish article has changed somewhat from past volumes, now following a pattern of headed paragraphs - introduction, boundaries, landscape, communications, settlement, manors and other estates, economic history, including agriculture,

woodland, mills, and trade and industry; this is followed by social history - community activities, education and charities. Local government covers the manor, parish, welfare and such things as water supply. Religious history obviously deals with the parish church and religious life, with sections on nonconformity and the religious buildings of the area.

It is heartening to see that extensive use has been made in this volume of the Wiltshire Buildings Record archive and the DoE listed buildings. Histories of many of the buildings are dealt with, including the families associated with them. Most family and house histories have been brought up to date as near as possible to the present time.

Excellent use has been made of photographs, with smaller more numerous pictures, integrated into the text.

As usual, a great deal of extensive and in-depth research has been carried out to make this an interesting volume. However, it is necessary to look at the negative points as well. There were typos in the text, which could have been avoided with more careful copy-editing. And because of the way the articles have been arranged, there was a fair amount of repetition, details of the same subjects cropping up in more than one section. Some terms were not explained - there was constant reference to 'rags' in the opening introduction, but we were never told what



they were. It turns out they were purlieus, but neither 'rag' nor 'purlieu' appears on its own in the index; one needs to look under Braydon Forest to find them; yet 'assarts' are given their own entry. The index is not the most helpful.

The maps were disappointing. Some did not include strategic places mentioned in the text. One was too small to read without the aid of a magnifying glass (map 2, p2). And there was surely a place for the derivation of at least some place-names in the area. I would like to have seen more on the roads and lanes of Cricklade and its environs, too. Pry Lane was a noticeable omission and there was no mention of Paul's Croft in Cricklade. Did a chapel, dedicated to St Paul, not exist there at one time?

Perhaps the greatest omission from the book is a bibliography. While it would be impractical to list every book and document used during the *research* of this volume, it should not be beyond the bounds of practicality to include a full bibliography of each citation made throughout the text. This is good academic practice in most fields and it is surprising to find the VCH omitting such a useful item. The abbreviation list at the beginning purports to carry a bibliography, but it is not comprehensive and some books are just not included there. These criticisms are not a reflection on the local author-editors, but on the general editorship of the whole series. For a book of this price and prestige, one expects a nearperfect product.

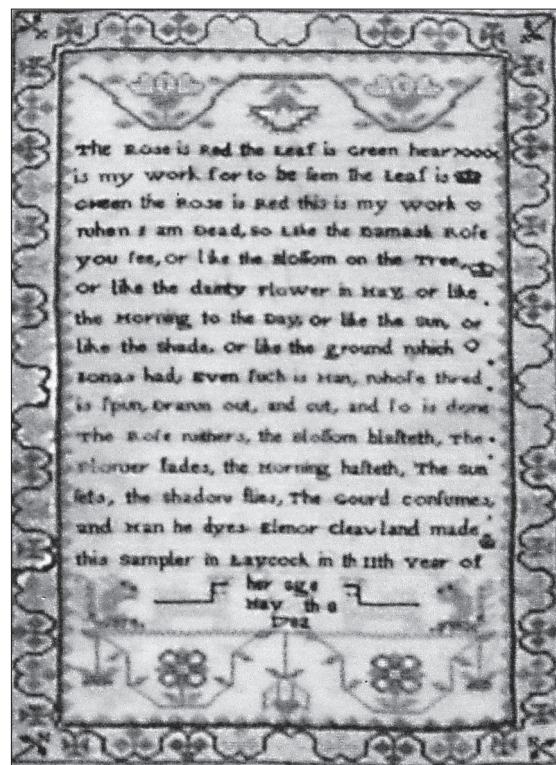
These criticisms apart, the volume is a welcome addition to the series and researchers will find plenty of information here on the area in the title.

*Sally Thomson*

## WILTSHIRE SAMPLERS: A SOURCE OF SOCIAL HISTORY

The Painting Room of Lacock Abbey has watercolours by Rosamond Constance Talbot and her sister Matilda Caroline, both daughters of William Henry Fox Talbot. Also, surprisingly, a sampler, not part of Talbot family history. It was found in Devon and sent to Lacock, as possibly of local interest. The final words of the sampler are: 'Eleanor Cleavland made this sampler in Lacock in th 11th Year of her age May the 8 1782'. The following entry was found in the Lacock baptismal registers: '1770 29 July Eleanor Cleavland da. Richard & Eleanor baptised', almost certainly the Eleanor who worked the sampler. In adult life, Eleanor married Richard Sketch of Enford, 7 January 1796.

The Cleavland family were of some standing in Lacock. On 23 April 1783, Richard Cleavland (possibly Eleanor's father) was the Attestor for the reelection of James Montagu, Esq., as Churchwarden and again on 29 April 1785, when James was re-elected. Cleavland was in the cloth trade, as can be seen from one of the entries in the Churchwardens' Accounts



*Sampler by Eleanor Cleavland*

for 17--: Pd. R. Cleavland for 10 ells Dowles for ye poor, 9s 7d.

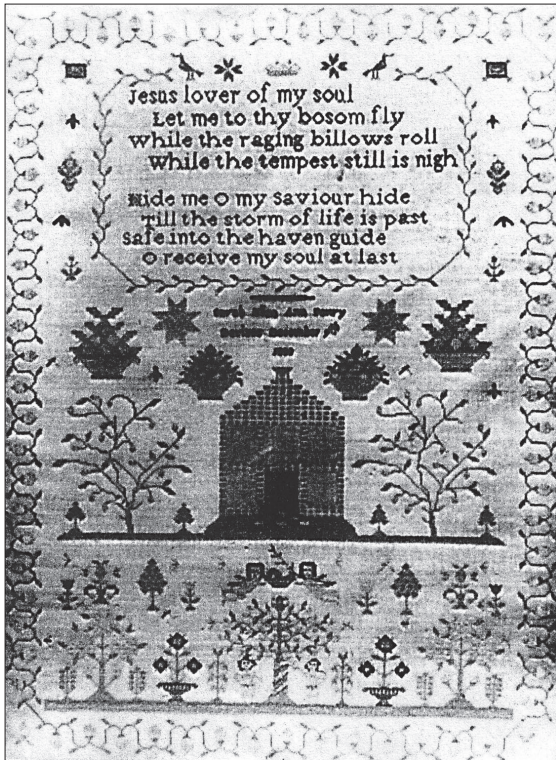
In an exhibition of textiles at Devizes Museum in the 1990s, there were seven samplers dating from 1833 to the early 20th century, part of its social history collection. The early 20th century sampler had hung for many years in the Brittox, in the Devizes office of Charles Sloper & Sons, drapers and furnishers. The earliest, an 1833 sampler, was worked by a Devizes girl, Sarah Elizabeth Ann Perry, baptised 8 November 1824. She was the daughter of Horatio Nelson Perry, who kept the Pelican Inn, Devizes. It was auctioned by Southebys in 1985 and bought by the Curator of Devizes Museum.

The Devizes Directory of 1839 shows Horatio Nelson Perry as a brewer and carrier, with 'Perry's Wagon' travelling from The Pelican to Bristol on Mondays and Thursdays. The Perrys were related to other publicans in Devizes and the surrounding area.

A Thomas Perry received an obituary in the Devizes and Wilts Gazette of 16th March 1820: 'on Tuesday last, Mr Perry, at an advanced age, late of The Bell in this town'. The Bell Inn was opposite the pond known as The Crammer.

From Edward Slow's 'The Wiltshire Moonrakers' (from *West Country Rhymes*, published 1894) comes the following extract:

Down Vizes way zum years agoo,  
An people wurdan nar bit shy  
Of who they did their sperrits buy.  
In a village liv'd a Publican



*Sampler by Sarah Elizabeth Perry*

Who kept an inn, the Pelican  
 . A man he wur, a man of merit,  
 Nan his name wur Ikey Perritt.

The poem is far too long to be quoted in full, but other lines are strong evidence that the Crammer is the site of the Moonrakers' exploits. The poem was hearsay and written well after the event; Perritt, in the poem, is near enough Perry. Bishops Cannings, near Devizes, also has a pond near an inn and was thought by Ralph Whitlock, to be the Moonrakers site. There was also a Perry family member at Bishops Cannings, called Isaac Perry. The 'Ikey Perritt' of the poem, perhaps? There is no evidence that the Moonrakers story is based on fact, but Edward Slow's verses cannot be ignored. Horatio Nelson Perry, the carrier of The Pelican, seems most likely to have been delivering 'sperrits' to his kinsman at The Bell, opposite the Crammer.

Sarah Elizabeth Ann Perry, who worked the sampler, was aunt to Mary Sarah Sissons Perry, a granddaughter of Horatio Nelson Perry. The social history lead from that is astounding.

Mary Sarah Sissons Perry was baptised 1848 and in 1868 came into a fortune of cash, lands and properties in Devizes, together with stocks and shares in Indian Railways. This fortune was left her by William Clare, Coroner of Devizes, who died in 1829. William Clare was removed from office in 1823, being no longer able to perform his duties due to great age. He died, aged eighty-two, and at that time was cared for by the Perry family; this probably accounts for his bequests to that family.

Mary Sarah Sissons Perry was my Grandmother. Horatio Nelson Perry, of the Pelican Inn, was my great great Grandfather.

*Brian Howells Banks*

## A GLIMPSE INTO LACOCK ABBEY IN THE 15TH CENTURY

The intention of the owner of the Lacock Abbey archives to sell the collection, has involved managers at Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (WSHC) in the lengthy process of applying for grants to ensure that the archive remains in their custody as it has since 1991. It covers the management of the estates and households of the Talbot and Davenport families from the 16th - 20th centuries, but not any material concerning William Henry Fox Talbot, the pioneer of photography, which were donated to the British Library in 2006. The two cartularies of the monastic house, published by WRS (vol 34) have been sold to the British Museum, with a proviso that digital copies will be provided for WSHC. Two remaining books, from the medieval library, including manuscript of Brito's dictionary were recently sold at auction. Before these were taken away I took the opportunity to inspect them to see if they contained anything relating to the nunnery that would be worth copying. Using a detailed description of the dictionary produced by Neil Ker in 1944, I was aware of some parchment fragments of accounts in the bindings dated 1266-1267, (numbers 206, 207 in his list). He was unable to make much of the writing on the back of each fragment. With the benefit of an ultra-violet light I was able to decipher a little more.

**206.** (18.5cm x 13cm) Ker identified these as an account of receipts from several estates, including Chitterne, Bishopstrow and Heddington. On its dorse Ker read one line relating to the new making of a door for the Abbesses' room. It is followed by accounts for a step and lead, presumably for the same job. It was preceded by accounts for the purchase of lamps, candles, repairs to collars and harnesses and sieves.

**207.** (18.5cm x 12cm) Ker identified a cellars' account including a gift of 20 shillings from Lady Katherine Lovel, who was a benefactor to Lacock. Money was also received from Thomas the chaplain, Payn the forrester, R Prodhomme and Ralph de Hedinton. On the back is a badly faded account with references to cloth, thread and *pholic[i]one* of russet purchased for weavers and dyers, which would appear to be for the purchase of tapestries or wall hangings. The inventory of the abbey taken in 1574 on the death of its owner, Sir Henry Sharrington, includes a large number of wall hangings, several with a religious theme, and while it is extremely unlikely that any of them dated from the mid 13th century, it is evidence of the enduring attraction of such luxurious furnishings. There follows a list of payments to various servants and



workers, including the miller, janitor, tailor, hayward, poulterer, groom, porter, laundress and steward. We are presented with fascinating and tantalizing glimpses into life in the abbey. Certainly these fragments merit the attention of a medievalist. Photocopies are available at WSHC (ref X3/138)

Steve Hobbs



*The Mansion House, Corsham, front door*

### MEASURING THE HEIGHTS OF THE NEALE FAMILY AT THE MANSION HOUSE, CORSHAM, 1722-51

The first 'mansion house' to be built in Corsham by a rich and successful clothier, in the last great boom of the broadcloth and/or medley cloth industry in the first half of the eighteenth century, was the 'Mansion House', as it was called at the time, and as it has been called ever since. Earlier successful clothiers had re-built or re-fronted their timber-framed houses with ashlar stone and sash windows, perhaps Venetian windows - smartening up their houses, but this was the first completely newly-built mansion house to proclaim the wealth and status of the clothier and his family. It was built with dispatch and with great expense in the years 1721-23.

It is a notable house, constructed on the then edge of the small market town of Corsham, grandly facing the important London to Bath road, a significant coaching road long before

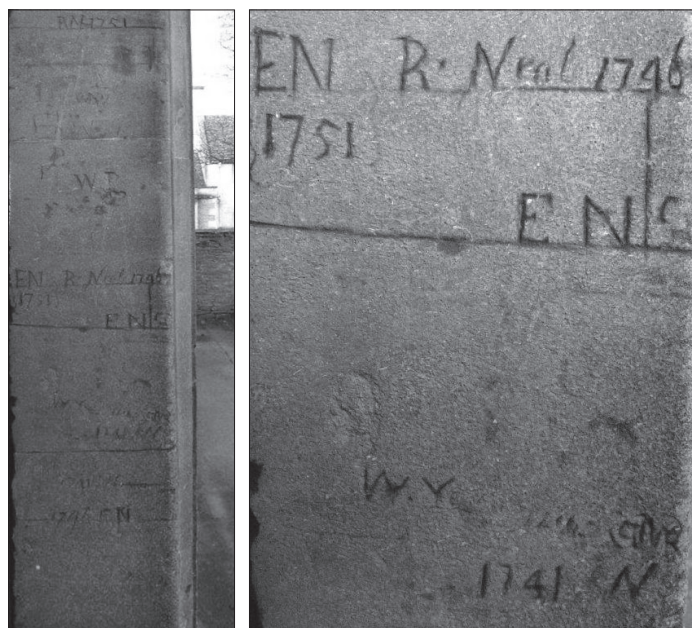


*The Datestone and measurement graffiti at the Mansion House, Corsham*

it was turnpiked. The house is oddly overlooked by Pevsner. 'Corsham has no match in Wiltshire for wealth of good houses, and there are a few of really high merit', wrote Pevsner. He noted the adjoining 'The Grove', the handsome mansion house that was next to be built, in 1737, along the coaching road to the east, strikingly facing north up Corsham's High Street. But Pevsner's eye failed to be caught by the Mansion House, rather down at heel by then, but evidently a house of distinction. The Neale family came to believe that Hawksmoor had designed it, or at least had a hand in it; there is not a shred of evidence for this, but on the visual evidence it is not totally implausible.

The Mansion House was built on two acres of land acquired by Robert Neale in 1721 from his father-in-law William Arnold; the land had cost £100, but it is not clear if this is what William Arnold paid for it before his death in 1719, or whether Robert Neale bought it for this sum from his father-in-law's estate. At all events, the grand new house was speedily built in two years at a cost of £2,100. The completion was marked by the elegant datestone on the carriage-house with the initials of Robert and Sarah Neale and the date 1723.

On the stone surround of the front door there are some interesting graffiti recording the heights of the growing children of the Neale dynasty, as the family were evidently regarding themselves. At the top 'RN' is recorded in 1722 - presumably the date the family moved in - at 6 feet and one inch. Immediately under him is 'EH', who must be his daughter-in-law Elizabeth, at over 5 feet 10 inches, and then another 'RH' in 1732 at five feet 9 inches. The elder Robert Neale (1682-1733) was 40 years of age in 1722; his wife Sarah Neale, *nee* Arnold (1679-1745), was three years older, and she does not figure in these measured recordings. The second 'RH' was presumably his son Robert Neale (1706-76), aged 28 in 1732, and not to be married to Elizabeth Smith until 1735.



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Presumably, the height of the son Robert is recorded aged 28 in 1732, perhaps when he returned home from working in London; after his father died the following year, he must have taken over the business and the house, getting married himself two years later, and having his mother continuing to live in the house along with his wife and their own growing family.

The recording of the growing family is difficult to interpret. The main initials recorded are 'RN' and 'EN', but they refer to more than two people. The three generations of the Neale dynasty in Corsham were led confusingly by three successive Robert Neales. And there were two Elizabeth Neales, a mother and a daughter. Besides the first and the second Robert Neales already referred to, there was a third – grandson of the first and son of the second. He was born in Corsham in 1736, and, like his grandfather, died young in 1774, before he was 40. His father lived for two more years, dying aged 70 in 1776. It is this Robert Neale, the third, who is recorded at 4 feet 3 inches aged 10 in 1746 (RNEAL) and 5 feet 3 inches in 1751 aged 15.

The second Robert Neale married Elizabeth Smith, heiress to her brother John Smith of Shaw House, between Corsham and Melksham, and Shaw House was inherited by the Neales in 1757; the second and third Robert Neales are subsequently as often referred to as 'of Shaw House' as of Corsham. Robert the second and Elizabeth had a daughter Elizabeth, evidently a much-loved daughter who lived for the fourteen years from 1743 to 1757. This is the girl 'EN' recorded at three feet 5 inches in 1746 aged 3, at four feet 1 inch aged 7 in 1750, and four feet 3 inches in 1751 aged 8.

Robert the second had two other children between the surviving Robert and the short-lived Elizabeth; there were twins, Thomas and William, born in 1738, and who did not live long enough to reach measurability, William dying soon after Thomas as babies. Robert the second himself had four brothers, only one of whom lived to maturity. William (1708–22) and Thomas (1712–28) both died aged 14, and George (1714–15) aged only one. James (1709–34) lived to be 25, itself quite an achievement in the smallpox-ridden 1730s, sadly dying after being set up with Littlecote Farm near Hilmarton, and soon after receiving affectionate bequests from his father – '£500, the best riding horse, bridle and saddle and my best pair of pistols and my silver-hilted sword and scarlet cloake and my watch'. Yet, puzzlingly, there is no 'JN' carved into the doorway. The dynasty is recorded in terms of eldest sons and a daughter.

The third Robert Neale had two daughters, aged three and one at the time of his death in 1774. The elder, Grace Elizabeth Neale, was baptised at St. George's, Hanover Square, in one of the most fashionable parts of London. She grew up to become

Lady in Waiting to Queen Charlotte and companion to Princess Amelia. She married Admiral Sir Harry Burnard in 1795, who promptly changed his name to Neale. He has a huge obelisk in his memory overlooking the Solent erected by Queen Adelaide in 1840; Lady Neale lived on in Blackheath in great style to 1855. There were no children, and no further direct heirs. Corsham and the making of cloth and the money to be made from making cloth had been left well behind.

The Mansion House sank to being let out as a school; revived for some years as a gentleman's house by a lawyer who was a distant kinsman of the Neales in the years after 1891, it subsequently sank further into being a private hotel, and then fell into the dead hands of Wiltshire County Council. Down at heel it survives, the markings on the doorway recalling for us the vanity of once brave dynastic ambitions.

Negley Harte

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#### **Acknowledgement**

*I am grateful for the photography of James Methuen-Campbell, the careful study of which – in its enhanced form – will throw further light on the rather simplified account provided here.*

#### **CHRISTIAN MALFORD AND ITS SPRING OR SPA**

A mineral spring at Christian Malford near Chippenham is mentioned briefly in the *Victoria History of Wiltshire*, Volume IV, p. 386, and more extensively on the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre parishes website under Christian Malford. In an article 'Spas and Mineral Springs of Wiltshire' in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Magazine*, (*WAM* lv, no. 198, 1–29, June 1953) J H P Pafford mentioned the mineral spring at Christian Malford, but gave no details. An earlier article by W F Parsons in 1896 (*WAM* xxviii, no. 84, 252–4) contained a description of a spring at Whitehill Farm, Wootton Bassett, which was used in the summer months by local inhabitants and residents of other villages and towns within a radius of ten miles, and another at Christian Malford, which the locals regarded as superior in its curative properties for both humans and animals. Parsons reproduced a detailed chemical analysis of the spring water at Whitehill Farm, made by the late Mr. Gyde of Painswick 'about forty years ago'. He identified the site of the spring at Christian Malford on land belonging to Sir H. B. Meux in a meadow between a residence called 'The Comedy' and the road

to Chippenham and cited an earlier reference to this spring in a work entitled '*A Tour through the Whole of Great Britain by a Gentleman*' published in 1740, though this incorrectly located it in Dauntsey parish.

A collection of records of the Herbert family of Dulverton, Somerset deposited in the Somerset Heritage Centre, Taunton (DD\DRU/2/60) contains some papers of Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert, 4th earl of Carnarvon (1831-1890) relating to the Christian Malford spring, including detailed analyses of the water, together with a valuation of the Christian Malford estate in 1866 and other papers relating to its sale in 1873 .

Lord Carnarvon had scientific interests and was a Fellow of the Royal Society. He may also have been interested in the development of the use of the spring for medical purposes as part of the assets of his Christian Malford estate, but there is some indication among these papers in a letter dated 19 August 1862 from Edward Meryon of Clarges Street, London, that his interest arose also from concerns about the health of his first wife, who may have been visiting spas on the Continent under medical advice during the 1860s. In the late 1850s he commissioned analyses of the water of the spring by Dr. J. Thomas Way and an evaluation of the potential curative properties by Dr. A. B. Granville, M.D., of 1 Curzon Street, Mayfair, who was the author of a study of English spas published in 1841.

Dr Way's report contains two analyses made on 5 November 1857 and 11 November 1858. The first, entitled '*Analysis of Mineral Water from Lord Carnarvon*', presented the following results:

Combined water with trace of organic matter	51.60
Silica, Alumina & Peroxide of Iron	0.80
Sulphate of Lime	6.57
Carbonate of Lime	32.46
Carbonate of Magnesia	22.53
Carbonate of Soda	215.76
Carbonate of Potash	4.90
Chlorine of Sodium	<u>224.29</u>
Total residue per gallon	<u>558.91 grains</u>

Way's second report contained a much more extensive analysis and more precise calculations. He concluded, 'The water pumped up from the well is perfectly clear, colorless and almost inodorous. It had a distinctly saline taste and effervesces on agitation exhibiting the presence of a considerable quantity of free carbonic acid. On standing, more readily on boiling, it deposits a yellowish sediment consisting of carbonate of lime, carbonate of magnesia, sesquioxide of iron and organic matter', and further, 'The mineral water of Christian Malford is a carbonated saline water the characteristic feature being the presence of appreciable quantities of bromides.'

Dr. Granville's report entitled '*Professional Opinion of the Medicinal Properties of the Carnarvon Spring near*

*Chippenham*', 30 December 1857, incorporated Dr. Way's analysis of a sample of the water and gave his own observations on a sample of water sent by Lord Carnarvon. He found the water to be turbid, almost milky white with a slightly saline taste, rather flat, but not disagreeable, with the large proportion of carbonate of soda. He judged the water of the spring to be the sort of highly carbonated mineral water successfully employed in all cases of morbid irritability of the stomach, - habitual heartburn, - gravel & calcidous disorders of a certain type, - tendency to gout accompanied with chalkstones, - defective condition of the urinary secretion, - a disposition to Rheumatic gout, - irritation of the bowels, - and, in fact, in most of what are called Stomach complaints. Its freedom from any tonic, irritating or purgative ingredients and hard water ingredients, such as chalk and gypsum, suggested that it might be beneficial. He made favourable comparison with several of the European spas known to him.

However, another adviser, Edward Meryon of Clarges Street, London, concluded that the bromide and iodine content would be insufficiently active to do any good. The spring was never fully developed into a spa; and in 1873 Lord Carnarvon appears to have disposed of the Christian Malford estate.

*Duncan Chalmers*

#### Printed sources:

W F Parsons 'The Chalybeate or Saline Springs at Whitehill Farm, Wootton Bassett, and at Christian Malford' WAM Vol. 28, no. 84, 252-254

J H P Pafford 'The Spas and Mineral Springs of Wiltshire' WAM Vol. 55., no. 84, 1-29

A B Granville *The Spas of England*, vol. 2 *Southern Spas* 1841;

W Whitaker and F H Edmunds *Memoirs of the Geological Survey: The water supply of Wiltshire from underground sources*, 1925, pp. 97, 110;

A Hoffmann 'Analysis of the saline water of Christian Malford' *Quarterly Journal of the Chemical Society*, vol. 13, 1861, pp.80-84.

#### 'IN GOODE AND PERFECT REMEMBRANCE': LIFE AND DEATH IN 16TH-CENTURY WILTSHIRE

In September 1558, Nicholas Thyngnell of Longbridge Deverill in Wiltshire drew up his last will and testament. Having committed his soul 'to almighty god to o[u]r blessed lady saynt mary and to all the holy cu[m]pany of heaven', he made several bequests for religious uses: 4d. to the high altar of his parish church, 8d. for a candle before the high cross there and 6d. for another candle dedicated to the Holy Ghost, 1s. 4d. towards the maintenance of the church's bells, and 4d. to Salisbury Cathedral. The remainder of his goods he left in trust for distribution amongst the poor of the parish (WSA, P2/3Reg/117C). Four years





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queen Elizabeth I, and the traditional doctrines and rituals of the English church had been swept away by a Protestant settlement. Foster's clear statement of Protestant doctrine is an indication of the speed and extent to which this religious change filtered down into the parishes of England.

We should be wary about taking these statements of faith entirely at face value, given that many wills would have been dictated to a local minister, who might himself have suggested a formula to summarise accepted doctrine. Despite this, it seems unlikely that a testator would choose as a scribe somebody with very differing beliefs from his or her own. Furthermore, there are still enough variations and idiosyncrasies between different wills to suggest that the testator was able to assert some individual choice in the process. The will of Margaret Styell of Horningsham, who had died in 1560, was so distinctively eccentric as to suggest that she was its author: 'I beqethe my sowlle Into the hands of Allmyghty god And my bodye to be burryed In Chrestian berryall... And this I beeqwethe bothe my bodye And sowll Into the hands of Allmyghtye god to whome be All honar & glory for Ever & Ever so be yt. God be preysyed' (P5/1560/2).

It is notable, only a year after the passing of a new Act of Uniformity, that this statement is cautious in matters of doctrine; there is neither mention of the saints in heaven nor to justification by faith alone. This is unsurprising in testators who drew up their wills during the bewildering period between the final years of Henry VIII and the reign of Elizabeth I. Others were similarly wary; Agnes Perys and John Roseter, both of whom drew up their wills in Longbridge Deverill in 1553, restricted themselves to a terse bequest of 'my sowlle to Almyghtie god', with no further doctrinal comment (P2/2Reg/176A, P2/2Reg/183A).

Besides these doctrinal preambles, religious practice could be revealed through the gift of money and goods for religious uses. In 1542, for instance, Edward Molens of Longbridge Deverill left money for special masses to be sung a month after his death and then every year on the anniversary (P2/1Reg/37A). This was unexceptional for the time, but a similar bequest by Margaret Gardener of Upton Lovell to support such month's and year's minds was remarkable because her will had been drawn up in 1552, by which time the mass and prayers for the dead had been prohibited; the bequests certainly cannot have been honoured by the time of her death in 1562 (P2/G/10). Bequests like those of Nicholas Thyngnell to the altar and candles of the parish church were the resurrection of a practice that had been continued from the Middle Ages until reforms of Henry VIII in the 1540s. However, the repeated shifts in policy of Henry and his son Edward VI, often accompanied with the confiscation by the state of the treasures of the parish, caused parishioners to become as cautious

about bequeathing money to religious uses as they were about making overt statements of faith. Although both Agnes Perys and John Roseter left money to the poor men's box of Longbridge Deverill, neither left anything to the church in any form, conscious no doubt of how much had been stripped from the churches of England in the previous decade by the spendthrift Tudor kings. This reluctance to donate money to the use of the parish church did not last long, however. As Steve Hobbs has shown (*WAM* 98, 2005), although bequests to maintain the liturgy and practices of traditional belief disappeared with their prohibition by the Protestant establishment, there still remained a need to maintain the fabric and fittings of the church, and to support the poor of the parish. The newly-adopted Protestant liturgy of the Church of England provided parishioners with new opportunities to make provision for parish worship in their wills, such as the bequest by Alice Lucas of two cloths for the communion table at Monkton Deverill in 1571 (P2/5Reg/122A). Gifts such as these further illustrate the spread and acceptance of new modes of religion during the Reformation.

Collectively, then, wills are a valuable resource for the study of shifting religious belief and practice, especially in that key period during the middle of the sixteenth century. Of course, the value of wills has long been recognised, and religious change is only one aspect of the past that they reveal to us. Once the important business concerning the welfare of the soul had been dealt with, testators would turn to the disposal of their worldly estate. Long of interest to genealogists, these bequests of land, property, cattle, chattels, and other goods enable us to reconstruct the networks of relatives, neighbours, friends, godchildren, and business partners that bound society together. They provide insight into the social structure of the time, telling us much about the nature of agriculture and industry within a particular parish, the range of occupations available, the wealth of individuals. Again, we must be careful when analysing the evidence of these wills. Those with meagre estates had little need to make a will, and so the poor are often excluded from probate records. At the other end of the social scale, the wills of the gentry came increasingly to be dealt with by the Archbishops' Prerogative Courts at Canterbury and York, rather than within the courts of their local diocese. It is important to remember, then, that diocesan probate collections are a self-selecting sample of the middling sort of society, defined in the broadest terms.

With that caveat firmly in mind, wills remain a fascinating resource for social and economic history. We see, of course, the overarching dominance of agriculture in the early modern economy, with the bequests of crops in the field, grain already harvested, sheep, cattle, and horses. An inventory of William Whettell of Hill Deverill valued his entire estate at



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£17 7s. 6d., of which £13 4s. 8d. consisted of stock or crops in the field, whilst his clothing was valued at a mere 5s. Farming equipment was carefully passed on to each generation. Whettell left to his son Edward a half-share of his 'yron bounde cart or wayne' (valued by the appraisers of his inventory at 12s.), and the other half to his widow Margery (P2/W/37). William Flacher of Monkton Deverill gave his son a horse, an iron, ropes, 'and all that belongythe to husbandry' (P2/1Reg/105/B1). Although agriculture dominated, nevertheless we also catch glimpses of proto-industrialisation, for instance the 'two brode lomes and one narrowe loome' left by Peter Foster to his son. Sometimes the evidence thrown up by these wills is more esoteric, such as the names of the oxen of William Mullins of Longbridge Deverill, Pyke and Starre (P2/3Reg/59A).

Household goods and personal property were also carefully disposed of in these wills. Furniture, kitchen ware, and clothing were all left to family and friends by testators; even the old coat of John Vylles was worth passing on to a friend (P2/3Reg/10A). William Wylkyns of Longbridge Deverill left the gown, jacket and doublet he had worn at his wedding respectively to his three brothers (P2/2Reg46/C1). Beds - complete with mattresses, pillows, bolsters, bedstead, and hangings - were particularly treasured possessions, always the preserve of the wealthier members of a parish. William Bryce of Longbridge Deverill was able to leave a bed each to his son and two daughters (P2/3Reg/40A). Usually these were flock beds, with mattresses made of wool, but William Gyse was wealthy enough to leave to his widow two feather beds in 1557 (P2/3Reg/8B). Other furnishings of value included kitchen tables and benches, coffer and chests, chairs and stools, and 'howsolde stuff'. What is particularly striking is the paucity of any items we might consider to be luxuries. Furniture was usually wooden, crockery was often pewter. William Bryce could leave his late wife's silver pin and 'a sylken cappe' to a daughter; Edward Mollens bequeathed two silver spoons to his children. Even in 1694, the only sign of opulence included in the inventory of Edward Collier of Hill Deverill were two silver spoons, despite his total estate being valued at over £215 (P2/C/849). As yet, the wills examined for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries - admittedly only a small sample of the total - have not revealed references to books, for instance, or wall hangings.

It is clear, then, that there is much that the probate records of Wiltshire can teach us about our past. They also give a voice to the beliefs and quotidian concerns of a broad sweep of society often excluded from other sources for the period. Despite this, the sheer weight of material means that the VCH has rarely been able to make use of wills when writing its parish histories. Now, however, the Wiltshire VCH team are keen to build upon the fruits of the Wiltshire Wills project at the Wiltshire and Swindon Archives. Through this

HLF-funded project, the probate collection of the Diocese of Salisbury has been catalogued and restored, and the digitisation of the entire archive is now under way. In total, the collection comprises over 100,000 wills, dating from the 1540s to the 1840s. There is already a small group of volunteers working with VCH Wiltshire to transcribe the wills of particular parishes of interest to the VCH, and it is hoped that more volunteers will be forthcoming to continue this work. We are currently focussing on the parishes that will make up volume 19 (Brixton Deverill, Compton Chamberlayne, Hill Deverill, Horningsham, Kingston Deverill, Longbridge Deverill, and Monkton Deverill) and volume 20 (Boyton with Corton, Chitterne, Codford, Heytesbury with Tytherington, Imber, Knook, Orcheston St George and Upton Lovell). The finished transcripts will be deposited with the Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, to serve as a useful reading aid to future users of the collection. If you would be interested in helping with this project - or would like to volunteer for the VCH in other ways - please contact us at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (01249 705516), or email me at: alex.craven@uwe.ac.uk. For more information about the Wiltshire Wills project, see <http://www.wshc.eu/about-wshc/archives/209.html>.

Alex Craven

## CUMBERWELL IN BOX

Most Wiltshire historians will know of G.J. Kidston's very substantial *History of the Manor of Hazelbury* (1936), and will have examined its large folding map, which is entitled 'The Plott and description of the Mannors of Haiselbury Box and Ditchridge. . . surveyed and tacken . . . by me Francis Allen'. In the margin of the map, as published, is the note: 'Copied by Thos. Holloway, Surveyor, Chippenham, March 1907'. A photograph of the original map is in WSA (318/3MS) and, for its early 17th century date, it appears to be accurately drawn, including many fieldnames, acreages and details of ownership. Rolled up with it are photographic copies of four other maps, dated 1626, describing in much greater detail areas of common field, which in the larger map have been left relatively blank. Also in WSA (318/3H) is a coloured original map, similar in many respects to the photographic copy but signed by Abrah' Alen (as are the common field maps). Like them it is dated 1626, and close scrutiny shows that there are many differences of details, especially of the names, between the two maps. The photographic copies and the original map form part of a deposit (WSA 318) of archives and copies relating to Box and Marlborough by Mr J.B. Kidston.

On the copy of the map published in G. J. Kidston's book a feature is marked simply as 'Well', south-west of Chapel Plaister along the lane to Hatt. However



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on both the 1626 and 1630 large maps, and the small 1626 map of Chapel Field, the well is named *CVM WELL*, *CVMA WELL* and *CUMBAr WELL*, with various marks of abbreviation. On the Chapel Field map there is also an adjacent fieldname, *Cu'barwell Peece*. This name does not feature in the vicinity in the 1840 tithe apportionment for Box, although a slight indentation at the appropriate place is marked, surrounded by quite different fieldnames. Presumably by this date the 'Cumberwell' name had been lost. The indentation still appears on modern Ordnance Survey maps, close to Chapel Plaister and Fiveways, at NGR ST 8368 6740.

Also in Kidston's history (on p.252) there is reference to a late 12th-century grant of land at Wadswick (adjacent to Chapel Plaister) in which one of the witnesses is William Cumbrewell. And in the 1332 tax list (published in 1989 as our society's volume 45) Nicholas de Comerwelle and Alice de Comerwelle are listed as taxpayers in Hartham, which is in Corsham adjacent to Box. There is, of course, to this day a hamlet near Bradford on Avon named Cumberwell, which figures in Domesday as *Cu'brewelle*. But the 1626 maps suggest a second Cumberwell, not far away, which has hitherto gone unnoticed.

None of this would be worthy of comment were it not for the significance attached by place-name scholars to the name element *cumbre*, as an indication of the survival into the early Saxon period of a native Romano-British population. It lurks in Cumbria and Cumberland; and, in the form *Cymru* it is after all the Welsh name for Wales. In his study of the transition from Roman to early medieval society in what became Wiltshire, Dr Simon Draper has noted the proliferation of the other significant name elements *wic* and *walh* in the Bradford and Corsham area alongside *cumbre*, which may all be diagnostic of a residual Romano-British population surviving here well into the period of Anglo-Saxon colonisation. If so, the identification of a second place called Cumberwell is one more piece slotting into a Dark Age jigsaw.

*John Chandler*

#### **Reference:**

S. Draper, *Landscape, settlement and society in Roman and early medieval Wiltshire*, 2006, esp. p.52. I am grateful to Dr Draper and Professor Richard Coates, both of UWE Bristol, for their comments on this identification.

#### **CELEBRATIONS**

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the launch of our Society and it is proposed to celebrate the event later this year. Sunday 21st October has been selected, with a day of talks and feasting at the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, in conjunction with the Wiltshire Local History Forum, with whom we have close links. Our main guest speaker will be Adam Nicolson, a well-known journalist and writer and one of our members. Further details will be announced during the course of the year.

*Sally Thomson*

#### **AGM**

This year's AGM will be held on Saturday 9 June, at the Wiltshire and Heritage Museum, Devizes, where the speaker will be Mr Tom Brakspear, talking about his grandfather, Sir Harold Brakspear, antiquary and architect.

#### **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Members are respectfully reminded that subscriptions were due on the 1 January and those who have not yet paid, should send their subscriptions to Ivor Slocombe, 11 Belcombe Place, Bradford on Avon, Wilts. BA15 1NA. The subscription remains at £15 a year.

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