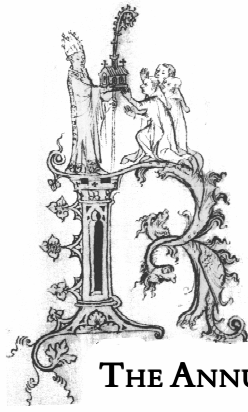


THE RECORDER



THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WILTSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY

EDITORIAL

The first issue of THE RECORDER was received with approval by most members; in fact, I don't think we had any adverse criticisms at all. Therefore, we have proceeded to issue number 2. But it must be pointed out that the majority of contributions to this newsletter are made by members of the Committee. We would very much like the rest of the membership to join in wherever they can. There must be some members who are using Wiltshire records for one purpose or another and we ask that you would think about sharing some of your findings, no matter how small or trivial they may seem. You may give encouragement to others who have not thought about using certain records. After all, the wonderful Wiltshire collection of records is there for us all to use. Please consider writing a short account of any work or research you may have done involving Wiltshire records. Or perhaps you have interesting deeds to your Wiltshire house which you could tell us about. All contributions gratefully received!

In the last issue, I wrote about water meadows in Codford significantly increasing the local corn yield. Some readers were puzzled by this and I feel I should explain. The water meadows gave the sheep a 'first bite' of grass in March, a time when the hay had usually run out and there was no new grass until at least April. This meant that more sheep could be kept through the winter. The importance of this can be understood when one realises how valuable sheep were at this time, before the advent of artificial fertilisers. They grazed the water meadows during the day and at night were folded on a selected area of the arable fields and allowed to drop their dung and urine there. The following night, they would be moved to a new area. Thus the whole field would be thoroughly manured in a relatively short time, using a minimum of five hundred sheep to the acre. More dung meant better soil and this meant an increased yield in corn. Locally this was barley, destined for the maltings of Warminster! Thomas Davis writes at length about farming in the late 18th century in his book *A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Wilts* (London, 1794), a copy of which can be seen in the Sandell Library at Devizes Museum. Dr Joe Bettey is also preparing a future volume on Wiltshire agriculture for the WRS.

Sally Thomson (*The Recorder* Editor)


MISREADINGS

The recent revelation that the Venerable Bede himself may have read the name of the 4th century saint who brought Christianity to Scotland as St. Ninian rather than St. Uiniau surely struck a chord in the hearts of all of us who have published original sources or used them in research. The following clangers are offered purely to amuse in the spirit of sympathy, rather than mockery of the valiant transcribers, particularly those who dig themselves into a bigger hole in their attempt to explain their misreading.

B.H. Cunnington: *Records of the County of Wilts*, Quarter Session Rolls for 1603: 'We present John Paynes bezzy for making a mucksune in the Market Place'. Explanation: Bezzy may be meant for Bezonian, a beggar. True reading: John Saynesbury.

Petition to King James in the same rolls: 'The King of Kings and Lord of Lords multiply his Favours and mercy upon you and your Royall stede and posterity'. Explanation: stede, Anglo Saxon, a place or spot. True reading: seede.

Canon Jones on the Terumber Chantry at Trowbridge in *WANHM* x: 'At Beckington (the property) is described as 'a Tune called the Hurle'. Explanation: This word derives from the Anglo Saxon Tun signifying an enclosure. True reading: an Inne called the Harte.

Wiltshire marriage licence bonds (a recently superseded index by Mrs. H. Whipple). One witness in 1739 was indexed as Theofillis Huntly. True reading: Ellis Huntly. Unable to write his name, the witness had made his mark in the form of a small circle, around which the writer of the bond, using it as an hieroglyphic, had written The  of Ellis Huntly.

The would-be bride of Thomas Stevens in 1765 was indexed as 'Mary Campbell Mary Mary Maskell'. True reading: May lawfully marry Mary Maskell.

Sir Richard Colt Hoare, in his account of Odstock in his *History of Modern Wilts*, transcribed a jotting in the 17th century Parish register as 'God mad' beer, and beer mad' corn'. True reading: God mad(e) bees, and bees mad(e) hone(y).

Wiltshire Record Society, vol. 38, *Two Elizabethan Women* (1983), includes a letter written by Joane Thynne to her husband in 1595 about a clandestine marriage contracted by their son with the daughter of a rival family.

To validate their union, the couple spent part of a night together, and, according to the WRS edition, the girl lay down on the bed in her clothes 'and the boy by her side butted and sported for a little while'. A footnote gives us the original spelling of 'butted and sported', which was: *boteid and sporde*. A reviewer kindly pointed out that what this actually meant was that the boy was still wearing his boots and spurs. [WRS vol.38, p.9., no.18]

G.S.Revels, in a pamphlet about Imber, *A Thousand Years of History*, after acknowledging the help given him by the County Archivist, Basil (!) Rathbone, spectacularly misunderstands a meeting house certificate. He writes: 'In 1788 Reg Hume and Shiute Barrington were granted a Baptist licence in the village. . . ' Shute Barrington was, in fact, the Bishop of Salisbury who licensed the Baptists' certificate. Reg Hume was not a person at all, but an abbreviation of the document, the Register of Bishops Hume and Barrington, in which details of their certificate were entered.

John Chandler and Steve Hobbs

RENT COLLECTION IN CODFORD ST. PETER

The following is an adapted extract from a dissertation for an MA in Local & Regional History. It involves the use of a number of records, all of which can be found in the WSRO and the Dorset Record Office.

Rents in Codford St.Peter were paid, usually, half-yearly, at Lady Day (March 25) and at Michaelmas (September 25) and the tenants would have trooped to whichever house the steward allotted for collection of the rents. There is a strong indication in the records where this house was, at least during the seventeenth century. It is to be found in the 1582 Survey for Codford St.Peter, which recites John Bright's (formerly John Prior's) property. In this survey, there are two tenements and three yardlands recorded, together with a 'covenant' as follows:

... vpon condition that euerie of the said tenants being tenant shall find the Steward Surveyor and Receavor of the lorde of the said Mannor aforesaid for courts to holde rents to receave or lands there to Surveye twice in the yere And to their horses sufficyent and convenient by the space of too nyghtes and one day at eury tyme during the terme aforesaid And vpon condicon and covennt that the said John (Pryor) shall p(ro)vide during the terme of his life and [—] a lyverie cote of the lorde and his heires as often and whensoev as the lorde and his heirs from tyme to tyme at his p(ro)per charge and expenses during the terme aforesaid.¹

Here, then, is the answer to how the tenants paid their rents. In return for the hefty rent of £5 4s, an entry fine of £15, two heriots and the use of two houses, stables, barns and land of some seventy-five acres, John Pryor, and later John Bright, had the privilege of accommodating the lord's Steward, Surveyor and/or Receiver and their retinue twice a year. This property came to be called a capital messuage in the manorial records, rather implying that it was a manorial demesne. Perhaps this is where the steward had originally lived before he became an absentee, like his master, although there is one other building in the village which may lay claim to that.

If we extend the resources a little to go beyond 1750, we can trace John Pryor's property into modern times. In the Rent Roll summary of 1679, Mrs.Jane Bright, the widow of John Bright, was paying an annual (deceased) rent of £5 17s 5d, still the highest rent of the copyholders.² Then in the Survey of 1776, the rent is £5 17s 0d, the value having risen to £65.³ By the time the manor was sold in 1812,⁴ this same property was the main manorial holding and was known as The Manor House; it is still known by that name today, though undoubtedly it was never the home of the lord of the manor.

The other property which may have had a high status within the manor is today known as The Old Manor House. This building dates from the sixteenth century, but is on obviously older foundations. Its site is on what was originally the south side of the main demesne farmyard, called the Rick Barton. The Tropenell Cartulary (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries) mentions the house and close called the Whomberton, garden and land of Thomas Tropenell to the west [ad domos et clausam voc. the Whomberton, gardinum et terram Thome Tropenell versus west]⁵ in a grant of 1469. 'Whom' is a commonly-recurring west country word for 'home', 'berton' is clearly 'barton' or farm; hence the Home Farm, or demesne farm, which Thomas Tropenell was farming, or at least leasing, at this time. (This was first pointed out to me by Miss Kate Forbes of Bury House, Codford). This would have been an ideal building for the collection of rents and is of sufficiently high quality as a building to have housed the steward at one time, perhaps before the allocation of the Manor House aforementioned. The fact that the latter used to have a garden in the vicinity of The Old Manor House and Rick Barton and stands on the opposite side of the road, rather indicates a close connection between the two buildings.

Sally Thomson

NOTES

1. WSRO Ref: 442/1.
2. Dorset Record Office Ref: D/FSI/Box 133.
3. WSRO Ref: 906/CC13.
4. Dorset Record Office Ref: D/FSI/Box 176.
5. Rev.J.Silvester Davies ed., *The Tropenell Cartulary* 2 vols. (WANHS Records, Devizes, 1908) p.122.

CRICKLADE'S ALLOTMENTS (OR LACK OF THEM)

Among the allotments of land made at the inclosure of Braydon forest was one of 100 acres (in fact 104 acres) given by the king to the poor of Cricklade and Chelworth and set out under an Exchequer decree of 1630. The 100 acres lay 2 miles south-west of Cricklade. The court of the Exchequer ordered that it should be managed by the bailiff and two constables of the borough with the two churchwardens and four overseers of St. Sampson's parish and the two churchwardens and two overseers of St. Mary's, and that the profits from it should be distributed in prescribed ways to benefit the poor. The objects of the charity thus created were met by leasing all the land as farmland until c. 1850; from then 77 acres was leased as garden allotments, the rest remaining farmland.

The letting of the 77 acres as allotments was not in itself charitable. In the earlier 19th century 500–600 acres of the Bowood estate was converted to allotments, as much for Lord Lansdowne's benefit as the poor's: to offset the additional cost of managing it, the allotment land was leased at a rent above that reflected by the fair market value of the land for farming. Similar principles seem to have been adopted at Cricklade. In 1869, when apparently the whole 100 acres was let, at £2 an acre the rent for the allotments was double that for the farmland. The demand for allotments was obviously high then, and in the late 19th century it may have been kept up by lower rent. In 1879 the allotment holders petitioned for a reduction after their potato crops had been blighted, and from 1881 the rent for allotment land was 30s. an acre.

The 100 acres given to benefit the poor of Cricklade and Chelworth was on the doorstep of Leigh village, and in the 1880s most of the allotment holders lived at Leigh. Other land, said to be nearly 70 acres, had been used as allotments by people of Cricklade, but by the 1880s that had gone back to farmland. The Allotments Act was passed in 1887, and in 1888 an inquiry about allotments for the labouring classes of Cricklade was held in the town hall. The inquiry found that allotments had not been provided by any landowner voluntarily and, to comply with the Act, Cricklade and Wootton Bassett rural sanitary authority entered into a contract to buy land for conversion to allotments for the town. The Act, however, required that the authority, in providing allotments, should incur no cost chargeable to the ratepayer, and by 1889 the authority's estimate of what rent it would have to charge for allotments to defray the cost of providing and managing them had dramatically reduced the demand for them. The authority withdrew from the contract, and Cricklade was left as a town without allotments.

The allotments which were part of the 100 acres apparently remained in demand until the First World War. In 1905 there were 235 allotments and, although there were only 62 tenants, most were probably cultivated. Demand had fallen by the late 1920s, 52 acres of allotment land was leased to a farmer in 1929, and by 1937, when there were only 18 tenants and holding ranged between 4½ acres and ¼ acre, some allotments had grown almost to smallholdings. In 1938 the trustees of the Hundred Acres charity allowed 6 acres of the allotment land to be fenced off, and in 1939 there were 28 tenants cultivating 19 acres of allotments.

The cultivation of the allotments in the 100 acres was brought to an end by the Second World War. In 1939 the War Agricultural Committee for Wiltshire demanded that as much of the 100 acres as was not being worked as allotments should be ploughed up. In 1943 the Air Ministry requisitioned 63 acres of the 100 acres for Blakehill Farm airfield, and by the end of the war only 4½–7 acres lay as allotments. In 1945 the tenants were given notice to quit, and the trustees sold 96 acres to the Air Ministry for £3,900 in 1946 and the rest of the 100 acres for £600 in 1947.

For the environmentally concerned the good news is that the land of R.A.F. Blakehill Farm, which was used by the R.A.F. until the 1950s, has recently been sold by the government to Wiltshire Wildlife Trust for conservation as meadow land.

Douglas Crowley

COLONEL WHITLEY AND THE WILTSHIRE POSTMASTERS

One of the earliest documents in the Post Office Archives is the out-letter book of Colonel Whitley, who was Deputy Postmaster General from 1672 to 1677. The revenue from the Post Office was at that time part of the income of James Duke of York (later James II), and the profits had been farmed out to Lord Arlington and Sir Charles Berkeley, who incidentally also shared the management of the King's mistresses. Whitley came from a Flintshire family of staunch royalists. Both of his brothers were killed in the Civil War, and he had accompanied the royal family into exile. His out-letter book and some of his account books survived among the papers of the Mainwaring family, who descended from Whitley through his daughter.

When the royal Mail was opened to the public in 1635, permanent posts were laid between London and the principal towns of Britain, and two of the post roads passed through Wiltshire. The Bristol Road ran through the north of the County, where Marlborough received posts from Newbury and sent them on to Chippenham and Bristol, and the Plymouth Road through the south, Salisbury receiving posts from Andover and forwarding them to Shaftesbury. It is significant that the distances between these towns are all round about 15 miles, as this is as far as a fresh and rested horse can be expected to gallop without tiring. The speed at which the mail could be moved depended entirely on the postboys being able to change horses at these regular intervals. As innkeepers were the people most likely to have horses and stabling at their disposal, most of the early postmasters were innkeepers.

The out-letter book contains copies of all the letters Colonel Whitley sent to local postmasters throughout England during his period of office. He was a very conscientious man, and it obviously saddened him that most of the letters which he wrote were admonitions to the postmasters about abuses in the service. Principal among these was bad timekeeping. In March 1677, for instance, there were 'grievous complaints' from Bristol about the late arrival of their mail. In 1674, Whitley had written to Mr. Stephens, the postmaster at Chippenham 'I find by yesterdays label that you were 6 hours riding to Marlborough, being but 15 miles, pray have more dispatch'; and again, to Mr. Pannell at Devizes, whose mail was picked up and set down at Beckhampton 'Mr. Stephens complains of the slow coming of the Bridgwater bag to Beckhampton, that his boy commonly attends its coming 2 or 3 hours, else it must be left behind'. The lateness of the mails was often put down to the poor quality of the horses which the postmasters sent out, but Mr. Bedbury of Salisbury was accused of employing postboys who were so physically small that they were frightened to go out on dark nights.

Another abuse was the opening of the mail pouches by the postboys. They broke the seals to take letters out and sold them to local carriers, who then delivered the letters and pocketed the fees, making considerable profits on the transaction. At that time the postal fees were paid by the recipient, not the sender. Sometimes things got so bad that the postmaster simply had to go. Whitley wrote several times to Mr Emmes of Chippenham, such as 'They dare not entrust their letters in your hands, because you detain, open and

suppress them as you see good,' and eventually Emmes was replaced by William Stephens.

Other letters written by Colonel Whitely related to the remittance of money to and from London, and variations in post roads. There was a protracted correspondence about a new route to Taunton. The old route had been a by-road from the Plymouth road, but Whitely was intending to set up a totally new route, leaving the Bristol road at Beckhampton, and running through Devizes to Frome, Wells and Bridgwater. The object was to increase revenue by running mails to towns not previously served.

Colonel Whitely resigned when the lease of Lord Arlington and Sir Charles Berkeley ran out in 1677. He lived to be almost eighty, and when he died in 1697 was said to have left a considerable fortune. His letters show that he carried out his duties in a most conscientious manner, while at the same time trying to keep on good terms with his subordinates, who did not always give him the support which he deserved.

Lorelei Williams

THE FUTURE OF THE VICTORIA HISTORY OF WILTSHIRE

Many members of the society will be aware that the Wiltshire V.C.H., the research costs of which are met almost entirely by the local authorities in the county, is in financial difficulty. Although Wiltshire County Council and Salisbury and Kennet District Councils have managed to keep up their contributions, West Wiltshire and North Wiltshire, while remaining strongly committed to the project, have had to reduce theirs. The difficulties would have been even greater this year had there not been a successful fund-raising appeal, which provided a small reserve.

The Wiltshire V.C.H. believes that it has much to offer and, looking to achieve medium-term stability, is discussing a possible partnership with the University of the West of England at Bristol. The university already has associations with the V.C.H. and has proposed a volume on Bristol as part of the V.C.H. bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, and it is establishing a Regional History Centre. During the autumn of 2002 discussions took place between the Director of the V.C.H. and representatives of U.W.E. to explore whether U.W.E. might wish to join the Wiltshire local authorities in contributing to the funding of the Wiltshire V.C.H. In a fruitful discussion in January also attended by representatives of the Wiltshire V.C.H. Committee and the Wiltshire V.C.H. staff, the strong synergies of such a partnership emerged, and it is hoped that both U.W.E. and the Wiltshire local authorities will be find it possible to negotiate a 5-year agreement in time for the beginning of the academic year 2003/4.

Such partnerships work well in other counties. The usual arrangements are that the V.C.H. staff become employees of the local university, which then receives the publication credits for the volumes towards its research ranking, while V.C.H. staff give some time to teaching. In return the university makes a financial contribution to the V.C.H.'s budget and provides facilities V.C.H. staff sometimes find difficult to obtain, such as access to an academic library, a research-active history department, and IT support.

If a partnership between the U.W.E. and Wiltshire's local authorities could be reached its benefits would be obvious. Most importantly, the future of the Wiltshire V.C.H.

would be secured for 5 years. The removal of uncertainty would allow the current staff to concentrate fully on their work and make it easier to attract any future recruits from a pool of high-quality candidates. How much staff time would be spent away from the writing of parish histories is a matter for negotiation. Although there would be some impact on the time needed to produce a volume, it is strongly hoped that all concerned would agree that the benefits of securing the future of the project and continuing work on the county are the most important considerations.

The volumes so far produced by the Wiltshire V.C.H. are the biggest and the best set in the country. Volume XVII was published in November 2002, work on Volume XVIII continues, and the draft text of a special paperback on Codford, to be published in 2004, is in preparation. The Wiltshire V.C.H. web pages are a model for other county websites, and a paperback reprint of the histories of Amesbury, Bulford, and Durrington will be published this year. Everyone wishes the Wiltshire V.C.H. to complete its coverage of the county. It has a strong momentum and much accumulated expertise and experience. A partnership with U.W.E., which would have benefits for both sides, seems the best way of underpinning its future progress. At the same time it would be likely to raise its profile and broaden its appeal.

Carrie Smith

AN APOLOGY

We have been rightly taken to task by Adrian Henstock, editor of our sister society in Nottinghamshire, the Thoroton Society. At my prompting Ian Hicks, editor of the forthcoming WRS volume on *Early Vehicle Registration in Wiltshire, 1903-14*, claimed in last year's *Recorder*, 'No English Record Society has published any source examining this form of transport which has transformed our lives.' In making the claim we both overlooked work published by P A Kennedy, 'Nottinghamshire register of motor cars and motor cycles, 1903', in *A Nottinghamshire Miscellany*, edited by J H Hodson, 1962 (Thoroton Society Record Society Series, vol. 21). I had in fact come across this work some years ago in Nottingham, and had passed a photocopy to Ian, which we both found useful. It is brief (only pp.65-79 of the volume), covers only the first five weeks' of registration (in 1903), and omits the date of registration and (crucially for motoring historians) the registration mark. Nevertheless we should not have claimed our work as a first, and we apologise.

John Chandler

ANNUAL MEETING 2003

This year's annual general meeting and lecture will take place at Wilbury Park, Newton Tony, on 31 May 2003, at 2.30 pm, by kind permission of Miranda, Countess of Iveagh. Dr John Elliott of Reading University will speak on 'Pugin, the Gothic Revival, and Wiltshire'.

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