

# THE RECORDER



THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WILTSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY

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## EDITORIAL

The 2005 AGM was held on Saturday June 4th at Manor Farm, Codford St Peter, by kind permission of Mr Henry Collins. It was probably only the second time that the AGM has been held in a barn (members with long memories will recall our meeting in a barn at Manor Farm, Stockton in the early 1980s)! But the setting was highly appropriate, as the Society's latest volume was launched at the meeting – Joe Bettey's *Wiltshire Farming in the 17th Century* (volume 57).

After a short business meeting, Dr. Peter Fleming, of the University of the West of England, gave a most interesting talk on *Politics and conflict in the later medieval west of England*. They had their problems with crime and extortion even then. During the talk, those of us seated near the back of the barn were further regaled by the activities of a small mouse running about on the top of a wall and by a short-eared bat wending its way up the doorpost.

Tea was taken in the gracious farmhouse and members were free to wander in the sitting room, where several interesting local maps were on display, and in the old back kitchen, now the family museum, where the Collins collection of agricultural artefacts and tools could be inspected. There were also archaeological specimens, most of which had been picked up by Henry Collins' late father from the 1930s until his death in the early '90s. Henry was presented with a copy of Joe Bettey's book.

This year our AGM will be held in the seventeenth century Merchant's House at 132 High Street, Marlborough. This building rose, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the Great Fire of Marlborough in 1653 and was built for Thomas Bayly, a silk merchant of the town. From the eighteenth century onwards it was used by various retailers, the last being W.H. Smith, from 1926-1990.

In 1991, the Town Council purchased the building and leased it to the newly-formed Merchant's House Trust for a peppercorn rent. It is still undergoing loving restoration, with meticulous attention to the details of décor and furniture. A small shop, selling decorative items, occupies the ground floor front of the building.

Because of the age and size of the Merchant's House, numbers will be limited on a first-come, first-served basis. This is regrettable, but we are sure that the membership will appreciate the necessity of complying with the rigorous rules laid down.

Mr Michael Gray, the President of the Trust, has kindly offered to give a talk on the house and its furnishings and tea will be available as usual. Please note that there is a change of day. Usually we have our AGMs on a Saturday, but of

necessity it has had to be transferred to a Sunday this year – 4 June.

I am very grateful to all contributors to this year's *Recorder*; I think members will agree we have a good variety of articles here – something for everyone. But I do encourage all of you to have a little think during the coming year and see if more of you can produce something for next year's newsletter. It doesn't have to be long, just something which you have found interesting, amusing or informative about Wiltshire records – of any sort.

Sally Thomson, Editor

## WILTSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY: SURPLUS VOLUMES

The Record Society still has a large stock of back volumes. At present these are stored in the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office but this facility will not be available to us when the office moves to its new premises in 2007. This has prompted the Committee to review its policy on publication. In future we shall print a sufficient number for the members plus only a few extra volumes.

But we also have to find ways of disposing of most of the present stock of several thousand volumes. A few years ago we had a very successful sale to members of a range of old volumes. The Committee has now decided to extend the range of volumes on offer to members at the very attractive price of £3 per volume (plus £2.50 for postage and packing unless collected from the Record Office). It is hoped that many members will take the opportunity of this offer. Please write to Steve Hobbs at the Record Office with your order (cheques made payable to the Wiltshire Record Society).

The available volumes are:

Volume numbers: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51.

(The titles may be found from the List of Publications at the back of the most recently published volume.)

If any members have other useful suggestions about ways of disposing of the stock, we would be pleased to hear from them.

Ivor Slocombe

## THE VIEW FROM THE WILTSHIRE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY

When I moved to Wiltshire last September to take up my new post as assistant editor of the Victoria County History, I was a newcomer to the County. I had previously

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worked on the Oxfordshire VCH volumes. I was immediately struck by Wiltshire's rich heritage, apparent in its prehistoric monuments, and the numbers of historic buildings in its towns and villages.

I have been welcomed into a vibrant local history community and I have also become aware of how strong the tradition is here of local history writing and the preservation of the past. John Aubrey (1626-1697) established the tradition of scholarship and the torch passed on to Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758-1838) and John Britton (1771-1857). It is interesting to note that the museum of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, Devizes, was begun with the purchase of John Britton's collections in 1853. The Society and its leading members played a significant role in the development of modern historical disciplines. Not only did they help to develop the techniques of modern archaeology, but also spawned many of the local history institutions which exist in Wiltshire today. Ralph Pugh, a member of WANHS and general editor of the Victoria County History, played a leading role in establishing both the Wiltshire Record Society, and Wiltshire's Victoria County History, which has so far published 18 volumes. Pugh appointed Miss Elizabeth Crittall as editor of Wiltshire VCH, who sadly passed away in 2005. Her successor was Dr. Douglas Crowley, who has also been honorary editor of WRS. Douglas will retire at the end of January 2006, after almost 38 years of service. The process has begun to appoint his successor, although his vast knowledge makes him irreplaceable. Douglas' work on the Victoria County History volumes stands in that tradition of scholarship of which Wiltshire can be so proud. It has been a privilege to work alongside him over the last year and I have learned so much from him. It will be a loss to the County, when he moves away to Suffolk at the beginning of February.

An exhibition about the work of Wiltshire VCH will be displayed at the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office until April 2006. The Wiltshire VCH Appeal Trust (Reg. charity no. 1102882) paid for the exhibition, which will be available to tour other venues from May. For further details please contact:

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*Virginia Bainbridge*

## A CELEBRATION OF WILTSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY

On Saturday 28th January 2006 a conference was held to thank Dr. Douglas Crowley for his work on the Wiltshire Victoria County History over the last 37 years. It took place at the University of the West of England Regional History Centre and was attended by about 50 people. Despite saying goodbye to Douglas, it was a happy occasion and many people said how much they enjoyed the day. In the morning, Tom Craig, Wiltshire County Council Heritage manager, presented an overview of the heritage services which the Council funds outright, and those it supports in partnership with other organisations. There followed short talks on how the County archives, the Local Studies collections, the County Archaeology service and the Family History society have evolved over the past 50 years. In the afternoon more detailed papers on aspects of Wiltshire's medieval and economic history were given by Dr. John Hare, Professor Michael Hicks and Dr. John Chandler. Dr. Peter Fleming explained how UWE came into partnership with the Wiltshire V.C.H. and Professor Christopher Elrington

brought the afternoon to a close with a short history of the organisation and a vote of thanks to Douglas. Although Douglas has retired to Suffolk, he retains his links with the County and is still a member of the Wiltshire Record Society Committee.

*Virginia Bainbridge*

## ELUSIVE ANCESTOR

Genealogists often suspect that the parish registers on which they rely for their raw information are deficient in entries, but there is seldom any way to prove their suspicions. Recently I came upon notes on a prominent family which go some way to confirming the unreliability of the registers.

WSRO 1390/128/1 includes some loose pages which are annotated 'I received the inclosed from Lady Savile in 1769 or 1770. Nevil Maskelyne, Astronr Royal'. The notes commence with the acknowledgement of the source 'Taken out of my mother Wallis Commn Prayer Book written with her own hand in the year 1666' and continue with the marriage of Anne Maskelyne to Harry Wallis in 1666 in Purton, baptisms of her eight children and early burial of four of them, and the marriage of the heir, with his three children as well. The concluding sentence reveals the copyist to be John Wallis the sixth child of Harry Wallis who was born in Trowbridge in 1677.

The individual entries are exceedingly detailed, giving place and time of birth as well as specifics such as Easter Eve. Baptism date is recorded along with the names of all the godparents, and frequently their relationship to the child. Burial entries name day and date of death, then burial, as well as the place in the church. Three children buried in St James were in their grandmother's grave 'Under the Reading Pew.'

The detail given and the prominence of the families mentioned (Maskelyne of Purton, Long of Rood Ashton, Penruddock of Groveley) encouraged me to compare these entries with what survives in the parish registers. It was quite a contrast.

I was not surprised by the sparseness of most of the entries – date, name and parentage only, in the case of baptisms, and date and name for burials, but given the prominence of the families, I was surprised that only three of the first eight baptisms are to be found, and two of the three in the next generation. The churches concerned are scattered through the county – Purton, Trowbridge and Barford St Martin – and the time period quite long. Yet it was a baptism as late as 1705 which was missing. The condition of the registers adds to the difficulty with the family – the first born Anne appears with a surname which might be read as 'WALKER', and blots and scratchings-out make it difficult to determine exactly who died. If this is the level of survival of information for the elite families, what chance do we have for the rest of us to trace families beyond the mid-18th century?

To give you a flavour of what might have been recorded and was not, here is one Prayer Book entry:

John Wallis was born at Troubridge on Tuesday 18th of September 1677 about 3 in the morning and was baptised in the Parish Church of Troubridge the Munday following being the 24 Instant. John Hall Esq of Bradford and Mr John Wallis were his godfathers and Mrs Mary Thinn of Mounton his godmother.

I wonder if John was aware that his entry was one of the missing?

*Persis Wiltshire*

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## WILTSHIRE WILLS PROJECT

The completion of the first part of this project, which our society has supported financially, is a good time to review some of the finds made during the re-cataloguing of the collection.

Just over 105,000 individual bundles of wills, administration bonds, inventories and other supporting papers will be recorded on the new database. With an average of 4 items per bundle, approximately 400,000 individual documents have been flattened, re-numbered, re-boxed, repaired where necessary, and re-indexed.

Several misplacings of document, inevitable over their many years of use both in the Record Office and previously, the District Probate Registry, have been corrected. Most notably the will and inventory of Jane Forget, a former nun of Wilton abbey, who died in 1588; the will was correctly in the dean of Sarum's collection, in view of her adopted home at Mere, which came under his jurisdiction. The inventory however, because its title included Wilton had been placed in the series of the archdeacon of Sarum, under whose control Wilton fell.

One document must have left the collection to be returned some time after. The back of a probate inventory of 1626 was used to record the expenses of Thomas Randall for quartering parliamentarian soldiers on his property and chantry land in Fisherton Anger, and for contributing to the garrison at Longford castle in Britford in 1645. Names of officers and numbers of men, including a surgeon, and horses add to the importance of this rare survival.

One interesting outcome of the programme of flattening and repackaging has been the discovery of several documents, which had been cut up and used as bundle wrappers.

The first was a lease dated 1651 of a house in West Street, Wilton, belonging to St. John's Hospital, that had been cut up into six strips. These have now been placed in the archives of the Hospital (Ref 1671/116). The other was a much more unusual document unique among the diocesan archives. It was an account of the provisions for Bishop Seth Ward's household in the manor house at West Lavington for one week in July 1673. The bishop's palace in Salisbury Close was undergoing extensive refurbishment and the bishop resorted to one of his manor houses for the duration.

Renowned for his hospitality, the Bishop lived up to this reputation during his sojourn. Mutton, beef, rabbit, duck and goose were complemented by carrots, beans and turnips, and washed down with beer and wines like claret and canary. On the Thursday four lobsters and 'souce' meat (probably bird of prey) were purchased for consumption on meatless Friday. The document has been reconstituted from twelve strips and placed in the diocesan archives with Seth Ward's personal papers (D1/27/1/5H).

Two documents also used as wrappers but not cut up were copies of parish registers (known as bishops' transcripts) for Farnborough, Berkshire for 1678 and Dilton 1694-1695. They have been returned to their original bundles.

The probate records themselves continue to enlighten and entertain with their detail and ability to recreate scenes of ordinary life. The spoken will of Thomas Kyngton of Atworth, who died in 1577, is an example. It begins 'Thomas Kyngton... being in his perffit mynde and memory about a senight [seven nights] before his decease sytting by the fier in his owne house'said unto his wife and family 'Wife I am olde and shal not lyve long I knowe well wherfore my mynde and will is...'

Although Thomas was not able to commit his final wishes to paper he was more prepared for his end than

William Mowdy of Boyton who, in 1579, 'beinge sicke', was 'demanded' by his two neighbours whether he was content for his estate to be bestowed on his children to which he answered 'yea'. This is probably as close to a last gasp will as possible. Similarly, poor John Greenway of Chippenham, who died in 1850, 'in [his] last moments' directed that apart from a couple of items to go to his son, all his estate (which was pitifully small) was to go to his 'litttle girl, Mary Ann'.

A rather less touching scene appears to have graced the deathbed of James Blake of Paxcroft Farm, Steeple Ashton, in 1851. On his decease, his six children read his will, 'and very inconsiderately determined to destroy it', as they thought its terms unfair. This show of family unity did not last long, however, as the eldest daughter decided that she would have been better off under the terms of the will. Luckily for her, two of her sisters had kept copies of the original will, although the two versions were not identical, which did not help matters. A further complication was the fact that the will contained bequests of certain copyhold property over which the testator did not have power of disposal. Needless to say, the action of burning the will (which the children claimed was 'without any fraudulent intent') was censured by the probate official whose legal advice was sought on the matter – he opined that the family acted 'incautiously' and 'improperly', and had come to realise their 'folly'. The mess was sorted out eventually, but at the cost, no doubt, of lingering family discord.

*Steve Hobbs*

## HUNGERFORD CARTULARY, PART 2: THE HOBHOUSE CARTULARY

When John Kirby died three years ago he had nearly finished editing a calendar of the Hobhouse Cartulary, one of the two versions of the Hungerford family's cartulary that survive more or less complete. He had published a calendar of the other such version, the Radnor Cartulary, for the Record Society in 1994. Secular cartularies survive in much smaller numbers than monastic cartularies, but it was useful for lay landowners and their stewards, just as for monasteries, to have an easier way to refer to their title deeds than sorting through the original deeds, which varied in size and shape, were usually folded and had their seals attached. For the Hungerfords at least four cartularies were compiled, two of which survive only as fragments, to provide copies of the deeds relating to their estates, which lay mostly in Wiltshire and Somerset.

The relationship between the Hobhouse Cartulary and the Radnor Cartulary is not clear. The Hobhouse Cartulary is much the larger of the two: it contains 341 folios as against 302 and the folios are very large, 450 by 300 millimetres (15 by 12 inches). Its main part contains copies of nearly 1,400 charters up to c. 1450. More than 900 of those charters are among the 950 in the Radnor Cartulary, and since they have already been calendared they do not need more than a cross-reference in the new edition. Added at the end of the Hobhouse cartulary are 32 folios with copies of a further 34 documents of the 1470s. It is clear that the Radnor Cartulary was copied, in part at least, from the Hobhouse Cartulary: there is an obvious discontinuity in successive entries on the recto and verso of a folio in the Radnor Cartulary, nos. 569 and 570 in the published calendar, which were evidently taken from the Hobhouse Cartulary, where the entries are discontinuous because the folios on the outside of the quire in which they lay were removed.

Several folios of the Hobhouse Cartulary were removed before the quires were bound, which may have been some years after the manuscript was written. Three of

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them were found by Janet Stevenson in 1993, bound, in the wrong order, into a volume in the Hampshire Record Office. After the folios had been numbered, probably when the quires were bound, five (folios 268–272) were cut out. The book was rebound in the early 19th century and again in 1937–8, when five loose folios were bound in where they lay in the book, between folios 54 and 55: three of them are folios 270–272, but the other two are so badly damaged that they cannot be certainly identified as folios 268–9.

John Kirby's widow Heather was able, with a good deal of effort, to identify the typescripts and word-processed files which he had made for the Hobhouse cartulary, and I have been trying to complete his calendar so that the Record Society can publish it as a companion to the Radnor Cartulary. John worked on the Hobhouse Cartulary almost entirely from a microfilm copy, which because the folios are so large is sometimes too much reduced to be easily legible. Moreover, because the binding is tight, some words near the gutter are difficult to read in the microfilm because they are foreshortened there. Much of the work of finishing his edition has therefore been checking the original manuscript for readings of which John was doubtful.

*Christopher Elrington*

## **GLEANINGS FROM WILTSHIRE PARISH REGISTERS**

Although the wealth and variety of memoranda found in parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials have long been appreciated from the work of the pioneers of the study of parish records like JC Cox and WE Tate, as far as I am aware, no county wide collection have ever been published. I am working on such an edition for Wiltshire for pre-1812 registers, which total about 1200 volumes, of which probably about half have relevant material. No other volume published by this society has relied on such large body of source material or placed more physical demands on its editor, who fetches and replaces the books to and from the shelves in the strong rooms of the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office! The advice of the king to the White Rabbit in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland 'Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end; then stop', seem eminently appropriate in this case.

They were generally written by incumbents to record their interests and responsibilities for the benefit of themselves and their successors in such matters as maintaining their property and tithes. Joint responsibilities with the churchwardens over matters such as allocation of pews and upkeep of churchyard fences are also reflected, as are gifts of church plate and other furnishings. They might also deal with projects of church building and upkeep, which might not figure in churchwardens' accounts as they were paid for by individual largess rather than parochial subscription. In a few cases individual memoranda record the business of the vestry and are the earliest examples of those meetings, although I am not including the full series of such records that are found, for example, in the registers of the Donheads.

The notes of John Mayo, rector of Beechingstoke in the mid 18th century, illustrate the more practical aspects of the life of a clergyman, in maintaining his parsonage and upholding his rights to tithes, despite coming somewhat prematurely into the living. A similar record was kept by the William Hickee, rector of Broughton Gifford, 1690–1733, which is enlivened by his account of a poltergeist in the church house. Corsham has a long series of pew agreements, sufficiently numerous to give some idea of the overall seating arrangement in the church. Gifts of fittings and furnishings are common; in Broad Hinton there is a most detailed

account of the materials purchased for a pulpit cloth in 1769. Here the vicar, Algernon Clavering, noted in 1769 that the tower was new leaded and a lock and key put on the door, 'to prevent people cutting their names etc etc etc' in the lead; an 18th century attempt to the precursors of the modern Kilroy.

The notes are not entirely the preserve of incumbents; in a few instances precocious parish clerks use the spaces in the registers for more than practising their penmanship. The best example of this is the eponymous Richard Clerk, who served both Devizes parishes between 1702–1729. Possibly related to earlier clerks and the father of a succeeding one, perhaps it was his dynastic awareness that encouraged him. Certainly his inclusion of an epic 76-line verse extolling the merits of Saint George over just about every significant figure in ancient and medieval history is quite a tour de force. As an example of popular literary culture it is quite exceptional; and probably merits closer study than it will receive in this edition. The downside of such exuberance is that Clerk must surely be the person guilty of cutting out a page from the Devizes St John register for 1559–1563 and using the blank reverse to make the bishops transcript of 1719 for St Mary: A piece of vandalism that came to light a few years ago when the registers were transcribed for the Wiltshire Family History Society, and which has now been rectified.

There is also a clear sense that the parish register was regarded as a repository of knowledge available to parishioners as required. Thus in one of the Beechingstoke registers two cures for the bite of mad dog copied and pasted in; evidence of the dangers of rabies in an age before penicillin. There are instances of documents, such as licences to eat meat in Lent and perambulations of parish bounds being copied in, emphasising the use of these books as registers in the wider sense.

Despite the common perception that our preoccupation with the weather dates from the times when our supply of food depended so much on the local climate, to date there have been relatively few references. James Ayscough, vicar of Highworth, added his notes written between 1732–1740, the worst 'that was ever known in the memory of man', emphasising that his interest was only in the extremes. For Bradford on Avon, one such event was recorded, now sadly very faint on the cover of a register. In 1611 the church was struck by thunder and lightning and falling masonry smashed the clock and its frame. Previously the earliest reference to clock was over 100 years later. The illegibility of the note explains why this event appears to have eluded historians of the parish.

It is in such glimpses that the strength of the material lies. In 1695 we learn that a parcel of Roman copper coins of the emperors from Gordianus to Tacitus (238–274AD) were found in a field called The Lands in Great Cheverell: surely a useful addition to the county's Sites and Monuments Record. A storm in 1740 almost destroyed the windmill in Highworth: I am not sure that we have any other record of that building.

These examples illustrate what I have found most intriguing in undertaking this work. The wonderful uncertainty of what is going to turn up, or not, in each register.

*Steve Hobbs*

## **FISHING RIGHTS IN LACOCK**

Lacock has a history of title to Common Rights on Common or Green, illegal inclosures and fishing fights on the Avon, to the extent of Court action. In the early 18th century there were serious differences between the Lords of the Lacock Manors, Talbot & Montagu.

### Fishing Rights.

From the Tryall notation (a list of past incidents to prove claims to fishing rights): 'As to the fishing... It appears in or about 1669 in a cause in ye K(Kings) Bench wherein Mary Montagu is pt(plaintiff) agt (against) Griest deft(defendant) for fishing in her separate fishery ...'

There were many instances of contention and one in particular reveals why rights were so jealously protected. The river was teeming with valuable fish. '... also the defendants the same day and year by force of arms fished in that separate fisheries in a certain river called Avon in the aforesaid parish of Lacoche and took and carried away fish, namely one hundred pices, in English pikes, to the value of £5 one hundred percas, in English perches, to the value of £5 one hundred Rubellions, in English roaches to the value of twenty shillings, one hundred apuas, in English dace to the value of ten shillings, and one hundred Gibbiones, in English gudgeons to the value of five shillings. And they committed other outrages etc. To the value of £40'

**An Offence of using nets** ('did pitch Netts') was reported and so it went on:

'Note this trespass was where ye plaintiffs lands lay on one side of ye said river & ye lands of James Montagu Esqr on ye other side ...'

'The plt Clayms title to ye whole fishing in ye river called Avon in ye parish of Laycocke from a place called Reybridge to ye lower end of a certayne Meadow called Wüickey (Withey) meade as tenants to Sir John Talbot, Knt. Lord of ye Mannor of Laycocke.'

**A Fracas:** '....(one Thomas Harding-who rented Mr. Montagu water) came into the water below Reybridge with his boat to fish and ye boate was broken by Sir John Talbot & ye fishing quietly enjoyed by Sir John Talbot & his tenants until 1669'

Agreement between Montagu & Talbot is recorded in letter of apology (undated) for a fishing offence, Montagu being 'heartily vexed at the folly of his Man fishing below Reybridge ... As I ever determined punctually to perform our agreement I have constantly enjoyed every man to forbare fishing below Reybridge ... convince all aggressors of this kind that the injury is to yours Not to

Your obliged humble Sevt Montagu.'

Yet disagreement continued. In a letter of 15th May 1840, Frederick William Rooke, now at Lackham, wrote to Fox Talbot referring to a quarrel between their Keepers.

'... my Keeper was on this side Reybridge on the Montagus Land when Blackman ordered him off & pointed to a part of the River where he chose to say my Rights ended.' Rooke emphasized that 'my Solicitor was satisfied from Documents I now have that Mr Montagu had the right to sell the River to me ... I put it as you do, that you had the right to half the River from Reybridge cottage to the Bridge and the Montagu property the other half.'

'I have a right to fish as far as Mr Montagu's Property goes, but I am perfectly willing to give up my Rights & make Reybridge, as you propose, my Boundary.'

29th May 1840: A letter to Fox Talbot from West Awdry, Solicitor.

'I enclose Counterpart Agreemt respecting the Avon Fishery signed by Capt Rooke ...'

So that was the end of the matter and perhaps left both Rooke & Talbot to concentrate on poachers.

Brian Banks

## WILTSHIRE CONSTABULARY RECORDS

The Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office contains an interesting series of records of the Wiltshire

Constabulary, some of which go back to the establishment of the Force in 1839. Wiltshire is said to have been the first county to set up such a police force; and the survival of such early police records among county records appears to be rare.

The records came to my notice when I undertook some research on behalf of a former neighbour into his family history. One of his ancestors, James Gawen (or Gowen) came from Westbury, where he, and apparently his father before him, were cordwainers (shoemakers). On 31 August 1837 at the age of 31 he had married Sarah Ann Joyce, a young woman aged 19 from North Bradley, but by the time the 1841 Census was taken on 6 June 1841 he was living in Mere and was recorded as an Inspector of Police.

This led me to the surviving records of the Wiltshire Constabulary. A modern typescript in the reference room, compiled from one of the registers of the police force (Register B - F5/200/1/2), contained some information about James Gowen, noting that he entered the force on 6 January 1840, that he was married and that his birthplace was Westbury and that of his wife was North Bradley, and details of his complexion, and the colour of his eyes and hair. His date of birth is recorded as 1814, which conflicts with his age as recorded elsewhere (thirty-one at the time of his marriage in 1837; forty-four at the time of the 1851 Census). Another register of the police force (F5/200/1/1) contains two entries (ff.4v-5r and 18v-19r) for him: the first as a constable as 'James Gowen', with black hair and brown eyes; and the second as 'James Gawen, Inspector', with dark brown hair and hazel eyes. The second also notes his trade of bootmaker working for himself and his dismissal from the force. A later return of members of the force, 1839-1874, (F5/202/1) states that he was dismissed for drunkenness. No date is given for his dismissal, but he was still in the force on 22 May 1841 when he was recorded for the last time in the divisional reports of charges for Hindon Division, including Mere Sub-division (A1/595 Bundle 6), and as late as 6 June 1841 according to the Census Returns.

The registers of members of the police force give interesting information about the membership and working of the force. James Gawen was by no means the only officer dismissed for drunkenness in the early years of the force. The reports of charges provide further information on police proceedings and on rural offences. The entries appear usually to have been made by the local Superintendent of Police, who signed most entries, though occasionally they were made or at least countersigned by the arresting officers.

James Gawen was involved in several arrests. On his second day in the force he arrested John Roe, a horsekeeper from Chicklade, for a stabbing with a swordstick. More common charges were sheep stealing and similar thefts, but on 27 June 1840 he took part in the arrest of Henry Kirby of St. Pancras in London and several others for breaking windows in the Ship Inn at Mere. An unusual case of leniency occurred on 22 March 1840 when he and another constable arrested two young men for stealing rods at East Knoyle on the land of a local Justice of the Peace, Henry Seymour. Seymour was noted as the complainant, but when the two officers took the young men before him as magistrate, he allowed them to depart unpunished. On 7 April 1841 Inspector Gawen charged two labourers from Mere with gambling. (A1/595 bundles 6 and 8 Hindon Division reports)

The reports of charges were obviously kept with some care as a formal record for the county authorities. One entry from a bundle of reports from Hindon Division, 26 September - 6 October 1841, (A1/595 bundle 2) is of particular interest in evidencing the formality of the record of proceedings and perhaps the proceedings themselves. The reports were entered and signed by George Lucre,

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Superintendent of Police at Hindon, who had recently moved from Chicklade. Entry 10 records a summons of 15 September 1841 against Lucre himself on a charge of assault at Hindon against William Tuck, an exciseman of Hindon, who brought the charge and was recorded as the witness. Lucre is recorded as being taken into custody by Jesse Titt, Constable No. 185, who took the charge and signed the entry. The case was apparently heard before two magistrates and was dismissed. It is interesting and perhaps significant that all the reports for this period, including his own case, were made and signed by George Lucre himself with no indication that he was even temporarily suspended from his office!

*Duncan Chalmers*

## THE CLERGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND DATABASE

The purpose of this project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board, is to create a resource that will enable the careers of clergymen to be tracked as they moved from county to county and diocese to diocese in England and Wales.

The results of five years of research in national and local archives have gone live on the web, with more material to be added every two months.

For Salisbury diocese, which is among the first seven dioceses covered, some information is available for the period 1660-1740.

As schoolmasters were licensed by the church and in fact were often clergymen, they are also included in the database.

The significance of the database for historical research cannot be underestimated. Throughout the period covered the Church of England was the single most important employer of educated males and the parish was the major unit of local government. Thus an understanding of the dynamics of the clerical profession, both in terms of individual careers and of fluctuations in the profession's overall size, distribution and character is central not only to the development of society and religion but also to the study of particular localities.

Searches can be made by place and person, although not all of the linkages have been made yet.

Supporting the database will be an authoritative list of parishes, chapels and school, notes of aspects of ecclesiastical administration and a glossary of terms. The address is: [www.theclergydatabase.org.uk](http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk)

*Robert Pearson*

## NOTES FROM THE GENERAL EDITOR

As I write (in early February) I am putting the finishing touches to volume 58, Ian Hicks's edition of **Early Vehicle Registration in Wiltshire, 1903 – 1914**, which is shaping up into a really interesting and attractive volume. This will be only the second time that the society has ventured into the 20th century, and the first time that we shall be able to include contemporary photographs of the subjects of some of the records. Pictures of vintage cars and motorcycles will pepper the text. It is not quite the first time that this class of document has been subjected to the attentions of a record-publishing society (we were roundly

told off by our friends in Nottinghamshire when we suggested that it was), but it is certainly a most ambitious venture. The mass of data, with their herculean indexes, will facilitate all kinds of research into the nature and growth of car ownership before World War One, as well as making available a mass of local and family information – and will be a means of locating, dating and identifying old photographs. Ian has accomplished an enormous labour of love, and I am sure he would wish me to acknowledge also the sterling help he received from our member the late Jean Cole, as well as professional help with the indexing from Philip Aslett. I hope to be sending the book for printing by the end of February, so distribution to members will take place around Easter.

Hard on Ian's heels, Sally Thomson has now delivered to me the edition of **Marlborough Probate Inventories**, which she has completed on behalf of the society in the wake of the untimely death of its editor, Lorelei Williams, in November 2004. This will be our volume 59, and I shall turn my attention to it in earnest as soon volume 58 has gone to the printer's.

*John Chandler*

## JEAN COLE AND MARJORIE MOORE

It is with great regret that we report the death of Jean Cole at the end of last year. She was a familiar figure in the WSRO and her photo graced the 'Questions and Answers' pages of *Family Tree Magazine* for many years. A full obituary was written by Marjorie Moore in the January issue of the Wiltshire Family History Society's journal and a condensed version appeared in Wiltshire Local History Forum. Enough to say here, quoting from her friend, Marjorie Moore, that she was an experienced and 'prolific writer, transcriber and indexer'. She taught family history, lectured extensively and broadcast on local radio.

She was a committee member of the Wiltshire Record Society from 1992 to 2001 and her contribution to Wiltshire family history and local history will be remembered and valued for many years to come. Always smiling and joking, she will be very much missed by all who knew her, however slightly.

It was a double tragedy that Marjorie Moore herself died in a safari accident in South Africa, the weekend of 19/20 February. She, too, was a prolific genealogist and the Wiltshire Family History Society has been dealt a double blow in the deaths of these two women, so devoted to the subject they loved.

On behalf of the Society, we extend our heartfelt sympathies to both families.

*Sally Thomson*

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Subscriptions were due on the 1st January this year. Any subscriptions still owing should be sent to the Treasurer, cheques being made payable to the Wiltshire Record Society