

# THE RECORDER



THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WILTSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY

## EDITORIAL

Some forty members of the Society gathered in the village hall of Steeple Ashton on the 2nd of June for the 2007 AGM and to hear committee member Kenneth Rogers speak, with his usual wit and erudition, on the history of the village. The occasion also saw the launch of the latest WRS volume (no. 59), *Marlborough Probate Inventories*, the posthumous publication of the late Lorelei Williams.

A delicious tea was provided as usual, and this was followed by an instructive walk about the village, led by Ken Rogers, during which he brought many interesting features of vernacular architecture to our notice. Steeple Ashton church was also included. It is a magnificent building, from which the architectural gems of the village radiate. Inside is a unique record, a small, palimpsest brass, originally a printing plate, recording on one side an 18th-century memorial, while on the reverse is etched part of a religio-political cartoon of the reign of Queen Anne.

There is an excellent guide to Steeple Ashton available in the church, written by Ken Rogers and with exquisite

drawings by Alan Andrew, showing many of the houses viewed during the Society's visit.

The other big event last year was the opening of the new Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, described elsewhere in this newsletter by Steven Hobbs. It would be interesting to know what members think of the new Record Office. Perhaps after a year's use, members would like to express their views in the next *Recorder*. All contributions to the Editor, please.

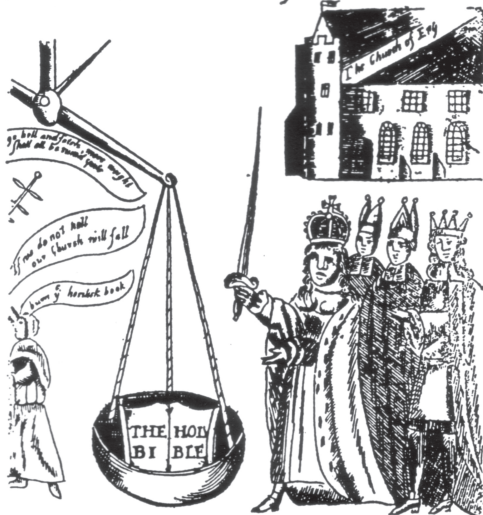
Sally Thomson, Editor

## SOMERSET SOURCES FOR WILTSHIRE STUDIES

Local history is rarely matched by local sources. Most local historians are familiar with the apparent dispersal of sources for their own county or parish arising from the effects of genealogical descent, property succession and agglomeration, testamentary bequests, institutional endowments and economic activity. My own research into the history of the Somerset parish of Kingstone, near Ilminster, led me to examine the records of the Arundells of Wardour, now in the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre. Not that the story ends there: for there are further records of other branches of the Arundell family and of related families in record offices in Cornwall, Dorset and Hampshire, not to mention the records of their manorial successors, the Pouletts of Hinton St. George, Somerset, in the Somerset Record Office in Taunton and those of the patrons of the benefice of Kingstone, the Vicars-Choral of Wells, preserved in the Cathedral archives at Wells.

A further example of the 'dispersal' of records is afforded by the Hobhouse Cartulary, one of four cartularies of the Hungerford family. This came into the hands of the Hobhouse family and ultimately into the collections of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. It is now held in the Somerset Record Office (DD\SAS/H348/1); and an edition of the text by the late John Kirby, prepared for the press by Christopher Elrington, forms the latest volume (60) of the Wiltshire Record Society, complementing the earlier edition (published as Volume 49 in the same series) of the Hungerford Cartulary belonging to the Earl of Radnor deposited in the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre. Another 14th-century lay cartulary with Wiltshire interest exists at Taunton for the De Moleyn family of Stoke Poges Buckinghamshire, which held lands in several counties, including Somerset and Wiltshire (DD\SAS/C795/SX/132). Such considerations led me to consider what sources for Wiltshire studies might be found in neighbouring counties. The records in the Somerset Record Office at Taunton

AND THE DEVIL OVERBALENCED BY THE BIBLE



Who see all refused to mention swaights  
Against the Emich Pope Devil and all their might  
Therefore good subjects all with one accord  
Honour and praise and magnify the Lord  
Who hath preferred our great Queen to be  
From Popery and miserie to set us free  
Sold by J. Sturges in Westminster England

The palimpsest brass in Steeple Ashton church

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scarcely match the wealth of records for the Wiltshire estates of the Bishopric of Winchester held in the Hampshire Record Office at Winchester, but several Somerset families amassed records of lands or interests in Wiltshire.

The most substantial are those of the Wyndhams of Orchard Wyndham in Somerset and the Pophams of Littlecote in Wiltshire and Hunstretre in Somerset. Wyndhams were leading citizens of Salisbury and later held manors and lands (some former Sydenham, Gilbert and Gawen lands) in West Knoyle, Upton manor, the Langfords, Alvediston, Norrington, Dinton, Manningford Bohun, Sutton Mandeville, Teffont and Tisbury, and at Allington and Slaughterford near Chippenham in the north of the county. Some documents for Knoyle date from the 15th century, but most of the records are from the 17th to 19th centuries and include deeds, estate accounts, rentals, surveys, tithe and case papers (DD\WY).

Further records of the Wiltshire interests of the Wyndham family survive in a collection of miscellaneous deeds of various families (DD\BR). There are deeds and other documents relating to Devizes Castle and the New and Old Parks, and to Bishop's Cannings, 1681; an abstract of title of Wadham Wyndham's lands, 1712-1786; papers relating to an 18th-century Chancery case over the manor of Heytesbury; deeds of Bezells Farm, Melksham, 1624-1810; deeds for a house called Bunnes, Bounts or Bunts Court, Salisbury, 1553-1768 and Hungerford's Chantry in the Close, 1630-1721; and leases of another house in the Close, 1802-1881.

The same collection (DD\BR) contains deeds of other families for the manor, a mill and enclosure agreements (1735-6) in Winterbourne Dauntsey, 1604-1736; a capital message called Harpendens Place in Winterbourne Earls, 1570-1650; lands in Laverstock, 1752, Ogbourne Maizey, 1664-68 and the manor house at Ogbourne St. George, 1714; a court roll of Shalbourne, 1619 and manor court presentments for North Standen, 1556-1653; and a report by Thomas Telford on a proposed, but abortive, turnpike road from Bath to Melksham, and a plan of the road in Great Chalfield, 1826.

The Popham (later Leyborne-Popham) family records include some for their estate of Littlecote in north-east Wiltshire and property in Hungerford (Charnham Street, Bear Inn and Hopgrass tithings lying in Wiltshire), Ramsbury (Manor House, Knighton Farm and Rudge manor), Froxfield, Chilton Foliat, Avebury, Berwick Bassett, Beckhampton and Winterbourne Monkton dating from the 17th to the 19th century, and including some maps (DD\PO and DD\POT).

The Gibbs family of Bristol and Tyntesfield in Wraxall, Somerset acquired records of the Gore family of Barrow Court in Somerset, some relating to their former property in Salisbury and at Ashley, Berwick Bassett, Bishop's Cannings, Box Agard, Ditteridge and Haselbury, Elston, Potterne and Tilshead, for which records survive from the 16th to the 18th centuries (DD\GB). The Halliday (later Mynors) family papers include material on probates, public appointments, legal cases, and properties in Warminster, Tilshead, Sutton Veny, Farleigh Wiltshire Park, and around Bradford-on-Avon, mainly from the 18th century (DD\MY). The Husseys of Crewkerne came from Salisbury and their records contain papers relating to property in Salisbury, Berwick St. James, Fisherton Anger, Winterbourne Ford, Winterbourne Gunner, Winterslow, Stratford and Laverstock, and include account books, probate papers, public appointments, and some correspondence dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries (DD\HSY).

For western Wiltshire there are records of the Poole family of Rode and North Bradley, which include deeds from 1617 to 1935, a pedigree of the Langford (later Batten-Pooll) family, 1490-1953, and transcripts of the Hungerford

Rent Roll for the 16th and 17th centuries (DD\PL). Another prominent family with estates straddling the two counties were the Hoares of Stourhead. Records of their land agents, Bennett & Company of Bruton in the Somerset Record Office include particulars and valuations, maps and plans, rentals and account books, and correspondence relating to these estates (DD\BT).

There are records relating to the manor of Furnax in Warminster, 1601-1860, including a plan of the manor, 1788, among the records of the Bruton Free School, now the King's School, Bruton (DD\BRU). Records of the Herbert family of Pixton Park, Dulverton, Somerset contain papers relating to a proposed watering place at Christian Malford, Wiltshire, including an analysis of mineral water, 1858-62, a valuation of the estate there, 1866, and its sale in 1873 (DD\DRU). Papers of the Weston and Helyar families of Coker Court, Somerset include 17th and 18th century deeds for former Glastonbury Abbey lands at Bishop's Cannings, Boyton and Mere and manorial, estate and property documents for Sedgehill from the 16th to the 19th centuries (DD\WHh); while those of the Walker-Heneage and Button families, also from Coker Court, contain documents relating mainly to Alton Priors, Lyneham and Preston, including court books, rentals and surveys, and grants, 1319-1730, an inventory of the goods of Sir William Button made for the Wiltshire Committee for Compounding following the Civil War, and a Wiltshire poll, 1772 (DDD\WHb).

The Somerset Record Office catalogues are largely available on their Internet website: [www.somerset.gov.uk/archives](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/archives) which includes a good search facility, as well as more selectively on the national A2A site ([www.a2a.org.uk](http://www.a2a.org.uk)). These sources provide more detailed information than this note, which it is hoped may serve as a brief introduction to what is available for Wiltshire studies at Taunton.

*Duncan Chalmers*

## **SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES: JACKSON COLLECTION**

The Jackson Collection is a major, but infrequently used, source for Wiltshire historians. Canon Jackson (1805-1891), rector of Leigh Delamere, collected a mass of material for a projected history of Wiltshire. This was never completed although some of his work appears in Aubrey and Jackson's *Wiltshire Collections*. On Jackson's death, all his material in the form of loose papers was deposited with the Society of Antiquaries of London. These were subsequently sorted and mounted on large sheets which were then bound in 14 very substantial volumes. The arrangement is mainly alphabetical by parish.

The collection can only be described as a veritable cornucopia. Much of the material consists of Canon Jackson's own hand-written notes. There is the usual special interest in the genealogy of major Wiltshire families but, more important, are the printed documents, press cuttings, early pamphlets and tracts. Perhaps most surprising and most valuable are the many original documents – deeds, court rolls, rentals and surveys and autographed letters. Finally there are many topographical prints, drawings and original watercolours including a number by Wheatley.

The Society of Antiquaries catalogue is a useful starting point but it is not comprehensive, giving only examples of what is included in each volume. But even a glance through this gives a good idea of the wealth of material contained in the collection. For example, under Corsham is listed: a 13th century copy of the grant by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, of Corsham manor to the tenants; portions of court rolls of

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Corsham rectory manor 1577-1684; early 19th century sepia drawings of the almshouses and school.

On another level are the printed tracts. An interesting and perhaps slightly amusing set is by Rev. Alexander Headly, rector of Hardenhuish, exhorting young ladies not to attend balls: 'Do you go to Balls? If so, have you REALLY been baptized?' His arguments were countered in another tract 'A Few Words addressed to the readers of the late Tract on Balls' by a Lady (identified in manuscript as Mrs. Kilvert, presumably the mother of the famous diarist Rev. Kilvert of Langley Burrell).

Two early manorial surveys or rentals took my attention. First a handwritten copy of a translation of a survey of Chilton Foliat 1547 giving a list of 'free rents, customary tenants, rents at will and rents by indenture'. A later original document is a survey of the manor of Chisenbury Priory 1699. Thirteen holdings are listed almost all copyhold for the lives of the holder and two others. The Maton family seem to have been the most important of the landholders. Timothy Maton held a messuage with 1½ yardlands plus another yardland. Robert Maton also had a messuage with 1½ yardlands. Finally Elizabeth Drinkwater, daughter of Timothy Maton, held a messuage and a garden. Most of the manor was not enclosed for there are references to the common fields including Somer field, Hitching field and North field. The common pasture may have been somewhat limited for the usual right of pasturage was only one cow although Robert Biffin also had the right for 20 sheep.

The depth and range of the material beyond that listed in the catalogue is well illustrated by the section on the parliamentary history of Chippenham. The catalogue simply mentions a copy of the parliamentary poll to elect two members in 1818. In fact there are 13 large pages packed with relevant material. It starts with a complete list of Chippenham's M.P.s, with handwritten notes on many of them, from 1295 to 1868 when Chippenham lost one of its two members. The disputed election of 1741 is given prominence not only because of the local interest but also for its national significance. A parliamentary debate on the issue in 1742 ended with a government defeat upon which Walpole, the prime minister, resigned. The 1818 poll list has a lot of fascinating detail. The 89 men who voted are listed with their place of residence, occupation and for whom they voted. Against many names is written 'slave' indicating that in some way they were beholden to one of the candidates. Next is the printed sheet 'Facts and arguments shewing that the Borough of Chippenham ought not to be include in Schedule B of the Reform Bill 1832'. It particularly argues that Chippenham was more important than and developing faster than Calne, which was not in Schedule B. There is a similar argument in 1867 to try to prevent Chippenham losing one of its two members. Amongst what we might call ephemera are two printed tickets dated 5 January 1835: 'To any one of the Publicans within the boundary extent of the Borough of Chippenham. Give the BEARER, one Quart of Beer on account of the Members'. Finally there are two long articles (from *Vanity Fair* and the *Agricultural Journal*) on the long serving Chippenham M.P. Sir Gabriel Goldney.

There is no end to the surprises. Having recently completed a booklet on the *Wiltshire Reformatory for Boys*, I was delighted to find (but unfortunately too late) some important additional information. A copy of a committee report (missing from the documentation in the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office) of 1856 throws new light on the origins of the Reformatory and the series of events leading to its establishment. There is also a report by Arthur Fane, the founder of the Reformatory, which describes the state of the institution in 1863 at a crucial stage when a large financial deficit threatened its future.

The abbreviated catalogue promises further delights to come:

- A favourable decision of the Commissioners for evicting scandalous ministers in the case of Mr. Stubbs, minister of Wroughton 1658.
- Two letters from Rev. William Hicks, rector of Broughton Gifford, on local politics.
- Sale particulars for Iford House and lands 1777.
- An anti-Bonaparte song, *The Marbro' Landlords' Intention*, by Mr. Fox (sung at convivial societies in the West of England).
- Particulars of the manor and two letters concerning a sale offer of Norton [Bavant] manor to Lord Weymouth 1706-7 'found at Longleat'.

It is remarkable that there is a complete lack of material on Trowbridge. Ken Rogers suggests that Canon Jackson may have lent or given his notes to Canon Jones of Bradford-on-Avon who in the 1860s was writing a series of articles on the history of Trowbridge.

I hope that this is sufficient to illustrate the importance of the Jackson Collection as a source for the history of Wiltshire and to whet the appetites of those who are undertaking local studies. The library of the Society of Antiquaries is mainly for the use of its fellows but I understand that access can be obtained by bona fide students. The abbreviated catalogue can be seen on the Society's website: [www.sal.org.uk/library](http://www.sal.org.uk/library).

Ivor Slocombe

## CENTRE FOR WESSEX HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

The Centre exists to encourage study and research into all periods and aspects of historic Wessex. It seeks to complement and supplement other local societies and activities. Our Spring Programme comprises research seminars in Winchester and Salisbury on topics ranging from the exploitation of Mesolithic heathland to 20th-century county elections. All seminars are on Thursdays at 5.30pm and are free of charge.

The Spring Conference on the theme 'Walled Wessex: Fortification, Decoration, Crenellation' will be held at Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum on Saturday 12 April 2007. Focusing mainly on Anglo-Saxon and medieval England, it discusses castles, walled towns, and other closes, and investigates how far these expensive and prestige structures were primarily defensive. There are six speakers: Dr Cheryl Butler, Prof Michael Hicks, Dr Bob Higham, Prof Matthew Johnson, Dr Ryan Lavelle, and Dr Andrew Lowerre. Fee: £12.

For full details on these events, please contact Michael Hicks on [Michael.Hicks@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:Michael.Hicks@winchester.ac.uk)

### ***New Postgraduate Opportunities at the University of Winchester***

For 2008 we have revised our longstanding and successful MA in Regional and Local History and Archaeology to enable students to study one subject only or both: the MA in Regional and Local Archaeology; MA in Regional and Local History; or MA in Regional and Local History and Archaeology. Each MA consists of an introductory and research module, three Special Studies on particular topics, and a dissertation. The course normally takes 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time. Most students study part-time in the evening – Wednesday evening in Year 1 – but some study



full-time and complete in 1 year. Special Studies range from Prehistoric, Roman, and Anglo-Saxon Wessex through the late medieval and post-medieval eras to Early Modern Hampshire and Sussex and Victorian Urbanisation. Students have ranged widely in their dissertations. Recent dissertations of distinction quality have treated Boxley Abbey in the 14th century, Chantries in St George's Chapel Windsor, Poverty in 17th-century Southampton, The China Clay Trade of Poole, and William Bingley's *History of Hampshire*.

Also available are the MA in Field Archaeology (primarily for practising archaeologists, principally studied at weekends), the MA in Historical Studies, which focuses on contemporary debates in world history (e.g. the environment, holocaust, memory, public health, and religion), and research degrees (M.Phil and Ph.D) full- and part-time in History and Archaeology, to which many of our own MA students progress. Besides its standard and successful courses in History and Archaeology and in the two in combination, the University also offers more focused BA degrees in Ancient and Medieval Art and Archaeology, Archaeological Practice, History and the Medieval World, and in History and the Modern World.

*Professor Michael Hicks*

## LACOCK PAGEANT

Last year saw the publication of a delightful little book compiled by WRS member Brian Howells Banks, entitled *Lacock Abbey Pageant 1932* and produced by Hobnob Press.

A medieval pageant was held in Lacock Abbey grounds on 3 September 1932, in which many of the characters were portrayed by their (then) modern counterparts. A series of



*Front cover of Lacock Pageant booklet*

postcards was produced and Brian has been collecting these over many years. He now has an almost complete set, showing characters from Matilda Talbot as Ela, Countess of

Salisbury, to the local blacksmith as the medieval blacksmith; and from the Bishop of Southampton as the Bishop of Salisbury, to the men of the 4th Wiltshire Regiment as pikemen. The postcards and accompanying text are supplemented by original extracts from the programme of the day, from newspapers and from tradesmen's advertisements. Brian has managed to identify many of the people depicted in the photographs, so that the whole publication forms an important and useful piece of social history.

*Sally Thomson*

*The book is available, price £5.99, from several bookshops in north Wiltshire, from the NT Shop in Lacock and from the author:*

*Brian H. Banks, Tythemere Cottage, 16 Velly Hill, Gastard, Corsham, Wilts. SN13 9PO*

## MUSIC AND MURDER

At the Society's annual meeting in 1999 Rosemary Dunhill, then county archivist of Hampshire, gave a talk on the Harris family of Salisbury and London. She spoke of the musical interests of the Harrises and mentioned their connection with George Frederic Handel. Afterwards my wife Jean told her of the friendship between Handel and a distant relation of hers, Elizabeth Batt, wife of John Mayne. (Elizabeth's son John died childless and his heir was his cousin, whose great-granddaughter was Jean's great-grandmother.) Rosemary Dunhill put us in touch with an American musicologist, Professor Ellen T. Harris (no relation of the Harrises of Salisbury), of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who was working on Handel and his circle of friends.

Professor Harris has been digging deep in the records concerned with Handel's friends, and in the Public Record Office at Kew (which we now have to call The National Archives) she found an account of a homicide committed, as a young man, by John Mayne, Elizabeth Batt's future husband. John Mayne was born in 1788 and baptised at Teffont Evias, where his father Christopher bought an estate in 1692, having moved there from Exeter a few years earlier.

The Maynes retained property in Exeter, and in 1711 John, aged 23, went there to collect the rents. After he had done so he visited a tavern and drank too much, to the extent that he could not easily find his way at night back to where he was lodging. In the street he was met by Margaret Richards, 'who officiously pressed upon him' that she 'would conduct him: which he (being a stranger and unhappily in drink) admitted her to do.' She took him not to his lodgings but to hers, an 'infamous house' or bawdy house, and in an unlit room robbed him of a silk handkerchief and of money in coin and notes, presumably the rents which he had collected. He demanded them back, and when she refused he drew his sword and 'in the confusion and surprise he was then in was the unfortunate occasion of her death.' John was to be tried for murder; the report of the killing is phrased in the way it is because it comes in a petition to the queen for a royal warrant for a stay of execution in case John should be found guilty. Had that happened the sentence would ordinarily have been carried out very quickly, and a stay of execution would be necessary to allow time for organising a case for a free pardon or a conditional pardon, which was often granted to people found guilty of capital offences. We do not know whether the matter actually came to trial, and if it did what the verdict was.

John Mayne married Elizabeth Batt in 1722 and died in 1726. It would be interesting to know whether Elizabeth knew of the scandalous episode in his bachelor days. Having



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had a son John (1723–85) and a daughter Elizabeth (1724–73), wife of Samuel Berkeley, she survived her husband by more than forty years, living mostly in Kensington, and died in 1768, aged 73. Her friendship with Handel was presumably part of her London life. Family tradition has it that Handel gave her a harpsichord, and when he died in 1759 he left a considerable sum of money to her. In the British Library Professor Harris has found a music commonplace book containing pieces progressing from the simple to suites by Purcell. It bears the title ‘Elizabeth Batt 1704’, and is just the sort of book that a young girl of nine studying the harpsichord would keep. So the presumption is that it belonged to the future wife of a man who may have been tried for murder.

Professor Harris plans to be in London again before long, so we may hope to learn further details, disreputable or otherwise, about Jean’s distant relations. She may have discovered the answer to the question why one of Handel’s hymn-tunes is called Trowbridge, which Ken Rogers raised at last year’s annual meeting.

Christopher Elrington

## WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON ARCHIVES

During the summer the record office moved to the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre in Chippenham, together with Local Studies, Archaeology, Museums and Conservation, and the Victoria County History and Wiltshire Buildings Record. As a result the service is now known as Wiltshire and Swindon Archives.

The move of the archives, which started as we closed the office in Trowbridge at the end of April, was completed, on time, by mid July. As the boxes and volumes were removed the static shelving was dismantled, which opened up whole new vistas in the strong rooms. One of them had been used as a badminton court and its white lines were exposed. The relief of the building at being unburdened from the huge weight of archives was expressed in some movement which made doors stiffer to open and gave a springier feel to the floors.

The removal of the entire archive, comprising 28,000 boxes, 3000 maps and plans and several thousand volumes, required 91 journeys by removal lorry between Trowbridge and Chippenham. The archives have been placed in order on the shelves of the four strong rooms although some inevitable fine-tuning was necessary to ensure they were readily available when the Centre opened on 31 October. The Local Studies Library moved in mid September.

For the staff it was a busy, if strange time. The Open Day, held on Saturday 13 October, proved a great success with 732 people visiting the History Centre. Many spoke very favourably about the building and were excited by the prospect of returning to their family and local history researches in a now fully integrated Archive and Local Studies service.

Behind the scenes it was very much a case of business as usual, with several new accessions of interesting and important material. Our strong links with the south of the county have been maintained through deposit of new material from the earl of Radnor of Longford Castle and the earl of Pembroke of Wilton House. From the latter came a small group of deeds relating to the Maudlin charity in Wilton (2057/C1). The earliest deed of about 1170, which is one of the earliest in the entire Wilton House archive, relates to a mill in Wilton granted by Hawise, abbess of Wilton, to Isemberd, the son of Ives. The rent was to be waived for two years on the understanding that Isemberd would repair the

mill and its equipment which had been damaged by fire. The connection with the charity is not clear and the deed and a later one of the same property may have been wrongly placed. According to the account of Wilton in Wilts *VCH* vol 6 members of the Isemberd family were the principal mill owners in the town from the 13th century. This deed may mark the beginning of their rise. The survey of the estates of the earl of Pembroke in 1566 refers to Isemberd’s mill, and the deed may be its earliest documented reference.

The deeds of the charity cover over 600 years of its history from c1270–1832. It was founded to maintain 13 ‘poor Magdelens’ to pray for the souls of the founders of the convent at Wilton. Subsequently its management passed to the earls of Pembroke and, as a result of an endowment in 1826 by the 11th earl, it developed into an almshouse charity for former employees of the estate and their dependants. The present day buildings are located at Fugglestone, along the A36. One deed is of particular note, because it adds to our knowledge of Wilton abbey. In 1428 a chaplain was given a building within the hospital. His duty was to pray for the soul of Juliana Giffard, a former abbess, at the altar of the Virgin Mary in the abbey, which was called ‘Requiem’. The wording of the deed strongly suggests that this was the name of the altar and not the prayer, although it could also have been known as this.

The deeds came in a purpose made wooden box, with a metal clasp and painted title, which is also being kept in the archive.

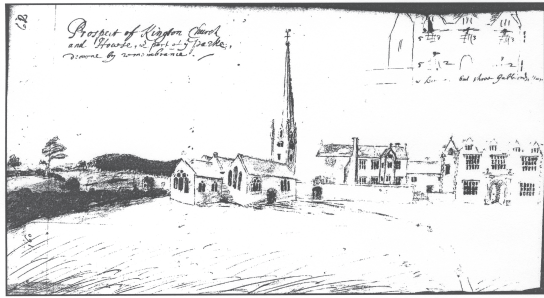
Steven Hobbs

## ‘KYNGTON’ 1517

In the early 16th century Richard Beere, Abbot of Glastonbury, commissioned a survey of the Abbey’s estates. The Abbey’s ‘Kyngton’ estate consisted of some 2,500 acres in the ecclesiastical parish of Kington St Michael, which at the time included Kington Langley with detached areas at Peckinggell and Allington. The Survey contained the names of the Abbey’s customary tenants together with a detailed listing of their landholdings.

Richard Snell was the Abbey’s reeve and *Farmer*, holding the *Lordship Court* consisting of a *hall chamber, kitchen, the Lord’s barn, a dovecote and croft*, and he farmed 200 acres of arable and meadow, 400 acres of woodland at *Haywode*, and 310 acres at *Langleyheth* for the Abbey. Snell also held land as a customary tenant, both in Kyngton, at *Skydmores*, and Langley; and supervised 35 tenants with lands in either Langley or Kyngton, the most affluent of whom were William Torney who held *Cleypitte*, Robert Bell and Isabella Russell of Kyngton; and John Tanner, William Necke, Robert Colchester and Thomas Coke of Langley. All had additional agricultural resources of either arable land, meadow, pasture or small enclosures. The *men of Kyngton* also paid for common rights in *haywode* for their *cattle and draught animals* and also for *pannage*. Overall the Survey indicates that Langley was the more prosperous of the two settlements.

The ‘Kyngton’ estate was divided into three entities; at Peckinggell two tenants shared two small fields, meadow and pasture. Kyngton had a three-field system, Langley, two; and fields were divided into *furlongs* of half-acre strips. Settlement field systems may have overlapped at the centre, as some furlong names appear in more than one Field. The general layout of the open fields can be deduced by using the 1842 Tithe Map, although many furlong names have been supplanted due to later enclosures and renaming. However, it is possible to obtain hints of earlier settlement patterns from names such as ‘*La Worthy*’, ‘*Odgarston*’, ‘*Burymede*’,



John Aubrey's sketch of Kington St. Michael church

'Blakelond', ground conditions and vegetation, *Blakebushe*, *Hortway*, *Furze*, or topography *Byddelyate*, *Henley Rawell*, although '*Chestell*' *dedmanfurl*' defy location, and *Jacobesslade*, and *Mauneshull* analysis.

The Abbey also had four 'Free' tenants in Kyngton, John Saunders, Thomas Tropenell, the Abbot of Malmesbury, and the Prioress of Kington, all made small payments for *tenements* or *messages* on the monastery's land.

Glastonbury Abbey was dissolved in 1539, and the estate was purchased by Nicholas Snell, son of Richard. A little over a century later, when his descendant Charles Snell died in 1651, the estate was divided between Charles' three sisters and their heirs, passing into the Sadler, Coleman, Stokes and Gastnell families.

Jean Martin

## SNIPPETS OF LACOCK SCHOOLING AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A READING ROOM

The chances are that members recently enjoyed the BBC *Cranford Chronicles* and will recall village scenes in Lacock. Relevant here is the 'Literary Dispute' between Miss Jenkyns and Captain Brown, dated about 1843. Miss Jenkyns was unable to accept reading and writing for the lower classes, but this was not the case in Lacock, probably equal to, or ahead of any similar village. Lacock petitions in the 1700s were supported by signatures, not marks, and the Wiltshire Community History says, 'the forerunner of the Day School is mentioned as existing in 1771 and in 1818 it was a voluntary subscription school with twelve pupils. It was superseded by the Day School in 1824.'

The *Salisbury & Winchester Journal* for Monday 19 Jan 1801 ran an advert, by the principal, for LACOCK SCHOOL, part of which read '... and to inform them that her SCHOOL opens after the vacation on Monday the 20th instant. Term 14 gns per Annum and one Guinea Entrance. Writing and Dancing as usual. Those Ladies and Gentlemen who think proper to favour her with their daughters may depend that the strictest attention will be paid to their health and morals'.

In 1858 Mr Merewether erected a schoolhouse on Bowden Hill and employed a Mistress who taught twenty to thirty children.

The Lacock School Records, for the year ending 31 Oct 1865 record that the Night School opened fifty-five times.

### THE READING ROOM

A meeting was held at the Vicarage, Lacock, on Friday evening, 13 Oct 1854 at 7 o'clock, for the purpose of taking measures for the establishment of the Lacock reading Room. A committee was formed with President Rev Arthur Bloomfield, Vicar of Lacock, a Treasurer and a Secretary.

A summary of Rules to be adopted: Any person desiring to be a member to pay an entrance fee of 2s if a Farmer or Tradesman, and 6d if an artisan or labourer, and 2d a week afterwards, though a later resolution allowed them, admittance by weekly payment of 1d. A subscription of 10s and upwards constituted an Honorary member.

Gentlemen who requested to become Honorary members: Capt. Gladstone, H.A. Merewether Esq., Capt. Rooke, Sir J. Awdry, H. Awdry Esq., W.H.F. Talbot Esq., Dr Bailey, Mr R. Barton, and Mr Jas. Fussell. Capt. Gladstone, living at Bowden Hill, was brother of W.E. Gladstone, PM. An H.A. Merewether jr was Sergeant at Law, JP, author and Recorder for Devizes.

Books and papers needed approval by the Committee. Newspapers on the day of arrival were limited to a 10-minute hold if called for by another. No newspaper, periodical or other property was to be removed, under penalty of 1s. At 8 o'clock on Monday evenings, all weekly papers were to be sold if six days old. A stamp was used for marking books.

Weekly payments were taken every Monday evening when new members were admitted. Payment not made for three consecutive weeks resulted in termination of membership. Quarterly meetings were held for auditioning accounts and the statement of the same. A member having a friend not resident in the village was at liberty to introduce him to the Reading Room.

The guidelines also decreed no smoking; no noise; no conversation in tone such as to annoy; a limit on holdings; fines – beyond doubt forerunners of the modern library.

Income had to cover costs, other than printed material. Rent had to be paid and local tradesmen are listed in accounts for coal and general maintenance: Banks for coal, Tanner and Austin for candles, Gale for making a bookcase, Fortune for varnishing the same, Tubb for a book stamp and a brush, Eyres for American cloth. And yet, at a meeting on 7 April 1856, all entrance fees were abolished!

Events were held to raise funds. A concert, arranged by Mr John Barton, was held on 31 Oct 1856. The cost of hire of a piano was £3, other costs amounted to 11s to Mrs Banks at The Red lion (presumably for refreshments), Mrs Gale 7s 6d, Mr Barton 15s. It must have been a success, as Mr Barton was given a vote of thanks. On 19 Oct 1857 Mr Merewether gave a lecture, admission being 1s for front seats, 6d for the back.

Papers taken included: *The Times*, *The Illustrated London News*, *Devizes Gazette*, *Punch*, *Chambers' Journal*, *The Field*, *Mark Lane Express* (it dealt with wheat crop and markets), the third edition of Keen's *Bath Journal* and Dickens' *Household Words*, the latter two being bound.

Dickens' *Little Dorrit* was purchased and as it came out each month it was to remain in the Room for one month.

A list of purchased books included: *Museum of Science & Art*, 10s 6d; Webster's *Dictionary*, 6s 6d; *Mark Lane Gazette*, 4s; *History of London*, by Charles Mackay, 7s; *Roads & Railways*, by Parker, 4s; Chamber's *Information for the People*, complete in 2 volumes, 16s; Stanley's *History of Birds*, 7s; *The Merchant Friar*, 3s; *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins, a Cornish Man*, 3s; *History of Arabia & its Peoples*, by Dr Chrichton, 5s; Knightley's *History of England*, 7s 6d; *Life of Millington with Lord Brougham's orations*, 1s 6d; *Voyages around the World from the Death of Capt. Cook to the Present Time*, 4s 6d; *History of War*, by Russell, 5s; *Map of Europe*, 14s; Chambers' *Atlas for the People*, 12s 6d.

The following were among books donated to the Room: *Handbook of Chippenham*, donor Mr Talbot; *Longfellow's*

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*Poems and Horse Training*, donor Rev.A.Bloomfield; and a number of books donated by Mr Paley.

The single storey Reading Room building was on Bowden Hill. The date it ceased to be used as such is unknown, but in the 1970s it was used as a Parish Room for events such as WI meetings. It was demolished in the early 1980s, but not without legal complications, as the land was in trust. The Lacock Parish Council are present Trustees of the site.

Brian Howells Banks

## READING BETWEEN THE LINES

The care of the poor in the United Kingdom, which, until 1834, rested upon each parish, was obviously not working, there were too many paupers settling in the industrial areas. The agricultural and industrial revolutions were well established by then, but still thousands of the population were no longer employed in the traditional agricultural system. Several factors were against the people who had moved to find work after repeated poor harvests. Illiteracy and being unskilled, except as an agricultural worker, were the main causes. Eventually the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 took over the individual parishes' authority and endeavoured to standardise care and relief of the poor throughout the Kingdom.

Ambrose Patient, yeoman of the parish (that is, Boyton with Corton, in the Wylde Valley), who lived at what is now Cortington Manor, was a Guardian of the local Warminster Workhouse Union and on its Board. Whilst tracing his fortunes, the minutes of these board meetings came to light and they made very interesting reading.

It is learned that the Warminster Union, like others nationally, had its area sectioned into districts. For this parish, the district was Number 2 and it stretched from Sutton Veny to Chitterne to Boyton and any spare hamlets in between! Each district sent a Guardian to look after its local interests, and he was supported by a Relieving Officer (an RO) and a General Practitioner. The Guardians held a Volunteer's post and also had to pay for their own meals if any were taken during Board meetings. Both the RO and the doctor held salaried positions and earned initially £70 and £80 per annum respectively, although Dr Flower, the GP for Codford, also claimed £11 for vaccinating children against smallpox. Other staff who were needed to help with the running of the Workhouse were a Master and a Matron, usually husband and wife, plus a few 'nurses' who helped in the infirmary. The latter earned £5 per annum, plus their keep.

The minutes, recorded in a beautiful copperplate hand, seem to relate to an obsession with money, with every ½d being accounted for. And to keep one individual in the Workhouse cost £2 os 6d each week. This parish had one man there in 1836. Annually the price of commodities rose and it was the Guardians' task to advertise for tenders to keep the Workhouse supplied with food and other necessities. They had to see samples of clothing or check the quality of food, including, for example, bread, flour (second best), bacon (dry Wiltshire) and bacon (American), shoe/boot laces, leather for repairing shoes and boots, polish for same, trusses (various sizes), which were used to help people with hernias, blankets, mops, buckets, stays for the women and coffins at so much per inch in length. Once someone had passed into the care of the Workhouse, their needs were met, but not necessarily with quality.

Sometimes the Workhouse Master also doubled as a teacher of the boys living as inmates. In 1848 the Paupers' School Inspectors arrived and did not like what they saw.

The school was held in the chapel and the Inspector wrote '... the boys should have instruction in moral and religious habits' and that the boys '... should have industrial training as a livelihood by honest exertion. But because of lack of supervision the boys are armed with habits of idleness instead of habits of industry.' The Master's wife also taught the girls and the Inspector found '... some sort of industry supervision, but totally ignorant of the common labour of the cottage industry.' Thus this particular pair soon left the employ of the Workhouse. However, one of the tasks levied on the Guardians was to make frequent inspections of various parts of the Workhouse and it seems that they certainly slipped up here. There are loose sheets of paper in the Minute Book with the names of Guardians detailed to inspect certain areas.

Abandoned and orphan children were hopefully prepared for skills by which to earn a living. One boy was certainly sent to *HMS Victory*, as the Captain (not Hardy) wrote to the Guardians thanking them for the boy and asking for an allowance towards his uniform. Later there was a request from central government asking for the names of likely girls, aged between 8 and 13, who could be sent to Canada (at £8 each for the voyage) to be general servants there.

Illegitimate children could only receive support if their mothers were also receiving help. But many families had also been abandoned by the father and husband, who had literally 'done a runner'. Some of these men were soldiers or sailors who were serving abroad or on board a ship. Getting money to dependants was not an easy matter in those days.

To help with the costs of running the Workhouse there was a village Poor Rate, levied on everything with a value, such as houses, barns, gardens, orchards and so on. By the early 1880s farming was again not very profitable and there is a record of several parish farmers having a meeting in the boardroom at the Workhouse to state their grievances and to ask for a reduction in the Poor Rate, which was granted.

On spiritual matters, the inmates of the Workhouse had to attend chapel frequently to hear sermons by the Workhouse chaplain, who inevitably conducted a Church of England service. Any burials were also in accordance with the Established Church and on one occasion the clergyman would not conduct a burial service, as the deceased was a known Nonconformist, thus outraging the Board if Guardians. There exists the transcript, again in beautiful copperplate hand, of a three-page letter sent to the Bishop of Salisbury, complaining of the conduct of the clergyman. Although there is no Admission Book surviving for the Warminster Union, the Minute Book did relate the names of people asking for relief, how much they received and their reason for not being able to work.

Reading between the lines, it can be seen that these Poor Laws were the first concerted efforts to aid the poor by removing the responsibility for them from the parishes. Shelter was supplied and can be likened to early council housing. Food and clothing can be considered a *sand* [as an?] early daily living allowance. Schooling, though mediocre, was a start. The initial inspectors of the pauper school were later replaced by a more efficient school inspectorate. A doctor being paid out of public funds to attend the poor sick and injured, and also to vaccinate children, was a step towards Public Health. And for the needy to be able to ask for assistance when they were 'able-bodied poor' was a step towards Social Security. The workhouse has had a very bad press; however, as a result of developments from this, things have improved in this country for the not so well off. (WSA H15/110/9 to H15/100/21)

Barbara Saunt



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# THE RECORDER

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*The History Centre was recently given a copy of the first ever issue of Wiltshire Life (August 1946), which neither they nor the present proprietors of Wiltshire Life had ever seen. It included this advertisement for a national newspaper, which appears to have been published from 1943 to 1953, and then in another guise until 1961. Thanks to Michael Marshman for copying it.*

## DRAYNEFLETE

Some time ago John Chandler tried (unsuccessfully) to begin a series in *Local History*, inviting readers to contribute interesting, odd or amusing stories from around the counties, which he called (after Osbert Lancaster's classic book) the Draynefleete Archive. This one came from Wiltshire and may be known to WRS members. Nonetheless, it bears repetition.

'Our Downs must have been queer places in those days for the belated traveller. I remember a story that our late neighbour, Mr Henry Merewether, was very fond of telling of how he was returning one dark night from Devizes, where he had been defending a man charged with highway robbery. So clearly had he shown the jury that, notwithstanding the existence of suspicious circumstances, his client was a man whom it was impossible for one moment to suppose capable of such a crime, that the latter was triumphantly acquitted,

and 'left the dock', as the newspapers say, 'without a stain upon his character'. But the same night, alas! on the top of the downs, Mr Merewether was himself requested to stand and deliver. And, still more sad to relate, the author of this request was his maligned client of the same morning!' [Plenderleath, W.C., 'Cherhill gleanings', *WANHM*, vol. 24, 1889, pp. 257-70, on p. 263.

*It is interesting to speculate whether the Mr Merewether in this story was the same gentleman who appears in Brian Banks' article.*

*Ed.*

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are respectfully reminded that subscriptions were due on 1 January. Subscriptions, please, to Ivor Slocombe, 11 Belcombe Place, Bradford on Avon, Wilts. BA15 1 NA. The subscription remains at £15 a year.