

**DORSET HISTORY ESSAYS, REPORTS, &
TRANSCRIPTIONS**

Edited by John W. Day

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EAST DORSET ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Preface

This collection of historical essays has been composed by members of the East Dorset Antiquarian Society as part of the 30th anniversary falling March 2013.

The society evolved from the Wimborne Educational Association lectures on archaeology by David Johnston and Tim Schadla-Hall and Dorset History by Jude James. Of paramount importance in the inception and growth was Norman Field and Martin Green.

Regrettably several founder members have passed away, but Tim still gives us occasional lectures and Martin remains a much valued member. The original 12 member committee were Martin Green, Haydn Everall, Ann Sims, Teresa Hall, Denise Bicheno, Ruth Clipson (who organised a week on Hadrian's wall, our first field trip) Sylvia Church, now Mrs Frith (who with Roy played an important part in our excavation of the "magic well" at Hazel Bryant) and Della, membership secretary and myself. Members included Henry Cole, Len and Pam Norris who remain active with us today, and Allan Cosgrove whom we still see about Wimborne and Ian Hewitt now a lecturer at Bournemouth University, who occasionally gives us a talk. Popular was Phil Cole who wrote the most fascinating poems. Currently we are advantaged by Lilian Ladle, Graham Adams, Bryan Popple, Helen Brickell, Peter Walker, Andrew Morgan, Brian Maynard, Dave Stewart, Stephen Smith and Karen Winsor, helping to establish a strong committee in a society of nearly 200 enthused members. Judicious administration ensures a mixture of long standing committee members and new faces, thus bringing fresh blood to a stable group. At the time of editing this project I am resigning from the chairmanship after 30 years.

Of importance is our member Dr David Reeve, a professional archivist who gives us sound advice on historical sources. We record our appreciation of Margaret Roebuck and Ken Wheatley for the many times they have interpreted Latin as some of us struggled through documents and Margaret for her leading participation in a study of Allen Valley deserted villages and Ken for his metal detecting abilities.

I am personally indebted to Helen Brickell who helped me amass data in research on the overseers of the poor of Wimborne, and Pam Bunting, Jane Elmer and Roger Luffman who assisted in research on Bastardy in Dorset. I thank Pam in particular for the amount and quality of assistance she gave. Heather Raggett, Pat Coulstock and Barry Perratt, a geologist with active interest in many subjects, are always mines of information unhesitatingly shared, and Barry has kindly edited a lot of my work, much to my advantage. Janet Bartlett has proved indispensable for the amount and quality of the archaeological illustrations she has drawn.

I am grateful to Derek Bunting and Alan Hawkins for helping me with transport to the History Centre at Dorchester (and Alan for trips to Southampton Records Office) and supporting me with questions and encouraging discussions.

It is invidious to pick out a few people in a society that has a very active membership but we would all agree that the mentioned members deserve particular accolade, though I apologise for leaving out equally valuable members. It must also be mentioned that we work closely with Priest House Museum and are proud to say that our member Gillian Broadbent is now the museum's archaeological finds curator.

We have also helped in many instances with professional archaeologists and other organisations, including Time Team, Professor Aston's Shapwick (Somerset) Project, The National Trust,

Bournemouth College, The Wessex Trust for Archaeology, AC Archaeology and The Avon Valley Archaeological Society.

We have organised Archaeological Training exercises, Day Schools on archaeological and historical subjects; archaeological subjects have included practical flint knapping, archaeological illustrations and surveying. We also have an annual field trip, visiting places of historic interest, which have included sites from Dartmoor to Scotland, once being led by Alan Hawkins on a visit to Spain, seeing a wide range of fascinating archaeological sites.

Visits to the Dorset History Centre, which are frequent, are made enjoyable and worthwhile by the eager help so willingly given by the archive staff, some of whom have given us lectures. I have also found the libraries at Dorchester County Museum and Wimborne Priest House Museum invaluable and the staff pleasantly helpful.

This collection of Dorset history essays comes in a variety of styles; some as straight forward essays, others as transcripts to support interesting matters. Some are short, others lengthy, some articles have appeared in earlier publications but most are newly written. Authors were given no direction as to content, just to keep to Dorset history, but perhaps not surprisingly most of the articles are centred in and around the Allen Valley and in particular Wimborne Minster, where we hold our meetings. It is hoped that a similar exercise will relate some of the excavations the society have done. The first essay about Chardstock is included as it was once a parish of Dorset and the author one of our most long standing members.

The 30th anniversary marks the time Della and I resign from the committee after 30 enjoyable years and have no doubt the society will continue to flourish.

As always I heartily thank my wife Della for the support she gives in my wandering through history and archaeology which she shares with equal interest. My research would never be printed without the skill of Alwyn, our son, who with great patience rescues me with considerable frequency from computer panic. It is my firm belief EDAS is the success it has become because of the input in one way or another by every member, past and present, and the award I was given for my contribution to Dorset Archaeology, by Prince Philip, is truly one that more rightly is one to all members of the society

The society meet at St. Catherine's Church Hall, Wimborne on the second Wednesday of the month, there are monthly walks to places of interest, monthly Newsletters and occasional journals. New comers are welcome.

John W. Day

Horton 2013

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Chardstock - Ann Sims

For much of its long history Chardstock was on the western fringes of Dorset. A small, predominantly pastoral village, it lies on a south facing promontory in the valley of the River Axe. Just over a hundred years ago, it was transferred to the jurisdiction of Devon County Council, but the present counties of Dorset – an indeed of Somerset too – are both only some five miles away. Today Chardstock is recognised as one of the most unaltered historic villages in East Devon, and it nestles within an ancient landscape.

The geology of these borderlands is notoriously complicated. Jurassic rocks, limestones and clays, occur in the lowest parts of the present parish and the valley bottoms. During the Cretaceous green sandy deposits were laid down, and this hard upper greensand splits naturally into blocks, a grainy light brown stone known as chert, similar to flint. Paleolithic man fashioned the chert into axes and scrapers, and in the 19th century a considerable number were found just down the hill from the present village, on the Axe river gravels at Broom.



View of the village from Beacon Hill

Up on the ridgeway area behind Chardstock, a Bronze Age settlement area was found about 150 years ago. The Bewley Down cauldron handles are of national importance.

During the Iron Age, this must have been very much a boundary area between the Dumnonii tribes to the West and the more sophisticated Durotriges to the East. The skyline is dominated by the imposing contours of Pilsdon Pen and Lamberts Castle, both with well documented hillforts, but another smaller univallate hillfort existed at Membury, just 5 miles away. Nearby a Durotrigan style coin hoard was found in the mid 19th century.

After the Roman invasion of 43 A.D., Vespasian moved west during the following 10 years. Part of the Fosseway, represented nowadays by the Axminster to Chard main road, is a couple of miles from the village, while Axminster, about 5 miles away, was an important Roman settlement at the junction of the Fosse Way and the road to Durnovaria. Axmouth and Seaton, at the mouth of the Axe, were Roman ports and military bases. Villa sites near Chardstock include Harcombe and Membury.

There is still much debate as to when the Saxon presence became predominant in this area of the West Country. Some of the earliest of the Saxon settlements are within a 10 mile radius of Chardstock – Colyton, Sidbury, Axminster and Axmouth. The nucleated pattern of the village, together with a tapestry of scattered hamlets and farmsteads, suggests a mid/late Saxon origin. It certainly mirrors Rackham's criteria, that an ancient countryside is one composing of a chaotic patchwork of mostly small irregular fields, thick sinuous hedges (or hedgebanks), small woods and winding tracks. Unconfirmed reports detail the recovery of late Saxon pottery from a central site. The place name, too, implies a Saxon origin, with probably a personal name, Cerdic, with the Old English 'stoc', interpreted by Mills as an outlying farm or a secondary settlement. In complete contrast to the winding lanes everywhere else, the road which links the village to the Fosse Way is relatively straight, an easy early access to this site. By Domesday, 'Cerdestoche' was held by the bishop of Sarum. There were 2 men at arms, 45 villagers, 21 smallholders and 6 slaves. The 12 hides included meadow, pastureland and woodland, and 2 mills. Value of the whole was £16. Already at the close of

the Saxon period, then, one can imagine an Episcopal reeve living near the site of the present Manor house, with a chapel nearby.

Although the Manor passed to the King under Stephen, by 1164 it was in the hands of one Gilbert de Percy, Sheriff of Somerset and Dorset. Gilbert donated Chardstock back to the bishop of Sarum shortly afterwards. Apart from a short break under the Commonwealth, the Manor remained in the possession of the Salisbury bishops until 1873, when it was sold to Baron Henley.

By 1218 a market at 'Cherdestoke' was granted to the bishop, followed two centuries later by an annual fair in September on Old Michaelmas Day. But by this time the Sarum bishops were establishing a summer palace here, with an extensive deer park for their pleasure. A block of land known as the Parks survives, complete with scenic public footpath over the river Kit and up the valley. In 1377 the bishop was granted licence to crenellate the palace; little remains of this today, although the Manor house does incorporate features from this period.

With the establishment of a strong manorial lord system here there is a wealth of surviving records. Four Manor court record books cover the period 1585 – 1787, containing many interesting references to the land and buildings, most of which were held on copyhold tenancy. These and other records, including the Episcopal Stewards accounts, are currently being transcribed by the Chardstock Historical Records group, who have constructed their own (free) Web museum.

Several houses with medieval features survive in the village, and there are a couple of traditional longhouses. With the abundance of wood and chert, this was the building material of the slightly



Medieval farmhouse: cross passage.



View on the other side of the cross passage, showing cruck construction, plank and muntin walls.

wealthier members of the community. The George Inn, for example, can fairly accurately be traced back to the late 15th century on documentary evidence. It has been assessed as originally being a medieval open hall house, modified and extended in the 16th and 17th centuries. Just down the lane is the former New Inn, another high status open hall house of around 1400.

The first reference to a schoolmaster dates from the 16th century. Some three centuries later, and shortly after Victoria ascended the throne, one enterprising rector decided to found a new school. In a highly unusual venture for a Dorset village, this was extended in the later 1840s to include an Industrial School for training servant girls. Flushed by his success, the rector developed a 'Middle

Class School’ and ‘Orphan School’ by the 1860s. The 1861 Census reveals 47 boys at the Middle Class School, varying in ages from 7 to 14, while at the Industrial School there were 80 students (from 4 to 17), and 7 staff. These students came from all over the country.

With the advent of so many young people into the village, the Victorians demolished the ancient parish church and erected a very much larger edifice. Only the south porch of the original structure remains today, but what were the features of the old church? Hutchins tells us that the chancel and transepts dated from around the early 13th century, with Tudor alterations when “the original structure had become much dilapidated”. He emphasises that the old church “contained nothing remarkable”, but other sources suggest there was a small chantry chapel, and a wall monument with kneeling figures, possibly Tudor. In the churchyard two large stone carved faces, probably Norman gargoyles, have been found. Recently the original Norman font has been discovered and reinstalled. The list of incumbents goes back to 1214.

By around 1874 the schools devolved into the private boarding college of St Andrews, which continued until 1886, when it was forced to close due to lack of funds. The dormitory blocks were demolished around 1912, but the National school continued and the buildings were used right up to a couple of years ago, when a new purpose built primary school was opened.

During the Victorian period small scale industry also developed alongside agriculture, such as paper making at Hook water mill, and clockmaking. Apples and cider production was also important especially with the advent of the railway. An ancient cyder press survives, and a small band of enthusiasts are now growing old fashioned apple orchards in an attempt to resurrect the flavours of yester-year – apples with impossible names, such as Catshead, or Chorister Boy. As late as the 1920s a rousing Dorset wassailing song was recorded at Chardstock:

*‘Standfast root! Bear well top!
Pray God send us a good howling crop!
Hats vull, caps vull, are busel bags vull!
Now, now now! (firearms discharged).*

So, here we have a fairly typical small rural village, a focus of human interest from the dawn of prehistory. Since the Norman Conquest and because of the strength of the manorial lords, there has been a story here of much continuity and a wealth of remaining records. Perhaps the most unusual aspect of the village history was the establishment of the Industrial school in the mid-19th C; what an amazing opportunity this must have been for the young people to learn skills for life. The Victorian church which remains, is impossibly large for the 21st century and, the maintenance is a constant headache for the Parish. Perhaps the greatest appeal of Chardstock in the modern world is that, situated as it is off the main holiday routes, it has so far escaped much development and retains an olde worlde charm. It is still possible to walk the web of public footpaths here on a Bank Holiday and not meet another soul!

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Detail from map by Thomas Moule, 1836



Ball On Line - John Day

Periodically I enjoy looking back over old magazines. Sometimes one can be highly amused by descriptions of prehistoric monuments and the inevitable assumed associated blood-thirsty events as believed by our forefathers. (Unfortunately there are still people who see death and destruction in every prehistoric monument). Not uncommonly there are more recent events that bring a smile to the lips and memory of another world. Such for instance is an article about Portesham by Ann Axenskold in the 1974 edition of the Dorset Year Book.

A local inhabitant told me of the time when he was a young man he played football for the local team. Another member was the Portesham Station-master, Mr Nichols, whose enthusiasm for the game drove him to great lengths. He would turn up to play on a Saturday afternoon, keeping a sharp look out for the smoke of a train to appear as it came from Abbotsbury, two miles away. The moment he saw smoke appear over the hedges and fields, he jumped on his bicycle and pedalled as fast as he could to Portesham Station trying to keep ahead of the train. He quickly unlocked his office, sold and collected tickets, waved the train on its way, re-locked the office and pedalled away to rejoin the match. These antics went on for some time until the passengers complained to the Railway Headquarters that they were being kept waiting for Mr. Nichols to appear on his bike to sell them their tickets, and they often did not have enough time to collect the ticket and board the train before he waved it on.

The railway authorities, showing more interest in their business than in the state of local sport, moved Mr Nichols to another station.

One wonders where Mr. Nichols was moved to. Presumably to a football free zone!

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Rope Making in Poole - Alan Hawkins

We Could Never Have Too Much

In the age of sail the need for supplies of rope would have been in great demand and without it overseas trade and the Navy would be rendered unserviceable.

The skills and knowledge for the making of rope are lost in antiquity but the use of vines or heather are known from the Late Bronze Age [1200BC] with traces of yew strands being used to bind sections of the Dover boat from this period. Although rope can be made from various fibrous materials hemp was the favoured crop and not being a native to this country was imported before being cultivated here.

West Dorset has long been associated with rope making, Bridport especially acquiring a reputation for the manufacture of quality ropes and twine. Dorset products, mainly centred around Beaminster and Bridport were highly regarded but it is clear that from a very early date Poole also became an important centre for rope making, not only for local needs but for the Navy.

Before the industrialisation of rope making, production would have been carried out close to its need and access to the raw material. Hemp seed was found in the medieval layer c1420 on excavation of the Foundry site in Poole, although this may not be conclusive evidence of local production it does give some support to activities that would have taken place in those earliest days of Poole.



*Rope Works
Chatham Dockyard*

Rope can be made on a very small scale or 'cottage industries', leaving little or no trace, but during the later medieval period these 'cottage industries' became more regulated and with the establishment of Naval Rope Works in the 17th century [Chatham 1618] production became more centralised. The naval base at Portsmouth was one of the three main naval locations and Poole was contracted to supply rope as were other maritime centres along the South Coast. The use of coastal works meant that imported hemp could be used in preference to locally grown crop, although with the interruption of supplies in the late 18th century the local product was encouraged by subsidies.

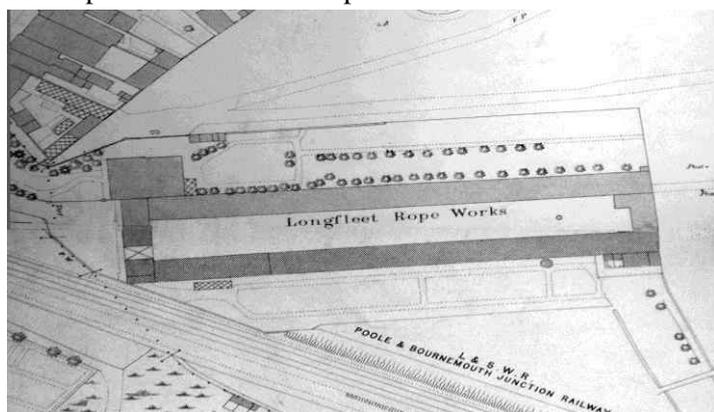
With the increase in Atlantic trade and development of the busy Port of Poole it is clear that much was produced locally and by the 18th century extensive rope walks existed in the town. Four are known from contemporary maps and show the ‘walks’ were up to a quarter of a mile long.

Prior to this time the extent of rope making around the Harbour is unclear but with the growth of Poole as a port and its trade with the New World a good supply would have been needed. The earliest reference I have come across for Poole is the record of a Lease to John Darby of ‘a rope walk at Ham Common for 14 years from 3 May 1727 at 15s [75p] ‘per annum, but the walk probably existed some years before this.

By the mid-18th century hemp was being imported from St. Petersburg but with the problem of supply home grown hemp was encouraged and a subsidy paid. In addition to good quality hemp the other main materials needed for making good rope are train oil (oil extract from whale blubber) and tar – both regular imports to Poole with the Newfoundland trade.

Women’s work

With mass production came the demand for a skilled work force, well before Henry Ford. It is in no derisory sense this would be termed as ‘women’s work’. Life in a maritime port such as Poole, which was by no means biggest in the land, would still have been rather more ‘lively’ than the sleepy village life we often imagine in our Dorset villages. Strangers would abound and tales of adventure would be told. For the women of those seafaring men there would be long spells of separation and they would need to be strong characters and in need of an income if they had to maintain a family. At Chatham women had their own room and while the overseer would be a man, women carried out the task of making the rope. Naval yards would have a specialist rope maker as overseer and it is clear some moved from one yard to another and the wives of the absent men would be found work in the yard. This is recalled in the name of one of the main rope walks for Poole which is recorded as Ladies Walking Field. This survived until quite recent times but is now lost under the urban development around the Dolphin Centre.



The unauthorised removal of rope or ‘theft’ is also a common problem with centralised production. It is perhaps fanciful that the use of this unofficially acquired rope was put to use as washing lines but in an effort to overcome this problem a coloured strand, or tell-tale, was woven into the rope with a different colour code used by the naval dockyards.

The use of cable and chain, which proved stronger and more durable, meant the demand for rope declined and with coming of steam vessels there would no longer be the need for the quantities of rope for rigging. It is said that in Nelson’s day a vessel of the fleet needed over 30 miles of rope, and

with spares and repairs this gives some idea of the effort devoted to just this one area for a safe passage where a voyage may last for several months.

Local production continued into the 20th century but with the introduction of synthetic fibres and demise of the great sailing ships rope is no longer produced commercially in Poole. With the increase in leisure sailing and sporting activity rope is still much in demand but most supplies being imported. Traditional rope making is still carried out at Chatham but only for specialist orders - or for demonstration purposes.



Cook Row Wimborne Minster - Dr David Reeve

The Church Green with the single row of shops in Cook Row to the north and the Minster to the south lies at the heart of the historic town. A number of these properties on the north side date from at least the 17th century as shown in figure one. However the 1613 map of the town by Richard Harding (Dorset History Centre D.1513/1), as shown in figure two, clearly show that in the medieval period there were houses on the south side of this small street as well as on the west side of the High Street (formerly Market Street). It shows that the churchyard did not extend as far north as it does now.

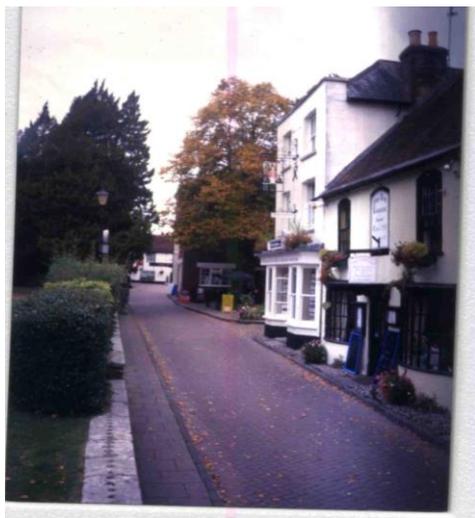


Fig1: Cook Row leading to the Corn Market today



Fig 2: Cook Row 1613 map by Richard Harding

It appears that the Governors and Churchwardens of the Minster were looking to expand the churchyard at the beginning of the 19th century and a number of deeds survive in the parish archives which demonstrate the acquisition of these properties. In 1809 a tenement and adjoining shop was exchanged for another property owned by the church (DHC PE/WM: CW 4/1); and in the same year a house and premises called “The Folly” formerly a small shop near the churchyard was “purchased for the improvement of the churchyard and the widening of Cookrow Street leading from the principal road into the Corn Market” (DHC PE/WM: CW 4/1). Further research in the churchwarden’s accounts may reveal the further acquisition and demolition of the properties as this expansion took place.

By 1833 only one property on the south side remained, which had belonged to the late Widow Darley. This property was on the south east corner of Cook Row and shown in figure 3. The property came into the ownership of the eminent town lawyer William Castleman. He “exchanged the messuage, late Darley's house, with an adjoining shop with the street on the east, the churchyard on the west and Cookrow Street on the north purchased in exchange for a messuage, stable and garden in East Borough with the intention of knocking down the house and extending the churchyard” (DHC PE/WM: CW 4/3).



Fig 3: The site of the Widow Darley's house

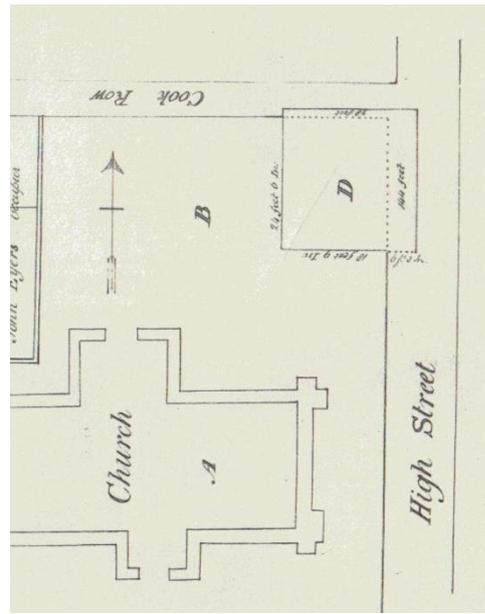


Fig 4: 1833 plan of Widow Darley's House

There is a plan of the property and churchyard which gives the dimensions of Darley's House (figure 4). It shows that the property ran 28 feet along Cook Row though the property itself extended 6 feet into the present day High Street. It extended 24 feet 6 inches into the current churchyard which gives an indication of the original northern extent of the churchyard/ southern extent of the Cook Row properties.

One further piece of conjecture arises from an archaeological investigation of the interior of 29 High Street, opposite Cook Row in 1990. This is the current National Trust Shop that forms part of the Priest House Museum premises. A possible boundary ditch running east west from under the door to the back of the room was discovered. The ditch contained a Roman pottery sherd and some 12th century pottery. The ditch appears to have been filled in around this time and the foundations of the current building constructed.

It is possible that this boundary ditch continued to the west and would have continued under the properties on the south side of Cook Row and further west under the Priest House Museum. An archaeological dig at the back of the Priest House Museum later in 2011 may well reveal the continuation of the ditch. It is possible that this is the boundary ditch of the north east corner of the original late 7th century double Saxon Monastery and if so would suggest that the line of the current High Street around the edge of the Minster churchyard is a later 12th century feature as this part of the town was re-organised following the demise of the monastery and its eventual replacement with a College of Secular Canons. If this is the case then the original northern entry to the High Street, Cook Row and the Corn Market may have been somewhere through the back garden area of the Priest House Museum.



George Augustus Place - Margaret Roebuck

Surgeon at the Wimborne Workhouse, 1837 and 1838

Mr George Augustus Place was appointed Medical Officer for District No. 1 in the Wimborne and Cranborne Union in 1837 and again in 1838 but in the latter year served only from Lady Day in March to 6th August, when he resigned. Prior to his resignation he had been summoned to a meeting of the Board of Guardians of the Union on 30th July and taken to task over his failure to appoint medical gentlemen to act for him in his absence. Since he refused to comply in future with the Board's request for locums, a statement was sent to the Poor Law Commissioners about his conduct. This forced his resignation on 6th August.

There were no further references to Mr Place in the Minute Book of the Workhouse until 14th January 1839 and even then his name was not mentioned.

The reason for his reappearance in the minutes was an anonymous item, which had been published in the "Times" on 11th January. The article contained an attack on the working of the New Poor Law. As an illustration of the failure of the system an outbreak of smallpox in the Wimborne workhouse and its management were mentioned. It was alleged that cases of smallpox had occurred as early as 28th December 1838. Five sufferers were in a small room sleeping three to a bed and the room was shared by eight others, who were not infected with the disease. No nurse had been appointed to look after the sick and no precautions had been taken to prevent the spread of the disease to the rest of the women's section of the workhouse. Incidentally it was stated that the surgeon was paid £10 per annum to care for 195 inmates.

On the same day as the article appeared in the newspaper, a meeting of the inhabitants of the town and parish of Wimborne was called for 3p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure that steps were taken to prevent the spread of smallpox and to guard against any danger to townspeople in future outbreaks of infectious diseases in the workhouse, which was situated close to the centre of the town.

At this point the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, Colonel A'Court became involved, after receiving a letter on 12th January from the Poor Law Commissioners. Enclosed was a copy of the "Times" article.

He visited Wimborne to investigate and determine whether there were grounds for the accusations, which had been made, and subsequently published a report "respecting certain charges contained in an anonymous paragraph published in the "Times" and "Standard" newspapers imputing negligence and mismanagement in the Union Workhouse".

The Colonel visited the sick and the women's section (ward) of the Workhouse as well as the small room identified in the "Times" article.

The substance of his report was:

In January 1838 there had been between 170 and 180 inmates. Two extra rooms had been added to the accommodation - a schoolroom/chapel and a dormitory. Each room was 60 feet by 24 feet. By 12th January 1839 the number of inmates had risen to 190 but it was considered that there was room for 30 more. He concluded that crowding was not a reason for the use of the "small room" (18 feet by 12 feet) to receive females. On the recommendation of a visiting committee, since November 1838, the

small room had been used to separate girls of good character from others and prevent communication between the two groups. By 10th January 1839 five extra beds had been placed in this room, one was occupied by a single woman but the other four were shared by three people apiece. In his view the arrangement was objectionable but had caused no inconvenience to the people concerned nor promoted the spread of sickness.

After dealing with accommodation he moved on to consider the incidence of smallpox in the workhouse.

On 15th December 1838 the Parry family of husband, wife and two children were admitted to the workhouse. The elder son, John, had eruptions which, according to his mother, he had had for some time. He was considered fit by the Medical Officer, who saw him on Christmas Eve, but two days later the eruptions returned with other symptoms. He was diagnosed with smallpox on 28th December and moved to the infirmary, a detached building, where his mother and an infirmary nurse cared for him.

Almost all inmates were vaccinated quickly, when vaccination became available. Children, at first thought to be off colour because of the effects of the vaccination, were diagnosed as suffering from smallpox on 8th January. This led to alarm in the town and the emergency meeting on 11th January.

The school room at the workhouse was fitted up as a hospital, after the Chairman of the Guardians and the Reverend Hanham had failed to hire a place outside the town for those infected. Thirteen smallpox patients were moved there and were attended by five of their mothers and three additional nurses.

Colonel A'Court took evidence from two nurses separately, who confirmed that they had been appointed on 1st. January 1839 to care for the sick and had sat up at night on 1st and 9th January. They did not leave their patients, until they had been moved to the school room. The mothers of the sick children declared that they had received everything they required. The Colonel concluded that the statements in the "Times" article had been inaccurate; that the outbreak had been mild as no one had died; that the Guardians of the Poor had not been negligent but had done everything possible to prevent the spread of the disease.

No fresh cases were to be admitted to the workhouse. Instead a room was hired to receive all applicants for relief, so that no members of the public should have contact with the workhouse. The Guardians of the Workhouse were instructed to take the Poor Law Commissioners' letter into account at their next meeting on 14th January and make a special report of their proceedings to the Commissioners. As instructed the Guardians sent their report to the Commissioners and to several local dignitaries.

At the next meeting of the Guardians, letters written by Mr Place were considered. These letters contained charges similar to those in the "Times" article and Mr Place had managed to have them published in the Dorset County Chronicle, challenging the Guardians to disprove his assertions.

The Guardians reaction was to ask Colonel A'Court to make a second investigation to vindicate them. The second enquiry took place on 21st January 1839, when witnesses were examined under oath and Mr Place was invited to be present, accompanied by his legal adviser.

Colonel A'Court's conclusions were:

- Mr Place admitted placing the article in the "Times".
- It was proved that John Parry had smallpox on 28th December 1838 and that he had been removed to the infirmary under the care of his mother and a nurse.
- Inmates were vaccinated as soon as possible.
- Children fell ill and were diagnosed with smallpox on 8th January. The schoolroom was used as a ward and 13 smallpox patients were housed there by 10th January under the care of five mothers and three extra nurses.
- The small room, occupied by thirteen people in five beds was measured by the Colonel and found to be 19 feet 7 inches by 12 feet 5 inches. He considered that the doors could be left open.
- The nurses had been appointed on 1st January and Nurse Cross claimed on oath that she had told Mr Place this. Mr Place and Mrs Lambert, a pauper, stated that they had not heard it.
- It was untrue that no precautions had been taken to prevent the spread of the disease.
- No paupers had been admitted to the Workhouse after smallpox had been diagnosed. The Coffin family of five had received an order for admission, which had been rescinded.
- The salary of the Medical Officer was not £10 per annum.

Although the Guardians of the Workhouse initially decided to publish both of Colonel A'Court's reports in the Dorset County Chronicle and circulate them throughout the Union, the decision was rescinded at the Board meeting of 25th February. Mr Place on the other hand, who had not been satisfied by the two enquiries, presented his case directly to the public in an "Address to the Inhabitants of the Wimborne and Cranborne Union" on 6th March. He indicated that he would have been satisfied with the report published on 26th February, if the depositions had been printed as they had been taken. There were omissions, which he wanted to point out.

His "Address" revealed omissions and alteration of evidence:

- The admission by Mr Geer, the Master of the Workhouse, that normally the small room housed six people, was evidence of overcrowding. This evidence had been omitted from the Colonel's report.
- The evidence given by Mr and Mrs Derrick had been altered. Their child had been ill on 6th January and moved to the school room on the 10th. She had said, "I slept with the two children, when one was ill. The other continued to sleep with me and he has since caught smallpox. Two mothers, each with two children, slept next to me and Loader's children have since caught the disease." The Medical Officer, Mr Rowe, agreed that Derrick's child had smallpox, while the other slept with it. This was omitted from the report. The printed evidence stated that the child did not have smallpox.
- Until 11th January even though attended by Mr Rowe and Mr Place and treated for smallpox from the 9th following a high temperature and delirium from the 6th, all this was clear evidence that precautions were not taken to prevent the spread of the disease.
- The provision of rush lights to Mrs Derrick and Mrs Reynard at night before 8th January was evidence of the presence of illness at that date and that nurses had not been appointed until 11th January, because they would have been visible in the rush light, had they been there.
- The evidence about the date of the appointment of Martha Cross and Bolton as nurses was disputed by Mr Place and Mrs Lambert, one of the paupers. Mr Place was not allowed to give evidence on oath that he had not been told by Cross that she had been appointed on 15th. January.

- Mrs Reynard's evidence that the eruption on her child went on increasing and was out a good deal on 7th January was not correctly reported.
- Only Colonel A'Court had questioned inmates and Mr Place's solicitor had not been allowed at the close of the enquiry to make observations on the evidence to elicit the real state of the case.

In his "Address" Mr Place offered the following undisclosed evidence:

- John Parry had smallpox on 25th December 1838. No precautionary measures were taken to close and clean the ward he occupied. His bed and bedding remained untouched until 1st January 1839, when Mrs Long and her five children were allowed to use the same bed and bedclothes. Anne Long contracted smallpox.
- Barnes and Reynard slept in adjoining beds until taken to the school room on 11th January.
- Jane Derrick and Anne Prior were taken to the school room in a healthy state, slept with sick siblings and contracted smallpox.
- Prior, the nurse, was allowed to visit her children in other wards daily and two of them caught smallpox.
- Loader, the washer woman, and Derrick, the cook, continued to follow their occupations, mingle with other inmates and sleep in the school room with their infected children at night, thus spreading the disease to other children.
- There were many other instances of people sleeping near the sick and catching the illness and sadly Loader's child died.

The following contradictions were observed:

- The Chairman of the Board had denied that people were sleeping three to a bed but there were twenty four inmates in eight beds in two wards and the Long family of six had one double bed between them.
- In a letter to the Poor Law Commissioners the Chairman stated that there was ample sleeping accommodation for two hundred and thirty people but there were only one hundred and nineteen beds ready for use.
- The Chairman reported that smallpox was confined to two wards, when four wards were affected.
- A letter written by a Dr Carnegie complimenting the salubrity of the Workhouse was inappropriate, as the doctor was commenting on the past not present state of the institution.

Mr Place concluded his "Address" by commenting adversely on the ability of some Guardians to care for the poor. He objected to the fact that guilty people were being protected- presumably some of those running and working in the workhouse and hoped that the poor would benefit from his actions in drawing attention to the shortcomings of the New Poor Law provisions. The Workhouse, in his view, could not accommodate the poor of twenty four parishes in an old, ill-ventilated building, close to water, confined for space and too close to the centre of town to prevent the spread of disease.

George Augustus Place was a man, who expected high standards in the management of infectious diseases and requirements of hygiene and had a well-developed social conscience. At the same time he had the confidence to speak out and deliver scathing criticism of those running the Poor Law provisions at a local and national level.

It is probable that he was an enlightened doctor, who realised that some more advanced medical techniques, superior management skills and much more cash were needed, if the New Poor Law system were to provide properly for the needs of the unemployed, elderly, and sick, who found their way to the Workhouse. However, he used methods, which were unlikely to endear him to the

Guardians of the Poor or the Poor Law Commissioners. He was a master of publicity. He did not hesitate to use local and national newspapers to air his views. He went straight to the sources of information and gave a voice to inmates about conditions and treatment in the ways of managing a smallpox outbreak. They appeared to be caught up in a crisis they could not control but were determined not to be blamed, particularly at the time of the outbreak of smallpox. He was in full command of the facts of the case.

Ranged against him were the Guardians of the Poor, drawn mainly from the merchant class, ministers of the church and local dignitaries. They had little medical knowledge but were the employers of Mr Place and had the power to restrict his practices despite their ignorance of the best for any shortcomings. Undoubtedly they did not understand Place or his advanced ideas, as might have been the case with the majority of Guardians at the time.

Colonel A'Court, as an official of the Poor Law Commission, must have supported the New Poor Law system, which was so criticised by Mr Place. He had visited Wimborne as recently as November 1838 and moved swiftly into action, when the crisis broke, by conducting two investigations. Despite this apparent efficiency though, he was not above omitting or altering evidence, which did not suit his purposes. His enquiries looked like a whitewash and significantly, as soon as calm had been restored, most of the recommendations made by Mr Place were adopted at the Workhouse.

Gadflies like George Augustus Place were needed to sting institutions into progressive action. In his own sphere he was the expert, who should have been heeded, Unfortunately for personal or other reasons he was not able to take the Guardians and Medical Officers of Wimborne with him and this failure must rebound on him as much as the other players in the drama.

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Legal Disputes in the Holt Area in the early 17th Century - Dr David Reeve

In 1603 the Duchy of Lancaster sold the Kingston Lacy estate to the Blount family. Though some legal disputes had taken place between the Duchy and the landowning neighbours, in the 35 years after the sale there were no less than four legal disputes that went to Chancery Court covering the Holt area of the estate. This article is not so much about the minutia of the court cases but about fascinating glimpses that they give into the local communities and life during the period.

Amongst the legal papers outlining the cases and the Latin Chancery bills and statements are a number of witness depositions, usually written in English. Invariably these witnesses were senior members of the local community, husbandmen and farmers, weavers and tanners, such as William Forest aged 74, John Lauwarren aged 67 and John Elliot aged 80 years. These depositions can give a wealth of local history information going right back to the 16th century.

In 1612 a dispute arose between Mountjoy Blount and Sir William Uvedale of Horton, concerning hunting rights in Priors Copse. It was alleged that Uvedale and his servant Andrew Bushe hunted in the copse, killing six bucks and six deer. Uvedale and Bushe claimed that Priors Copse was part of the manor of Horton and therefore they had a right to hunt there. Blount claimed that the copse was part of the medieval hunting forest of Holt, which he had exclusive hunting rights to. Keepers of the forest had walked the copse for the last 50 years and Francis Uvedale, Thomas Uvedale and Sir William Uvedale had not hunted in the forest except by stealth.

The witnesses included John Lauwarren, a former keeper of the chase and also one time employee of Francis Uvedale. During this time he was employed to kill the deer but never in Priors Copse. He recalled that 4 years past (1608) the servants of Thomas Uvedale killed two deer between Priors Copse and Horton Street. He was so offended that with his own hands did 'spoyle his owne dogges and his men for feare of his displeasure did runne away'.

Amongst the papers is a detailed perambulation of the medieval hunting forest of Holt, confirmed by a number of witnesses. It starts at the Mannington Oak (opposite the junction of Burts Lane and the main Horton to Three Legged Cross) to the cross in the centre of Horton. It then went down the old road to Petersham and Bothenwood on to Walford. The boundary then went through the centre of Wimborne to the two bridges at Eastbrook then up Colehill Lane. The perambulation then went north of Uddens as far as Horeseford (modern day Ameysford) then north through the heath as far as Burts Lane then back up to Mannington Oak.

The majority of these and other boundary points can be found on a map of Holt Forest by Richard Harding of Blandford dated to the 1620. The only points not on this map are Uddens Cross and a stone cross between Uddens and the heath. Interestingly in a legal dispute concerning the northern boundary of the manors of Uddens and Kingston Lacy there are references in the witness depositions to the cross between Uddens and the heath being dug up by Arneys about 30 years previously (c.1607)

Two earlier perambulations take the forest boundary to the south of Uddens along Uddens Water, Clayford and then on to Horsford. It looks like the later perambulation, the 1637 legal paper and the Harding map. were all trying to grapple with the complications of the manorial and forest boundaries in a similar way as the dispute around Priors Copse.

The witness depositions in the 1637 dispute also refer to a greater number of trees being felled on Holt Heath in 1596 and used by Merville to build a new manor house at Kingston Lacy. This is

referring to a new manor house that was built close to the medieval ruins by Thomas Hall in 1591. It comprised a dwelling house, barn, stable, pigeon house, orchard and grounds about the house totalling 8 acres. The same house is shown on another map by Richard Harding, showing the boundaries of Cranborne Chase. Both Thomas Hall and his son Bartholomew lived there until 1641, when it was sold to Sir John Bankes, (some 5 years after he had purchased the rest of the estate from the Blount family). Soon after it was converted to a farm and leased by the Bankes family, becoming known as Kingston Hall Farm.

In 1613 a legal dispute around Colehill took place between the Hanhams and the tenants of Kingston Lacy. It concerned the boundary between the Hanham and Kingston Lacy manors in Colehill. The witnesses were asked for evidence of previous tenants in the area and which manor they belonged to. Amongst the examples includes former tenant Joan Parker. She had been a tenant of Kingston Lacy manor. It states she had been accused of witchcraft and taken to the assizes. Whilst there, her cottage was pulled down. It was also stated that her husband had long before been imprisoned and executed as a felon. Parker appears to have escaped her ordeal at the assizes and returned to Wimborne, where she continued to get into trouble with the Wimborne Church Court with promiscuous behaviour and bastardy leading to a period in the House of Correction in Sherborne.

As well as these disputes around Holt there are a number relating to Wimborne Town. With the lack of records relating to the Deanery Manor in the town these disputes are very important for gaining information. Between 1600 and 1604 a dispute arose between the Hahams, owners of the Deanery Manor, and that of the Duchy of Lancaster who held the Borough Manor (covering East and West Borough as far south as Hanham Road). There is a lot of detail about the duties of the manorial officers and the jurisdiction of the various manorial courts. The witnesses inform us that the Deanery Court was held at Deans Court and the Badbury Hundred and Three Week Court (which dealt with debt and trespass in the Hundred) met at the Guildhall in the Market Place (Cornmarket). In John Forest's deposition he confirmed that the prison house was below the Guildhall. The prison, pillory and other places of punishment belonged to the Duchy and maintained by the bailiff of the Hundred. He went on to name two bridges at Eastbrook as the boundary between the Deanery and Leigh manors. We also learn from James Dean of Leigh that the Deanery had three pounds, one at Deans Court one at Leigh and another at Walford.

Legal dispute papers and particularly witness depositions can therefore be an important source for uncovering so much about the local community and are well worth a detailed study, particularly if other sources are scarce.

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Wimborne, Early 14th Century Title Deeds - John Day

This article first appeared in more concise form in the NOTES & QUERIES FOR SOMERSET AND DORSET, September 1998.

As part of the E.D.A.S. research into the archaeology and history of the Allen Valley an examination was made of the catalogue of Wimborne Title Deeds for the period 1280 to 1351 held at the Dorset History Centre. This time was chosen in order to compare the names involved with transactions of Title Deeds proceedings with those of the Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1327 and 1332 and the Feet of Fines from 1280 to 1369 and people mentioned in Pat Coulstock's book The Collegiate Church of Wimborne Minster, with the object to see if this would give any indication of the wealth in the borough. Although the source material is a catalogue, not yet completed, and transcribed in abbreviations, it is a very useful document that allows considerable information to be gained. This essay is not intended to be a definitive study but a basis from which further work could be undertaken.

Title Deeds are documents dealing with ownership or occupation of real estate. There are three kinds of estate, freehold, leasehold and customary or copyhold. There may be more than one kind of estate at the same time. One person may have the leasehold and another, the freehold. In medieval times all land belonged to the King but he granted most of it out; the tenants of direct grant from the King often had very large and multiple estates. They invariably let out most of this land which in turn was sometimes let out by the subtenants, which could in theory go on ad infinitum. A situation called subinfeudation. To convey buildings and land the vendor had to give the purchaser *livery of seisin*. That is, delivery of freehold possession by handing over a symbolic part of the property in the presence of witnesses. The Deed is called a *feoffment* or *Deed of Gift* - not a free gift. Reference is made to this in several of the cases in this list from Wimborne. Title Deeds such as for rent charges or rights of way required a written Deed, called a *Deed of Grant*.

Deeds were not normally dated until about 1295. Extant Wimborne Deeds are dated from 1279 to mid-16th century

The examples from the catalogue demonstrate the concise nature and method of identifying the original more comprehensive documents.

TITLE DEEDS 1/2

Grant

1 William Prodomme and Johanna his wife

2 Alban Friday

1 to 2 for life

Property: all the tenements which 1 had by gift of 2 in Wimborne Minster

Rent: 2 to 1 rose each year on the nativity of St. John the Baptist.

Warranty

Witnesses: Henry Elis, Richard Alban, Roger Edlof, Roger le Wollemangere

Monday 11 November 1280

TITLE DEEDS TD 1/3

Quit claim

1 John le Blumvile son and heir of Walter Blanmvile

2 William Prodomme of Wimborne Minster.

1 notes that he leased to 2 a tenement which he had in Weststrete, Wimborne between the tenements of John Pertrich on one side and that of Peter Scheppe on the other, for a period of 8 years.

1 Quitclaims 2. Property the tenement described above

2 To hold the property from the capital lords of the fee for the service thence owed and accustomed

Witnesses: Henry son of Elias, Roger Edlof, Richard Alban, Richard Jolif, Roger Wolmangere

Thursday 19th December 1280

TITLE DEEDS

1 Gilbert Rotecod of W.M.

2 Richard Bernard, clerk and Walter his brother.

1 grants to 2 for their service.

Property: two parts of a stall in the Deans Market, W.M. between the steps of the Cemetry of St.Cuthberga the Virgin on the east and the Kings road which leads from the said market-place towards the house once owned by Richard Skyl on the west.

2 to hold the property from the capital lords of the fee by hereditary right rendering to those lords the service thence owed and accustomed.

Warranty

Consideration: (2 to 1) 4 1/2 silver marks.

Witnesses: Philip son of Elyas, Galfrid Walkelyn, John de Bosco, Reginald Seward, John Corneys, Richard de Henton, Henry Tinctor, Richard called Precher, Adam le Tannere, Roger le Wolmanger, Alban Friday and others.

12th Feb 1295.

The Title Deeds named 308 individuals. Collectively their names appear a total of 736 times; the frequency of a name presumably reflecting social standing. The most frequently named are Roger Edlof (40 times), John Tony (21), William Prodhomme (17). The surname Alban appears thirty-seven times. Richard Alban appears 19 times (likely to be Richard senior), Richard junior once, William 14, John 3; a John Abban appears 6 times, possibly a Alban.

Wimborne Lay Subsidy Rolls records 71 taxpayers in 1327, of which 23 are in the Title Deeds and 11 in the Feet of Fines. There are 12 in the Wimborne Deeds that seem to also be in the 81 taxpayers of Leigh and one, John Monte Alto, who paid 3s. the highest tax of the 24 taxpayers of Barnsley, now a deserted settlement. This distribution of people indicates that the outlying population paid a significant part in the town's activities. For instance, William Proudhomme came from Sturminster Marshall. Of those most frequently mentioned four are in the Wiimborne Lay Subsidy Rolls; Richard Alban was the heaviest taxed in the town at 5s, Richard Edlof and John Tony paid 1s each, and William Prodhomme 6d. As only twenty of the 71 towns folk who were taxed paid 1s or more, this makes that group some of the wealthiest as far as the subsidy rolls tell us. Matilla Edlof, who may be related to Roger, is on the Leigh subsidy roll as paying 1s.8d. in a vill that taxes ranged from 6d to 3s.

Nineteen people in the Title Deeds are members of the church officials so they would not be paying tax so not appearing in the Lay Subsidy rolls. So we may surmise that 264 people in Title Deeds, presumably men of substance, do not appear in the Wimborne Lay Subsidy Rolls. It is reasonable to assume that most of them being witnesses were local people. As occupations were not regularly

recorded and domiciliary addresses never, it is likely some were ecclesiastics. From the evidence presented there are many fewer paying tax that one would anticipate, even if some were church people and others below the tax line they would be a small percentage of the town's population. Jude James estimates the population in this period was 320 inhabitants.

A further assessment of the comparative wealth of the town is extrapolated from a wider analysis of the Dorset Lay Subsidy Rolls. The average taxes for the vill of the Allen Valley and some adjacent to Wimborne are: Sixpenny Handley 39d; Tarrant Gunville, Pentridge, and Witchampton, 21d each; Shapwick 18d.; Petersham 16d; More Crichel and Horton 12d each; Hinton Martel and Parva, Kingston Lacy and Monkton Up Wimborne 11d each; Leigh 10d; while Wimborne and Didlington at 9d each; Barnsley and Tarrant Rushton at 8d each, clearly makes Wimborne low in the league table. Despite the fact Wimborne was a Minster town of ancient royal heritage there was a discrepancy between it and the surrounding wealthier countryside. Some evidence of its poor state is noted by Pat Coulstock that Thomas Upton, a Canon of St. Cuthberga and a Magistrate who is mentioned in the Title Deeds, was involved in the Inquisitions in 1338, 1349, 1351 and 1367 into dilapidations of Wimborne Minster Church.

Though the 1327 and 1332 Lay Subsidy Rolls are a wealth of information, and the only ones extant that record individual tax-payers by name, they have to be treated by caution. The Norman tax collectors often replace Saxon names with Norman, which can produce some uncertainty about identification. Parishioners may move from one vill to another but discerning this not easy. James Wynterborne is named in the 1331 Title Deeds and as a subtaxer for Badbury Hundred in 1327 but does not appear anywhere in 1332. A James de Wynterborne Clenchustone, clerk, had a grant of 32 acres in the South Field of Kingston Lacy. The James's are believed by Pat Coulstock to be the same person. She records that the Close Rolls of 1328 reads that Richard de Clare, Dean of Wimborne, was to excommunicate James because of his contumacy which may have caused him to move from the Wimborne district. There were two other Wynterbornes in Dorset but with different Christian names.

John Capon, a local layman of some importance an officer of the Duchy of Lancaster, with John Rotecod, an Augustinian Canon of Christchurch, were given permission in 1354 to found a Chantry in St. Cuthberga. The upkeep of the Chantry was to come from tenements and land that are recorded in the Title Deeds. (Information from an Inquiry in 1403)

.....precise information about the holdings from which the annual rent of 7 marks was derived. For instance 2 marks came from all the Wimborne tenements that which had formerly been held by Thomas Gloukerner, the four shops in Cook's Row and one tenement with seven shops adjoining opposite the Corn Market. The messuage granted to the Chantry's Chaplain stood near the parish church of Wimborne between the tenement of John Capon and that of Robert Cok.The messuage and rent were held jointly by John Rotecod and John Capon of Elizabeth de Burgh in the free socage by rendering fealty. (Pat Coulstock)

The property referred to was held by Elizabeth de Burgh from the King by Knights service as part of the manor of Cranborne. Elizabeth does not occur in the Wimborne Title Deeds of this essay but a Richard de Bergh acted as witness in these Title Deeds several occasions in the 1340's and 50's. There is no indication within the researched documents that there was any relationship. Richard does not appear in the Subsidy Rolls but Elizabeth paying 13s.4d. tax in the 1332 Roll for Cranborne shows herself to be the wealthiest person on the Roll of that vill. John Capon appears in the Title Deeds and the Feet of Fines but not the Lay Subsidy Rolls, neither does Edith, wife of John, or Thomas son of John. Galfrido Capon is one of the lower paid tax payers at Leigh but no clue is shown whether he is related to John. It seems reasonable to assume that John Capon of Horton (whose tax level we do not

know) is the same Capon of Wimborne, as John Capon snr. of Wimborne figured in the 1356 Feet of Fines when he acquired property in Horton from William and Nichola Bridesyard. The Bridesyards are not in any of the 1332 Dorset Lay Subsidy Rolls so they must have also held property elsewhere. John Rotecod, as to be expected as he was a church officer, does not appear in the Subsidy Rolls, though a Matilla Rotecod does. There are several Rotecods in the Title Deeds, Nicholas, Gilbert, Roger, Wiliam but no John. Gilbert was a Chantry Priest. Matilla is the only Rotecod in the Dorset 1327 Subsidy Rolls but she does not reappear in 1332. It is not unreasonable to believe that the Wimborne and perhaps the Leigh Rotecods were related.

Tanner, like Rotecod, is a repeated name in the Title Deeds and the Lay Subsidy Rolls. There are various Christian names: Adam, Walter, John and Edith, who were married, and Matilda, in the Title Deeds; Peter and Richard in the Wimborne 1327 Rolls and with Thomas in 1332.

Where names are similar and it looks likely they are the same person I have included them as such. The deeds record William Crondel (1315), William Crondil (1317) as the same person (as the catalogues are a transcript it may well be a typing error). A time gap and differential spelling makes William Crondall, Sacrist of St. Cuthberga Church, who acted as Procurator for the Dean and College in 1379 as less likely, though perhaps a relative. William Prodhomme appears in Wimborne Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1327 and 1332 and several Title Deed transactions. In 1314 he was granted a tenement in Wimborne and 5 acres of arable land in Leigh, when he was described as of Sturminster Marshall. There are no other Prodhomes in either extant Subsidy Rolls for the whole of Dorset. He had a wife, Edith, and son, John recorded in the Title Deeds.

It is of interest that there are people with the same or similar names in parishes not near but neither very far with parishioners of Wimborne. I am indebted to Jude James for bringing my attention to a case of Englishery in 1280 with a reference to the Caupon family of Wimborne from the Calender of New Forest Documents 1244-1334, Hampshire Record Series, vol. 3 1979, entries 286 and 301. – *“Walter Caupon of Wimborne was killed near Brocley by an unknown person who immediately fled.*

The jurors say that they did not know who killed him No Englishery, therefore the judgement is murder upon the whole community of the whole community of the New Forest. The finder John de Wymburne is not suspect. He does not attend therefore in mercy also his pledges Walter Likepen and John le Petit.....”

Englishery was the Norman law appertaining to murder (*J. James pers com*) it being a matter of whether or not the murdered person was Norman or English. If Norman and the culprit was not found, the whole community it was declared he came from was held responsible and given a hefty fine. Englishery meant if the victim was English punishing the community not entertained.

The use of a place name as a surname does not necessarily mean that is where they currently live, but where their family originated from which may have been many centuries before.

This narrow review of some of the people living in 14th century Wimborne makes a starting off point for a more comprehensive research project.

Acknowledgements:

I am grateful to Pat Coulstock for her advice on the history of Wimborne Parish Church and to Dr David Reeve for his guidance on source material and allowing me to tap into his wealth of knowledge about the history of this famous market town. ∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞

Wimborne, Sewerage Committee Minute Book - John Day

While keeping an archaeological watching brief on the replacement of sewers in Wimborne, a visit was made to Dorset Records Office to read the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Wimborne Minster Sewer Authority 1869-1872. Though the records did not clearly answer the questions I was asking - the date of the building of the brick drainage culverts under the town's roads - it did make interesting reading, although not as detailed as the Highway Board Minutes - about which there will be a later article, and also a report on the archaeological assessment.

A Mr Chislett remained the Chairman throughout the period of the minutes. Among the committee members was a C Ellis, probably one of the Ellis family who owned a brewery and who was referred to in an earlier E.D.A.S. Newsletter article about a bottle seal found during the Lodge Farm excavation.

The Committee of 17th August 1869 documented the need for a complete overhaul of the town drainage system. It was decided to ask Mr Coombes, drainage surveyor of Tisbury to submit plans. These plans were looked at and agreed on in September. Also in this month Police Superintendent Hammond complained of smoke from the gas works being a public nuisance. The gas works were ordered to rectify it. It was agreed to employ a temporary scavenger to clean the town - a Mr Aplin having been discharged. In the 1900s an Aplin family lived in King Street.

On the 2 November tenders were invited to construct a sewer from the termination of the sewer near the Coach and Horses to continue to the River Stour, with a cesspool at the outfall, and tenders for a sewer from the Brewer's Arms in Poole Road to junction of Kings and High Street. The committee were to look into the costs of laying a short drain from the corner of Redcotts land to premises of Mr A Ellis.

The Brewer's Arms was on the west side of Poole Road about where the car park is now situated.

At the meeting on the 9th it was felt necessary to publish and distribute bills warning persons against connecting drains to the present street sewers.

While reference is made to the pre-existing sewers nothing is said about the fabric or type of construction. Glazed pipes were not used locally until mid 19th Century. There is no comment on what material was used for the work done in the period this book of minutes were kept except the one sentence on the 16th November, "that the best quick socket pipes properly laid in clay at 2s. 8½d. a yard were to be used".

On the 14th December the Inspector reported that drains were laid in West Street. On January 11th 1870, Mr Ridout's tender of £248 to renew sewer No.1 was accepted and he was to start on March 1st and finish on 1st June. The next month he asked, and it was agreed, to change this to April 1st to August 1st. Payments this month were made to:

	£	s	d
Holloway H for plan	2	2	0
Wood J printing	3	5	0
Dacombe J for carpenter work and Scavengers burrow	2	13	8
Street A Masons work	24	14	6

On April 5th the committee agreed to rent a yard for storage from Mr Dewer in King Street for £1 per annum.

On May 3rd 1870 notices were issued "on Mills called Ellis, and Beales Mills requiring them to regulate Mill hatches on Sundays during summer to keep river water at such a height as will cover the mud and prevent a nuisance from the smell."

On 10th of this month a special meeting was called to apply for tenders to water the streets. This job was shortly after given to Phineas Cherrett of Corfe Mullen for £7 a month. A new water cart was purchased from Mr. Bartlett.

In June an application was made to the Public Works to borrow £3,200 to complete a new drainage system for the town.

Mr. Cherrett's wage went up to £7. 10. 0d. per month and he complained that one of the wheels on the water cart was imperfect. Mr Bartlett was told to improve it. In August Mr Bartlett was told to further attend to the cart because of its general poor state.

In October the Secretary of State consented to the loan of £3,200 at repayment over 30 years. In December there were 16 tenders, including Mr Ridout's to renew the drainage system. A Mr Sibsey of Southampton was successful with his tender of:

Section 2 £1,400
Section 3 £ 601
Section 4) According to schedule of prices
Section 5)

There were no associated plans so it was not evident where the sections were.

Mr Bartlett was paid £23.12s for "the water cart and extras" on 7th April 1871, nearly a year after he sold it to them. A new pump and hose was ordered for it. Tenders were invited for someone to water the streets. On the 15th Mr Wills applied at £4.16s., Mr Buckingham £2.7s but Mr Cherrett was successful at £7.16s a month.

In May 1871 £200 was drawn from their capital because of that amount of shortfall from collections by the Overseers in the Sewerage Rate. The Highway Board also had problems about collecting Highway contributions.

In June there was correspondence with Mr Taylor of the Local Government Acts Offices asking if they had legal powers to repair and maintain the Fire Engine. Consequently they wrote to the Vestry refusing to accept this task. They ordered the cleaning of water carriers running from Mr Hatchards Mill to entrance of the town. A notice was sent to the Board of Guardians to discontinue turning their sewage into the River Allen to the prejudice of Public Health and suggest the adoption of the Guardians at the Union of Moles Patent Earth Closet or similar remedy.

Mr Hatchard was so successful in cleaning his Mill runs that by the end of June the committee had to arrange for the relaying of their pipes because of the volume of water. The Overseers had still not paid for the sewerage rates. In October letters were sent demanding immediate payment.

In October tenders were obtained for the post of Scavenger. These included Mr Wheeler for £1.12s, Mr Stickland £2.10s, Mr Pond for £3 a month and Mr G Daw who successfully tendered £1.12s.

In December concern was still being expressed at the continuing failures of payments of the sewage rate.

Mr Hawkins, Registrar of the Governors of the Grammar School, wrote in January 1872 saying the water conduit from the Minster was being used for drainage of houses and he required this should stop forthwith. Sewerage Board Inspectors gave notice to the house occupiers to disconnect immediately.

In March money to the bank was overdue and the Treasurer did not have enough funds to repay it. Repairs to the water cart this month totalled £4.17s.7d. The Chairman wrote to the Guardians of Union House to cut off communication of drainage with the river. Mr Daw was found unsatisfactory as a Scavenger and Mr Wheeler took his place in May.

Also in May the Water Cart was to be painted immediately and Mr Cherrett instructed to water the street as before.

The minute book was a large, beautifully bound book with some hundreds of unused pages and it was not apparent why it was not continued. Most of the records were in a very pleasant clear hand and easy to read. Mr Cheslett, Chairman and Mr C Downton were long standing members and with Messrs Hopkins, Brown, Laing and Druitt, formed the last recorded committee on May 7th 1872. It would be interesting to know what other parts they played in the role of the life of the town.

The Scavenger seems to have been the man who tidied the streets up and may also have been the same person who watered the streets. I could not distinguish from the minutes whether "drainage" referred to surface water drainage, foul sewage or both. As 'night carts' and earth closets were in use beyond this date it seems likely that reference is only to surface drainage. But, I note, a brick culvert in the Minster Mews used, I believe, for foul sewage and built with bricks made between 1784 and 1851, when there was a brick tax. Salt glazed stoneware pipes were used in the Poole area from 1854 and concrete pipes first made locally in 1874.

In this period rates were collected by the Overseers at a local level and they seem sometimes to have found them as difficult to get as the present Poll Tax. It would be interesting to know what became of the deficit and if there are any extant Overseers Account books that give more details of this problem.

If anyone has information and can expand on the contents of this article I would be pleased to hear from them.

Acknowledgements

I make a special note of thanks to staff at the Records Office in Dorchester, Nicholas Pettefer and Brian Nippard of the Engineers Department of the Council Offices in Furzehill, Col. Grey of EDAS and D. Hammond of Verwood Pottery Trust, and last but not least Wilf Atyeo and workers of C. Lee.

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Bastardy in Wimborne – John Day

A bastard is an illegitimate birth, i.e. born outside of marriage. Attitudes to bastardy have changed over the years. During the medieval period there was little, if any, embarrassment or criticism of a birth out of wedlock. In fact, titles such as “The Bastard of Orleans” show an element of pride. Monarchical sexual exploits were well known and apparently acceptable. In the post medieval period bastardy took on the mantle of immorality and church actions were punitive towards women who bore bastards and bastard children seen as “something different and undesirable”. In my younger days “bastard” was a term of abuse and put by many in the same category as swearing. It is a term I rarely now hear and when I do is usually said in a joking sense. Today, bastardy is not uncommon but such births referred to as simply illegitimate, and unmarried couples an increasing norm. Bastardy documents in the Wimborne archives come under several headings.

1. Examinations. PE/WM OV 10/3/1 – 10/1/64
2. Bastardy Bonds. PE/WM OV 10/1/1 – 10/1/94
3. Warrants for Apprehension (Arrest) PE/WM OV10/5/1-10/5/34
4. Bastardy Orders PE/WM OV10/2/1-10/2/67
5. Bastardy Summons PE/WMOV10/4/1 – 10/4/4

There are a total of 263 extant documents catalogued within the bastardy accessions of Wimborne. There are other references to illegitimate births in the Quarter Sessions Calendars, the Overseer’s Accounts, Vestry Minutes and the Church Court minutes. The most numerous type of documents are 94 Bastardy Bonds, for the years 1599 to 1823; then 67 Bastardy Orders (1686-early 19th.c.); followed by 64 Bastardy Examinations (1708-1816); 34 Warrants for Apprehensions (1758-1833); 4 Summons (1691-1831). It is only between 1758 and 1816 that there are examples of all the types of documents i.e. 58 years out of the total coverage of 244 years, that it is possible to trace individuals through numerous different bastardy documents. This does not mean there are no missing documents: nor does it include those referred to in the other documents . Within the overlapped years there are 34 Examinations, 56 Bonds, 10 Bastardy Orders, Summons nil, 25 Apprehensions, making 125 out of the total of 236 extant documents.

As with all other records there is no way of telling how many may not have survived. The most interesting and showing very human behaviour, and interests, are the examinations; these seek to gain financial responsibility from the fathers of illegitimate children in order to prevent expenditure from the parish, and as a method of controlling morality. Of the 64 extant Examination documents there are 52 from the 18th. century and 12 from the first 16 years of the 19th. century. The last surviving examination document was in September 1816, when the examination of Mary Evans took place concerning her bastard child and putative father James Manuel of Holt.

In most years of the examination documents there was only 1 examination annually, and it is only in 4 of 63 years that there are 2 a year and only in 1802 that we see a maximum number of 3. This seems a very low number and is likely to demonstrate the failure of survival of many documents.

Bastardy was often seen as a punishable offence, punishment being a method of controlling morality. This is clearly seen in the record of a Quarter Sessions case: a writ of good behaviour was granted against Ann Mounders of Wimborne Minster because she gave birth to an illegitimate child. There are

instances of the Court ordering whippings for relative minor offences, including bastardy; in 1632 Margery Boatson was to be discharged from the House of Correction but, *if in future she keeps company with Minterne, she is to be committed to the House of Correction for one year*. Whoever Minterne was he was obviously seen as a undesirable associate for Margaret and the Court considered themselves as right and proper they should control their friendship. Charles Webb, overseer of Wimborne in 1799, informed the magistrates that Sarah Pearce had been delivered of a female bastard child. The magistrates issued a warrant for her arrest and to be taken to the Keeper of Dorchester House of Correction “*to punish her and set to work during the term of one whole year*”.

PE/WMOV10/5/11

In the early post-medieval period it was the practice of the Churchwardens and Overseers to present the mothers of bastard children to the Church Consistory Court with the punishment of having to appear at church wearing a white gown, carrying a staff and admitting their guilt. Reeve records such a process happening but (pers. Com) points out this practice faded out in the 18th century.

Every effort was made to find out who putative fathers were, and if single encourage their marriages. Such circumstance was probably behind the Overseer’s accounts in July 1721:

Pd. £1. in expense in takeing up Avis Faulkner and her companion and keeping them all night and for a lyconce and for marrying of them the next day.
Pd. 2s. for a Gard to hide with them one night and half a day and helping take them.

In August 1723 there is a one-line entry which no doubt hides a similar story:

Paid for marrying Peter Pryssott 7s. 6d.

The only circumstance we know about William Maybe is recorded in the January 1769 accounts:

David Pitman for expences on Acc. of Wm. Mayby being kept in custody 3 days for a bastard. £1:3:4

Examination documents, some printed but most, and more comprehensive, are hand written and tend to follow the same structure: name of examinee, but not address; marital status, name of alleged father, though none seemed to be present at the examination; the woman’s sexual experience. This latter is not included in the standard printed forms, indicating some difference of interest between the local officers with a salacious element, and law makers in Parliament whose only interest was facilitating payments from the fathers. Most of the examinees were single women but there were 3 married women and 4 widows in the time period covered by the examinations. Three of the women refused to name the father, one of whom was one of the married women.

Of the putative fathers 10 came from areas of Dorset outside of Wimborne and the immediate environs, 3 from other Counties, 3 from other countries, 8 were mariners, 4 soldiers. Two were Irishmen, one of whom was one of the mariners and one described in the examination of Ann White in 1777: *concerning her bastard child Peter Armstrong of Ireland, travelling peddler, the putative father*. One, from America in 1747, described in the Examination: *Martha Stevens concerning her female bastard child, aged about four years, Arkamall Stevens of Montana the putative father*.

Examples of hand written examinations:

The Examination of Mary Pinson of the Parish of Greater Canford in the County of Dorset, singlewoman, with a Bastard child she now goes with, which when borne is likely to become chargeable to the said Parish. Taken this ninth day of July Anno Domini 1708. This said Mary Pinson upon Oath saith that Francis King of Moorstown in the said Parish of Greater Canford is the Father of this child whom with she now goot and that the said Francis King had Carnal knowledge ?? of her body in her fathers house at Longfleet in the said parish of Greater Canford on the Monday fortnight on three weeks next after Christmas Day last but which of the days she can not now remember and that no other person had Carnal knowledge of her body before that time or since.
Harry Constantine.

Hester Duffett of Canford Magna says Robert Painter of Canford Magna, shoe maker is the father of her child. Robert Painter only father of said bastard child she now goes with. He had Carnal knowledge of her body three times, a week before Candlemass last past, and a second week after Candlemass and last a fortnight after Candlemass when she lay with him in Old Walk near the Park and there got her with child. Promised to marry her. He was the only person to have Carnal knowledge of her body.
21st. August 1708

Joan Dolling, widow, putative father Melchisadeck Arnold of Winterborne Came, servant. Husband, deceased three years previously
February 1711

Joan Brinson widow, putative father Joseph Burgery late of Gosport, now Lyme Regis, carpenter. He had Carnal knowledge of her body within a week next after Christmas last past and that he had frequent Carnal knowledge of her body between that time and the five and twentieth day of Monday following and no other person since death of her husband Andrew Brinson.
July 1713

Mary Etheridge of West Parley, putative father John Hedges of Wimborne Minster, servant to Mr. Brambles. John Hedges had Carnal knowledge of her body several times in her masters kitchen and last week in May last past that about a week after he had Carnal knowledge of her body again upon his own, when he got her with child and lay once more with her in the kitchen again about a fortnight after. Which were all the time he ever had Carnal knowledge of her body. No other person had Carnal knowledge of her body. He often proposed marriage.
Nov. 1714

Examination of Margaret Curtis, pregnant, married woman, putative father Richard Moores, labourer. Margaret Curtis wife of Moses Curtis, mariner, concerning James and Christopher borne 28th February last past. John Philips of Horton, putative father. She states she had not seen her husband for upwards of five years and believes he is beyond the seas.
April 1765

Mary White re Mary her female bastard child. James Perry, stone mason and Timber merchant, putative father. States her husband has gone away from her eighteen years this Spring to Newfoundland but hath heard he died about 3 years since and also when she acquainted him the said James Perry that she was with child by him, who with some surprise said he would not learn it

happened for a hundred pounds and told her if she would drink a draft that he would bring her, he the said James Perry would keep her like a gentlewoman. Said she had committed sin enough already.
May 1768

The Examination of Catherine Frampton of Parish of Wimborne Singlewoman touching a Bastard Child with which she now goes, which when born is likely to become chargeable to the said Parish. Who saith upon Oath that she is now with Bastard Child and that John King of the same Parish husbandman is the reputed father of said child, and that he has had carnal knowledge of her body several times for the space of two years last past or thereabouts, and that he lay with her at her father's house in the Whitsun holidays last past which was the latter end of May last at which time she was got with child, and that before and since that time he had frequently carnal knowledge of her body, and that no other person besides of said John King ever had carnal knowledge of her body, and that he promised her marriage several times.

February 1710.

J. Ffitch.

At the foot of this examination are two additions.

Dorothy the wife of William James of the same Parish labourer made Oath the same Day before me of the said John King owned to her he was father of the bastard child with which the said Catherine Frampton now goes and promised her fifteen pence a week for nursing said child when born

J. Ffitch

Soloman Frampton of the same Parish laborer of the Catherine Framton on the same day likewise made Oath made oath before me that of said John King owed to him that he was father of said bastard child with which his daughter Catherine now goes, and proffesed before Mr. George Pashen an attorney at Blandford to give bond for keeping the said bastard child when born, but if ?? ?? the same bond way not then executed.

J.Ffitch

The descriptions of sexual contact is described in standardised form, and the details leaves an impression the examiners were very interested in the physical sexual elements which, as already stated, is not included on the official forms, leaving one to wonder what expressions the women themselves used and their ease or otherwise of explanation.

While there were 64 extant examinations there are 94 extant Bastardy Bonds, the bonds covering a much longer time scale (1599-1823). A Bond was an article that was made by someone prepared to promise to be financial responsible for an illegitimate child. This was mainly the putative father but was sometimes a relative of the father, occasionally both father and relative being jointly responsible and as parish officials overseers could be bonded. Within the 94 documents determining a bonded decision to be financial responsible for an illegitimate child there are 2 instances of the overseers being so bonded for children living in Wimborne but responsible to parents from outside of the parish. The overseers of Bloxworth were bound for the child of Deborah Dibbens of Bloxworth in 1790, the child of Joane Brinosn in 1717 was bound by the overseers of Hinton Parva.

There are also two instances when Bastard Orders were made to overseers. A Bastard Order was a directive enforcing payment. In 1812 the overseers of Godshill, Isle of Wight, were directed to be financial responsible for a bastard child:

Whereas The Reverend Sir James Hanham, Baronet Clerk one of Her Majesties Justices of the Peace for the said County of Dorset on the complaint of the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the parish of Wimborne Minster in the said County of Dorset issue a summons under his Hand and Seal Dated the twenty seventh Day of February one thousand eight hundred and twelve requiring the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of Godshill in the Isle of Wight in the County of Southampton some of them to appear before him and such other of His Majesties Justices of the Peace for the said County of Dorset this day at eleven o'clock in the forenoon to show cause why an Order should not be then and there made for the payment by the said Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the said parish of Godshill of a weekly sum to the said Churchwardens and overseers of the said parish of Wimborne Minster for the maintenance of Ruth Osborn a Bastard born in the said Parish of Wimborne Minster as a??? child with her mother Ann Osborn. And whereas it appears to us on Oath that the said Summons was duly served on the said Churchwardens and Overseers of the said parish of Godshill or some of them but they or any of them have not appeared in pursuance thereof And whereas the said Ann Osborn in and by her voluntary Examination taken in writing and upon Oath this Day by and before me the said Sir James Hanham and the Reverend Geo. Peter Price two of the said Justices for the said County of Dorset hath declared she was delivered of the said Ruth Osborn in the said parish of Gods Hill that the said Ruth Osborn was born a Bastard and is now of the age of two years or thereabouts that the said Ruth Osborn is now chargeable to the parish of Wimborne Minster aforesaid and that the said Ann Osborn is not willing to part with the said Ruth Osborn until she shall attain the age of seven years now in consideration thereof and on the complaint of the said Churchwardens and Overseers of the said parish of Wimborne Minster aforesaid We do hereby Order that the said Churchwardens and Overseers of the parish of Godshill or some of them to pay to the said Churchwardens and Overseers of the said parish of Wimborne Minster the sum of two shillings weekly and every week for and towards the maintenance of the said Ruth Osborn until they shall be ordered according to law to forbear the said allowance or otherwise given under our Hands and Seals at Wimborne Minster aforesaid the thirteenth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twelve.

The overseers of Poole were ordered "to pay maintenance money for the male bastard child of Charlotte Stickland" in 1832.

Payments came in three elements. The putative father ordered to pay a lump sum to cover the expenses of the mothers lying in period and a sum, weekly and every Week from the present Time for and towards the Keeping, Sustentation, and Maintenance of the said Bastard Child, for and during so long Time as the said Bastard Child shall be chargeable to the said Parish Wimborne Minster. The third element reads, And we do further order that the said....(mother's name)....shall also pay or cause to be paid to the Church Wardens or Overseers of the Poor of the said parish of Wimborne Minster for the time being, or to some or one of them, the sum ofweekly and every Week, so long as the said Bastard Child shall be chargeable to the said parish of Wimborne Minster in Case she shall not nurse and take Care of the said Child herself – Given under our Hands and Seals the Day and Year first written above.

There are 3 instances where the putative fathers surname is the same as the pregnant woman and bonded to be financial responsible for their children: William and Joane Tucker in 1668; John and Anne Hart, 1733; Samuell and Flower Pitt, 1772. These may be coincidental names, relatives, or even married couples but where the births happened before the wedding. None of these paupers were recorded in any of the other documents. It should also be noted that Martha Stevens had the same surname as Arkamel whose examination records he came from America.

Despite the 244 years that the period of extant documents overlap I could only trace 51 paupers that were made subject to more than one bastardy document; most only two. These figures are uncertain because it was not always easy to identify individuals.

Some paupers appear in more than one document outside of this overlap:
Joane Pottell & John Frampton, Bond 1691, Order 1686, Exam 1686.
Sarah Harvey & William Green, Bond 1709, Order 1709, Exam 1709.

The examination of Sarah Harvey in 1709 is on a smaller piece of paper than the other examinations and the hand writing more difficult to read. She had born a female bastard child the father of whom, William Green was of Wimborne Minster.

There are some documents that stand alone but in which reference is made to non-existent documents, such as Elizabeth Richman alias Sivier & Thomas White. There was a summons in August 1828 to the constables of Wimborne to bring Elizabeth Richman, alias Sivier, before the Overseers of the Poor of Wimborne to be examined concerning the birth of her bastard child by Thomas White of Wimborne. Also, a notice to the Wimborne constables in December 1831 to arrest Mary Burroughs Sivier, to bring her before the overseers to be examined concerning the birth of her bastard child by Richard Holly, labourer of Wimborne.

Both of these summons were dated after the last surviving examination in 1816, indicating therefore a whole series of examinations that have not survived. There are two interesting features about these summons. The constables were ordered to bring Elizabeth Richman before the Magistrates (Henry Banks & The Reverend Sir James Hanham) at the House of Philip Bragg Warren. The same House was also mentioned in the case of Mary Burroughs but the names of the Magistrates were not appended. One wonders who was Mr. Warren. The other point of interest is that both paupers sported the name of Sivier. This is not common name (the Seviours still exist in Horton) and one wonders what, if any, relationship existed.

Some examples of those traced between the years 1758 and 1816 are:

William Bolt, Exam and Bonds 1765
Ann Brewer, Bonds 1811, Arrest 1810, 1812
John Budden, Bond 1716, Exam 1714 & 1718
Evans Mary, Bond 1817, Exam 1815
Richman Joseph, Arrest 1793, Exam 1793
Runyard Mary, Exams 1793, 1802, Arrest 1797

PE/WM OV 10/3/1 – 64

The examination of Mary Tasswell alias Tanswell of Wimborne Minster took place on the 15th. May 1714. This Examinant upon Oath saith that she was delivered of a male Bastard child and that John Budden (son of William Budden) of the parish of Wimborne Minster Mariner is the reputed father of her said bastard child, his having had carnal knowledge of her Body in the month of May last several times and that she was gotten with child by him the said John Budden in the said month of May. And she further saith that no other person ever had carnal knowledge of her body but the said John Budden. In 1718 there was another examination in which she said she had been delivered of a

bastard child, but the sex is not recorded, the father being John Budden of Long Lane. She again said no other person had had carnal knowledge of her body.

The examination in 1793 of Mary Runyard is printed and very short, being typical of printed examination, saying little more than she is with child and that James Watson a corporal in His Majesties Second Regiment of Dragoons in Scots Greys is the father. A second short examination in 1802 relates she has had a second child. This time the father is James Hayward the Younger, labourer of Wimborne Minster.

The voluntary examination of Mary Evans of the Parish of Wimborne Minster, single woman taken on Oath before me one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace, September 1816. This Examinant on Oath doth declare she is with child and that the child is likely to be born a Bastard and to be chargeable to the Parish of Wimborne Minster aforesaid and that James Mauell of Holt in the Parish of Wimborne Minster aforesaid had Carnal knowledge of her body and did beget the said child she now goeth with, and is the true and only father thereof.

Roe King (Magistrate)

This review forms part of a monograph on the Overseesrs of the Poore in Wimborne. A fuller project is underway on bastardy in Dorset 1600.

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The Plague in Seventeenth Century Wimborne - Dr David Reeve.

The spread of bubonic plague in the 17th Century struck fear in the hearts of the population. The disease could strike at any time and at any level of society. It is not until more recent times that we have an understanding of the cause of the plague; the *plague bacillious* carried by the infected black rats with lice and fleas. By the 17th century it was a well known and much feared disease but there was no understanding of its cause or any way to prevent its spread. The victim's skin turned black in patches and inflamed glands of 'buboes' in the groin combined with compulsive vomiting, swollen tongue and splitting headaches made it a horrible, agonizing killer. It could kill within hours or lead to a painful lingering death. Historians have managed to track a series of outbreaks that spread through much of the country, including 1603-1605, 1625-1626, 1637-1639 and 1664-1665.

The lack of surviving documentation can make it difficult to research such outbreaks. For Wimborne Minster the parish registers do not survive until 1636. However, the churchwardens accounts do give some insight to the plague that swept through Dorset in 1625. It was reported in Blandford, Bridport, and Dorchester, as well as in Wiltshire such as in Salisbury². There is also evidence of plague sweeping through Somerset and Devon.³ Reference can also be to a spreading through the midlands in towns such as Leicester and Loughborough.⁴

Table 1. The purchasing of graves and the tolling of the Great Bell in Wimborne Minster 1620 to 1630.

Year	Purchase of Graves	Tolling of the Great Bell
1620	7	19
1621	6	31
1622	8	30
1623	7	23
1624	9	27
1625	17	62
1626	13	26
1627	10	26
1628	5	26
1629	9	30
1630	9	29 ⁵

The Wimborne burial Registers do not survive for this period but the churchwardens' accounts include purchases of graves and payments for the tolling of the Great Bell at funerals. Whilst many in the parish could not afford such items at funerals the figures shown in table 1 give a clear indication of a large increase in these payments in 1625 and 1626. If the 1625 and 1626 figures are ignored there was an average of 7.7 graves purchased a year and an average of 26.7 funerals using the Great Bell for the period 1620 to 1630. When comparing the average with the 1625 figures this suggests just over double the amount of graves purchased and well over double the tolling of the Great Bell, clear evidence of a dramatic increase in mortality in the parish, most likely due to plague.

The parish registers for Wimborne begin in 1636. There are a number of problems calculating how many christenings and burials are taking place, though the names are illegible.

In 1638 there were a staggering 192 burials, which suggests that the plague had hit the parish.⁷ Between January and July the figures were unremarkable, 39 in all, in July only two burials are recorded. Between August and September 83 entries are recorded, 40 in August and 43 in September. The figures for October through to the following April (with the exception of March) remained in the 20s per month. The monthly entries suggest that the plague raged between August 1638 and May 1639, where 259 burials took place. It is difficult to know whether it was mainly the urban population or a combination with the rural population that were killed. If it was a combination, then 10% of the parish population died.

With statistical analysis of parish register sources, recently explored by Goose⁶ there are often gaps in the records: including the breakdown of accurate recording at times of crisis such as plague.

There is evidence of the plague in other parts of the county. In Bridport the Borough ordered that a night watch be provided to guard against the plague⁸. There is also evidence of plague in Bristol between 1637 and 1639⁹. The plague is also recorded between 1637 and 1639 in the midlands including Melton Mowbray, where a third of the population died, Leicester and Loughborough.¹⁰ Unfortunately the churchwardens accounts and the figures for the tolling of the Great Bell and purchasing of graves for 1638 have not survived, possibly as a result of this serious outbreak.

Nicholas Russell records that 400 victims of a plague outbreak were buried in St. Peters Chapel, Wimborne Minster, in 1638.¹¹ His grandfather would have been alive in 1638. Whilst Russell may have over-estimated the figures it appears that this harrowing event, which killed five times the yearly average, still had a profound effect on the folk memory over the next two generations.

sources

1. Further information on Wimborne Minsters Population in the 17th C. can be found in D. Reeve 'The Study of a Small Town: Wimborne Minster Dorset 1620-1690 (unpublished PhD 2002)
2. Underdown' *Fire From Heaven* pp.122, 126-127
3. F.Neale & M.Coleman 'The Plague is Raging', *SDNQ, XXXIV (1998)* AND p.Slack *Impact of Plague IN Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford 1985), pp 115-116
4. *Wilshire Plague in Leicestershire 1558-1565* (Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (1969) p.63
5. In this year there were 17 payments for the Great Bell and 12 for the 4th Bell which was also being used for funerals.
6. N. Goose 'Urban Demography in Pre-industrial England', *Urban History, 21 (1994), pp273-284*
7. Unfortunately the christenings do not survive so it is impossible to calculate the impact on the population.
8. DRO DC/BTB. H6 FOLIO 28
9. Slack, *Impact of Plague, p120*
10. J.Wilshire *ibid* p.63
11. Russell, *Vindogladia* p35 and DRO PE/WM. RE 1/1-2

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Deserted Medieval Villages of East Dorset - Margaret Roebuck

Inspired by the work of Mrs Heather Bird on the “Survival, Shrinkage & Depopulation of Villages in South Leicestershire 1086 – 1555”, a working group of East Dorset Antiquarian Society (EDAS) members decided to try and replicate the Leicestershire results or follow where the historical evidence led in the case of Dorset villages. Our aim was to test the main conclusions reached by Mrs Bird by tracing the same course in a Dorset context i.e. to draw information about population and tenure of Dorset villages during the period 1086 - 1280 A.D.; examine ownership of land; consider the effects of taxation, plague and other problems on the number of villagers and the survival of villages in the 14th, century; and finally to research the reasons for the survival of some settlements and the decline of others between 1400 and 1500 A.D.

The group, which met in September 1993 for the first time, had little more than a copy of Heather Bird’s thesis and the Phillimore transcription of the Domesday Book for Dorset to hand. At that stage our aim was clear but the approach less easy to determine. Should we trawl through the Domesday book looking for villages which would fit neatly into the three categories identified in the Leicestershire survey - medieval villages which survived from 1086 - 1550; settlements which survived but in reduced size; communities which disappeared from the pages of history? Or should we try to consolidate the historical activities of EDAS in the Allen Valley and confine our study to villages in and close to the valley?

Of course the latter. In a very mechanical and bureaucratic way we shared out the villages between us and went off to do our research as best we could. It should be pointed out here that for several members of the group this was the first venture into historical research, the use of original material and visits to the Dorset Records Office, Dorset County Museum and various libraries in pursuit of information which might or might not exist.

The starting point for all of us was the Domesday Book. We intended to extract and record as much information as possible on the ownership of each village, its taxation bracket, land, population according to the four categories - Villagers, Smallholders, Cottagers and Socmen, and the value of each village.

It was at this point we encountered our first problems. Not only was some of the pertinent information in the Domesday Survey recorded by manor rather than villages but a few individual villages had several names and worse still some of the chosen villages either did not appear in Domesday, or had incomplete entries.

We persevered, learning from and supporting one another and from September to March consulted the English Place Name Society's Volumes, Hutchings History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset, The Victoria County History, Calendars of Inquisitiones Post Mortem, Lay Subsidy Roles 1327 - 1332, Dorset Tudor Subsidies 1523 - 1593, Inquisitiones Nonarum 1341. By the end of March we had completed the survey of the early years but were not able to draw conclusions or separate our villages into the three Leicestershire categories. Research over the whole period 1085 - 1550 will be needed before either is possible. Even so we noted differences between Leicestershire and Dorset already. Socmen were singled out by Heather Bird as the independent, strong willed characters of medieval times who made a significant contribution to the survival of villages in Leicestershire. In Dorset only one reference to a Socman has been unearthed. What will be the effect of this on Dorset villages?

Did Socmen masquerade under another name here? Or were there red-blooded Dorset men who fulfilled the same role as Socmen who breathed vitality into their village communities?

Another distressing difference was that Leicestershire is blessed with a wealth of surviving historical records compared with Dorset. Much valuable information came from Hundred Rolls there. So far we have not tracked down any of these for Dorset for the early period of our study and the record of village occupation is much thinner as a result and comparisons across the centuries less easy.

Finally we sense that most of the villages of the Allen Valley in our survey, which need not be representative of what was happening in Dorset as a whole, survived beyond 1550 and some went into decline at a later date and for different reasons from those offered in Leicestershire.

Our preliminary findings follow. We have made the assumption that the number of Villeins (Villagers), Bordars (Smallholders), and Cottagers indicate the number of households to be found in each village. This is likely to be a minimum number as they reflect only the households headed by a man working on the land, although in Hinton Martel 8 Burgesses are noted too.

Table A. Numbers of Households in Each Village (Domesday Survey)

Village	Total House holders	Villagers	Cottagers	Burgesses	Slaves
Baggeridge	3		3		
Brockington	No figures given				
Moor Crichel	householders cannot be distinguished from rest of Manor				
Little Crichel	"lost" Moor Crichel				
Long Crichel	31	17	14		
Didlington	19	7	12		4
Hemsworth	6		6		1
Hinton Martel	41	15	26	8	
Hinton Parva	+8				
Horton	14	4	10		
Knowlton*	1		1		
Petersham	11		11		
Philipstone**	7	1	6		
Sixpenny Handley	45	30	15		
Wilksworth	6	2	4		
Wimborne Minster	14	4	10		
Wimborne St. Giles	33	13	20		
Witchampton	24	6	18	1 Thane	

Small points can be made here. Although the Domesday Survey is a remarkable compilation of information it does not lend itself easily to a project aiming to record details about occupation of villages. Frequently individual villages were mentioned only as part of a manor, a unit of rural organisation which could include several villages.

The Domesday Commissioners simplified the diversity of peasant categories into four classes only. Slaves servi - this was the lowest class and slaves had no rights but were subject to work at will. The

other three categories were of free men. The Cottager and Bordar or Smallholder drawn together as a single category, lived on the land of the lord or one of the more prosperous Villeins. They had a toft (a homestead) and a croft (a small piece of arable land) but did not have a full share in the village fields, their portion usually being less than a virgate (approximately a 30 acre holding which was just sufficient to sustain a peasant and his household).

On the other hand, the Villein or Villanus was a villager with full holding or share of the village farm lands or messuage (house & appropriate land). Some were tied to an estate with burdens and could not freely sell land but at least they could keep money they earned and their possessions; others were even more firmly tied constrained with heavy labour services. In either case a villein tenement passed from father to son.

* The figures refer only to two hides (240 acres) in Knowlton, not the entire village. In another section of the Domesday Book Knowlton appears as part of a manor held by the King inhabited by 30 villagers, 30 smallholders, 1 cottager & 8 slaves.

** These households are recorded in the Domesday book as belonging to Wimborne St. Giles, but in the notes are identified as part of Philipstone.

The last group or category is not found in Dorset since it was confined to areas which had fallen under Scandinavian influence or Danelaw and was mainly in the north east of the country. Sokemen or Socmen had more freedom than Villeins in that they could sell land freely and were economically independent but they were practically on a par with villani as far as the size of their holdings was concerned. From Table A it can be seen that villages of our survey were occupied mainly by the households of the Villagers and Smallholders or Bordars. Some idea can be gained of the size of village population, provided that it is remembered that only farm workers are mentioned in Domesday and there would have been craftsmen in each village too.

Table B. Land Ownership - Number of chief tenants holding land under the King

Village	No of land owners	Details
Baggeridge	1	Wulfric Hunter
Brockington	1	Godric
Moor Crichel		
Long Crichel	2	Alulf, William of Eu
Little Crichel		
Didlington	1	St. Mary's Church Wilton
Hemsworth	2	Humphrey the Chamberlain, Count of Mortain – sublet to Hubert
Hinton Martel	7	Priest; Priest; Bishop of Liseu; Priest; Wulfric;
Hinton Parva		Wimborne Church; Bishop Maurice
Horton	1	Horton Church
Knowlton	2	Count of Mortain
Petersham	2	Odo, Isolde
Sixpenny Handley	3	St. Mary's Church, Shaftsbury Abbey, and two Free Englishmen
Wilksworth	2	Doda; Aethelrun
Wimborne Minster	3	King; Earl of Salisbury; Odo the treasurer.

Wimborne St. Giles	6	King; St. Mary's Cranborne; Wilton Abbey; William Chernet,
		Wulfgeat; Harvey the Chamberlain
Witchampton	2	Queen Matilda; Count of Montain – sublet to Hubert

The villages in the study were in four different Hundreds, which were mini Shires or units of government administration originally extending to over a hundred hides apiece (1200 acres) encompassing several villages. By about 1000 A.D. the Shire had become a financial unit as well as judicial centre.

The four Hundreds were:

SIXPENNY HANDLEY	Sixpenny Handley.
CRANBORNE	Wimborne St. Giles
	Hemsworth Witchampton
KNOWLTON	Baggeridge
	Brockington Long Crichel Knowlton Philipstone
BADBURY	Moor Crichel
	Didlington Hinton Martel Horton Petersham Wilksworth Wimborne Minster

Land in some of the villages was directly held by the King and served to conceal the real population figures, as it is impossible to disentangle information such as “Wimborne Minster, Shapwick, Moor Crichel and Wimborne St. Giles occupied by 63 villagers, 68 small holders and 7 cottagers were held in lordship by the King”. What portion of these householders should be added to the details given in Table A for Wimborne Minster, Wimborne St. Giles and the tantalising empty boxes alongside the name of Moor Crichel?

Major land owners under the King were the Bishop of Lisieu St Mary's Church, Cranborne, (Wimborne St Giles); Horton Abbey (Horton); Shaftesbury Abbey (Sixpenny Handley); Wilton Abbey (Didlington, Wimborne St. Giles); The Count of Witchampton, Knowlton; The Count of Mortaine (Hemsworth, Witchampton, Knowlton, Brockington); William of Eu (Long Crichel); Aiulf the Chamberlain (Long Crichel); Humphry the Chamberlain (Hemsworth); Hugh of Ivry (Petersham); wife of the son of Grip (Wimborne St. Giles; Isolde (Petersham); King's Thanet (Wimborne St. Giles). They in turn might sublet parts of their land to others, Witness Table B, land ownership.

In a consideration of the villages it is possible to see some interesting points of divergence. There is a rough relationship between the size and value of holdings three categories can be identified.

The largest land holdings were at Long Crichel, Hinton Martel and Sixpenny Handley.

At Long Crichel 16 hides, approximately 1920 acres of land, were divided between William of Eu, the land owner of 12 hides and Aiuf the Chamberlain. On William's land there were 20 free inhabitants and their households and 11 slaves. Between the villagers and smallholders had land for four ploughs while William's land required 11 ploughs; conversely there was comparatively little meadow land, pasture and woodland. The value of the holdings had increased over time by 50% from £10 to £15. Aiuf's land was more valuable too, 65/8 instead of 40/-. He retained enough arable land to occupy three ploughs with the aid of 2 slaves, while 4 villagers and 7 smallholders had land for half a plough. Much of this acreage was meadow, pasture and woodland and there was a mill paying 20/- in his holding.

The land of Hinton Martel (22 hides) and Sixpenny Handley (24 hides) was divided between many more owners – six at Hinton Martel and three at Sixpenny Handley and in both places there were large tracts of arable land for ploughing, enough to occupy 41 and 45 villagers and smallholders respectively, with the addition of 4 slaves at Sixpenny Handley. Attached to Hinton Martel was considerable acreage of meadow, pasturage and woodland. The mill paid 10/- and the entire holding was valued at £23:14:6. Interestingly 8 Burgesses are mentioned as living at Hinton Martel. Despite its larger acreage Sixpenny Handley did not have the same value as Hinton Martel as it was worth just £12 – perhaps the limited meadow and woodland had some effect.

The next group of villages was situated in much more confined land holdings, six hides of 720 acres at Didlington, seven at Horton, ten and a half at Wimborne St. Giles and six and two thirds at Witchampton. Didlington and Horton had but one landowner each, in both cases the Church – Wilton Abbey and Horton Church, while Wimborne St. Giles could boast 5 landowners (2 Church and 3 Lay) and Witchampton two, both lay. Population and land value were lower in this group. Didlington was inhabited by 19 smallholders or villagers and 4 slaves worked the land too with 9 ploughs between them. Relatively high meadow and land acreage sat alongside small amounts of pasture and woodland. The mill paid 12/6 and the holding was valued at £7.

Horton was of less value at £4 even though 14 villagers or smallholders and three slaves worked arable land for ten ploughs. Nor was there much meadow, pasture or woodland although there were two mills paying 15/-. A large slump in the value of most of the ten and a half hides at Wimborne St. Giles was recorded at Domesday, valued at 15/- instead of £2:0:0 but Harvey the Chamberlain's land hand shown a phenomenal increase from 30/- to 50/- in total 13 villagers, 20 smallholders and 10 slaves found a living here with the use of 18 ploughs on arable land and some meadow and woodland. The two and one third mills paid 10s.7d.

The last village in this group was Witchampton; its six and two thirds hides were divided between two landowners. Unusually the Domesday Survey records that the 5 villagers and 15 smallholders on the land of Queen Matilda shared a holding of two hides and 1 virgate – a total of about 270 acres and had two ploughs between them. Presumably the rest of her holding was worked by two slaves and six ploughs. The moderate amount of meadow, pasture and woodland brought the value of the land to 100/-. Not only was there a mill paying 10/- here but two cows, two pigs and 40 sheep appear in the record. Hubert had just two hides, with two and a half ploughs and his section of the village contained one villager and 3 smallholders. The holding with meadow, pasture and woodland and a mill paying 16/- was valued at 25/-.

More than 50% of the villages in our survey were very small indeed, at most three and a half hides, at least one virgate, although one suspects that there was more land involved at Wimborne Minster than

can be extracted from the Domesday Book. Three villages, Baggeridge, Brockington and Philipstone had one owner each, the rest two and the total population of all villages is only fractionally more than that of Hinton Martel alone. Values of the land were similarly low, Baggeridge 10/-, Petersham 30/-, Brockington and Wilksworth £1. Knowlton 25/-, Philipstone 30/-, Wimborne Minster £4, Hemsworth £4:5:0. As with Witchampton the livestock of Wimborne has been noted – 2 cattle, 10 pigs, 127 sheep and 30 goats. Knowlton, Petersham and Philipstone had mills.

Tantalising glimpses of the rich fabric of Allen Valley village life can be gleaned from the pages of the Domesday Book. A society composed of wealthy and probably mostly absentee landlords whose land was managed by slaves and free men. Quantities of arable land, manured by animals kept mainly in the meadows and on pasture land, produced the grain to be ground in the mills. Woodland was for pigs, hunting, timber and firewood.

From the research of others into the rural economy about the time of the Norman Conquest we learn more of the nature of rural life in general and possibly this is applicable to the Allen Valley communities too. H.R. Loyne paints a picture of open fields with the careful allotment of arable and meadow land, the regulated use of Common and forest and a blend of corporate endeavour and private ownership.

For the countryman the arable land was the most permanent and expensive part of the estate to maintain but there were many other calls on his time as well. There were plough beasts to keep and maintain. Several oxen pulled a heavy plough suited to long strips probably 220 yards in length, since an acre, which was a days work unit, was 220 yards long, by 220 yards wide. Long before this stage was reached the farmers talent for selecting stock for breeding, seed for sowing and hurdle making to enclose both arable and meadow land was in demand. At the end of a successful year the meadows were reaped, crops and grain gathered and the grain dried and milled.

Woodland and forests were so important to the rural economy for producing mast for swine – 30 pigs could feed under a large tree – that strict penalties for infringement of rights were imposed. A man felling a tree was fined on the scale of 30/- to 60/-, depending on the size of the tree, while 60/- was the charge of burning a tree.

The picture is completed with a scene of pastureland and common allocated according to a formula and grazed by animals and homesteads surrounded by small enclosures in which vegetables and fruit trees were grown and in some cases young beasts were kept.

Although agrarian goods were exchanged for money the people on the land were mainly self-sufficient. We can people the Allen Valley and imagine what life at a practical level was like for those who worked the land and their families, but the vital flavour, spiritual, aesthetics and psychological insight are denied us.

To return to the original aim of our research, if we are to confirm one of Heather Bird's theories for the reasons villages were abandoned at some stage between 1086-1550, we should draw together all those with one owner in 1086 because in Leicestershire such villages generally were abandoned voluntarily or under compulsion or were reduced in size. It appears that a sole owner had more power to decide the fate of a village by the way landholdings were used.

We put the microscope under Baggeridge, Brockhampton, Didlington, Horton, Knowlton and Philipstone in particular. During the next year our aim will be to find evidence of the numbers of households in each of these villages during the 12th- 16th centuries and the lot of the multi-owned villages, especially Wilksworth and Petersham which survive only as farms and Wimborne Minster which seemed so insignificant in the 11th century.



A Forgotten Vill – Ann Sims

Petersham was studied as part of the research undertaken in the deserted or shrunken villages in the Allen Valley. This report is very much a few tentative remarks produced as a background to the concern that was felt at the extensive drainage work and ploughing on part of the former vill site.

Petersham was reduced to a single farmhouse built in the later 18th century and about three or four scattered cottages. The area is on London Clay and Reading Beds. About a mile to the south-west is the River Allen, and half a mile to the North there was probably a further important water course in the 18th century at Pond Head. Mills and Ekwall agree that the Place Name indicates a settlement of Saxon origin, being interpreted as 'Peohtrics' ham or homestead. By the time of Edward the Confessor Petersham was divided into two distinct land parcels, owned by Wada and Saeward. At Domesday, both land parcels contained ploughland and meadowland, and that of Isolde may be equated with the later vill, since it contained 11 smallholders, pasture, woodland and a mill. This division persisted until the Norman period and may indeed be reflected in the development of the medieval moated site, later Gaunts House, apart from the rest of the vill. Even today Hinton Martel parish boundary, which may well be of considerable antiquity, slices through this area up to the main road to Gaunts Common.

The whole focus of settlement may originally have been as an important junction of old routes, particularly that west to Stanbridge (evident today as a track) and even more on the north/south route. Wimborne to Horton, skirting the formerly heavily wooded forested areas of Winburnholt are less liable to flooding than the Cranborne Road. An undated early map shows the existence of a village green, and this, together with a pond, may partly underlie the present Petersham copse.

Throughout the medieval period Petersham was an outlying settlement to the manor of Cranborne. As this represents an intrusion into the landscape of Kingston Lacy, it might be hoped that the lands of the vill of Petersham might have been demarcated with a bank and ditch, which further field work may reveal.

The medieval litigation records chart the rise of one particular family, the Gascelyns (variously spelt) who in true 'Dynasty' tradition quarrelled among themselves for what is apparently quite small assets in Petersham. In 1306, for example, Isabella Gascelyn contested William Gascelyn for the ownership of just one third of a messuage and one carrucate (De Banco Rolls).

The records also show that Petersham was regarded as a vill with messuages and tenements under a 'capellanus' (1217) The vill continued to have attached to it both ploughland and especially important meadow land. Mick Aston has underlined the importance of meadow land as a prime factor in the continuing visibility of settlement. As already mentioned, some of the land contested in the 13th and 14th centuries is apparently very small land parcels, and this may suggest strips in open fields. References elsewhere to the manor of Cranborne describe three-field systems.

Although probably highly inaccurate, the Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1327 and 1332 both show 19 taxed individuals, presumably the heads of households. This number may be regarded as a minimum, since, in the case of the later date, litigation survives concerning two characters who were clearly not poor, attest they came from Petersham, yet do not appear on the Cal. Close Rolls Edward 111, page 527, Cal. Inq. Post Mortem, vol. 7 No 535. Compared to the other local settlements the

returns seem to suggest a relatively poor vill on the eve of the Black Death, but still persisting and even being referred to in 1375 as the "manor of Petersham", sending 10 marks annually to the King.

Hutchins charts various landowners through the 14th and 15th centuries, until the manor and demesne lands were bought by William Russell of Barnsley in 1631. The Hearth Tax returns of 1637 again suggests a recognisable community with ten named individuals and 13 exempted hearths, which probably represents some 16 cottages.

The purchase of Petersham manor and lands by Sir Richard CarR Glyn in 1785, subsequent land exchange and consolidation by neighbouring land owners, together with emparkment around Gaunts House, was clearly a watershed in the history of the settlement. Was this another case of removal of cottages 'cluttering' up the hallowed cartilage and splendid entrance of a great estate? Was Petersham Farm, dating from this period, built as a dwelling for the farm manager much as had been done at Kingston Lacy only a few miles to the south-west.

Much further work needs to be done to suggest the later history of Petersham, but the evidence from the Tithe map does point to a linear settlement along the eastern side of Chalbury Road right up to beyond the present estate entrance, and again up to beyond the present Petersham Farm. Obviously not all these areas may have been occupied at the same time. Some "humps and bumps" survive in this area today, and it was across one of these fields that an intrepid E.D.A.S. field walking team got to work.

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Horton, Early History - John Day

Horton, the “muddy settlement” is a name of Saxon origin.

Little is known about the early historical period of Horton. It is classified by Goode as a deserted village, meaning what we see today is post medieval buildings and to all intents and purposes earlier buildings have disappeared, either destroyed or now only found underground. Other deserted villages are not far away. Brockington, a few miles east is represented by humps and bumps in a field. Knowlton, by a deserted church in the middle of a bank and ditch henge monument and sunken pathways and house platforms is nearby. Further ploughed out henges are in adjacent fields. Baggeridge, or Baggeridgeestrete as it was once called is only identified by a scatter of pieces of pottery (EDAS field walking project) and extant medieval documents give identification of early landowners of the Knowlton area.

Horton parish lies in the Allen Valley, on the south side of the Allen River and approximately midway between Cranborne and Wimborne. Cross roads, marking routes from each direction of the county are situated north-west in the parish, close to the River Allen. The market town of Wimborne is about 7 miles south-west, the road traversing from Cranborne through the Horton cross roads and running parallel to the river. The Cranborne-Wimborne Road is of Saxon origin. There are numerous prehistoric monuments between the road and river. Standing at the cross-roads is the Horton Inn, built in the 1800's. Until the 1940's the road from the Gussage villages in the north ran close to the entrance of the Inn. To improve access the road was rerouted at this point taking it away from the inn's entrance, causing the cross-road to be dog-legged.

There are pre-historic burrows in the field immediately north of the Inn and a Tongue and Ring feature in the field east, (aerial photo by the author) and a scatter of pre-historic flint and Verwood pottery shards. In a garden in the centre of the village two pits were excavated that had been part of a circle of pits, identified by Martin Green as Neolithic. Lying across the infill of these pits were Saxon and medieval shards. Also lying across the infill were burials, demonstrating this area was once part of the cemetery of the Parish Church. During the Second World War, the metal fence bordering house from the church was removed for making armaments. Post Second World War, the fence was replaced further back into the cemetery to make a larger garden for the house of the then church warden. The Home Farm field south of the village centre, running east and parallel to the road was field walked by EDAS members, Mesolithic flint and 13th century pottery was retrieved. Prehistoric burrows and ditches are clearly seen in the heath land on the east side of the parish. At this spot we find trackways, relics of medieval routes, creating Davids Cross, a place where records tell us was used as a burial site for people who had committed suicide.

The adjacent parish of Woodlands was once a chapelry of Horton.

Horton is recorded in the Domesday Book as having been held by the church before 1066. The Domesday Book also tells us that Horton Church held a small church in

Wimborne Minster and land for two houses, another house in Wareham and a house in Dorchester. Before 1066 it paid tax for 7 hides. There was land for 7 ploughs, of which 2 hides are in lordship; 2 ploughs there and 3 slaves. The further population consisted of 4 villagers and 10 smallholders with 1 plough. Two mills paid 15s, and 6 acres of meadow, pasture 2 leagues long and wide, woodland 1 league long and ½ league wide were valued at £4. Of these the King held two of the best hides.

It is likely that the 7 hides ascribed to Horton are an understatement.

The earliest we know about Horton outside of the Domesday Book is that in the 10th. century, certainly by 970, a house of nuns was founded there by Wulfrida (Wulfhilda). Before the Norman Conquest of 1066 this had been replaced by a community of Benedictine monks which survived until the sixteenth-century Reformation.

Evidence of the existence of a nunnery at Horton comes from the New Minster, Winchester; the entry “Wulfhilda abbess of the nunnery of Horton”, in a list of illustrious women, probably compiled about 1020.

Goscelin of St. Bertin, a monk of Canterbury, wrote a life of St. Wulfhilda about 60 years after her death. When a novice at Wilton King Edgar (943-75) wished to marry her but she refused. Her aunt, Wenfleda, abbess of Wherwell, deceptively invited her there to become her successor, but when she arrived she found the King waiting for her and her aunt an accomplice. She escaped through the drains in spite of chaperons inside and guards outside. Edgar seized her in the cloister but she got away and took refuge in the sanctuary among the Altars and relics. Edgar renounced her and in reparation gave her Barking Abbey re-endowing it with several Wessex churches including Horton, taking her cousin Wulfrudis instead.

When being visited by Edgar, Ethelwold and a naval entourage from Sandwich at Barking, Wulfhilda miraculously multiplied drinks. Following intrigues of some of her nuns in the reign of Ethelred they persuaded the queen-mother, Alfrudis, to eject her from Barking, she retired to Horton for 20 years. After the ejection Alfrudis was Abbess for 20 years, when she was overtaken by disaster induced by a vision of Ethelburga to recall Wulfrida from Horton in 993. Wulfrida lived for a further seven years.

Goscelin describes Horton as the centre of four other monastic communities, all equally spaced at a distance of twenty miles from each other. They are named as Wilton, Shaftesbury, Wareham and Hampton, now presumed to be Southampton. Horton lies twenty miles equidistant from and in the centre of a circle formed by these. It may be that the only significance of the siting is geographical.

It is not known how long the abbey survived after Wulfhilda’s death but it ceased to exist by 1031. Goscalin describes how a woman of Horton community was miraculously healed at Barking after Wulfhilda’s death. This could mean that by this time nuns from Horton had had to take refuge at Barking from Danish raids, although there is doubt whether the village itself was attacked.

In 1033 King Canute granted a farm called “Waenca’s” to one of his retainers, a man called Bovi. This farm was in the direction of Three Legged Cross. Within three years of Bovi receiving the land a Benedictine Monastery was founded by Ordgar, Earl of Devon, father in law to King Edgar. Ordgar and Ordulph, who was his son or grandson, were described as giants of men, with enormous strength. The descriptions lead one to believe they had dysfunctional pituitary glands which can create growth problems of gigantism and dwarfism. Ordulph was buried in Horton, which created it as a place of pilgrimage; Bishop Sithric raided and damaged the village, removing the bones of Ordulph to his church in Taunton, thus making it a place of pilgrimage and profiting through the gifts of Pilgrims.

In the first half of the 12th century, King Henry I demoted Horton Abbey to a Priory and annexed it to Sherborne. He did this on the grounds of the Abbey at Horton being in poverty, but there are charters

that make it look as if the Abbey had a further 18 hides in Devon and the accusation of poverty therefore a device by King Henry to demote it. The Priory survived until the 16th. century Reformation.

It is rumoured that valuable objects of this period have been locally found in the markets of Switzerland.

Various Court Rolls tell us something about the people of the medieval period.

The only known Abbott is Osirich of 1097 mentioned in the Curia Regis Rolls of 1221. In April 1283, Hugh, Prior of Horton, went abroad on a pilgrimage and while away his affairs were looked after by his attorney, John de Chegy and Henry son of William de Horton.

One of the earliest records I have found of named likely inhabitants of the village is in the Curia Regis Rolls of 1221. Alan de Gergio held a free tenement from Jordan de Malpero. The Feet of Fines in the Reign of Edward 1st. In 1280 records a Reginald atte Chyrch was granted a messuage and land from John atte Chyrch. This is a typical Saxon naming style meaning Reginald and John lived by the church, it is reasonable to assume they were related.

At Wylton, in the Octave of Holy Trinity, between John atte Chyrch of Horton, querent, and Reginald ate Chyrch of Horton, impediment, of a messuage and land in Horton. Plea of warranty was summoned. Reginald acknowledged the tenement to be the right of John as by his gift. For this John granted the tenement to Reginald. To have and to hold to Reginald for life of John and his heirs rendering therefore yearly eight shillings at Michaelmas and Easter for all services etc. John and his heirs will warrant the tenement to Reginald for life, by the said services against all men. After his death the tenement shall wholly revert to John and his heirs quit the heirs of Reginald. To hold the chief lords of that fee by the services which belong to the tenement for ever.

The Feet of Fines is so called because the “Fine” means “Finis” to a legal document sealing the transfer of land. The person to whom the land was transferred is the querent, the person transferring property is the deforciant or impediment. All land belonged to the King, which at his wish could be granted to tenants and they in turn grant it to sub-tenants, the various tenants often holding separate various holdings. So “tenants” need not be living in property referred to in court proceedings but gaining the profits.

There have been changes in the parish boundaries since the medieval period. Gussage all Saints once bordered Horton at Three Legged Cross and then, as now, boundary problems were not unusual. In the 1231 Calender of Close Rolls (16 Henry iii) states that Henry, Abbot of Sherborne asked that a perambulation of boundaries (ad curiam regis et petut perambuladtion fiery.....) be made between his land in “Horton and the land of William Pentic, William de Serland, Roland Prior of Gods House of Suhants in Gessuig”

Horton by this time was a cell of Sherborne. Church lands in Gussage all Saints belonged to the priory of St. Julians in Southampton. The priory was situated in the south-east corner of the city and earlier, in the reign of Henry III (1216-1272), had been turned into a hospital for poor people. The chapel to the house was dedicated to St. Julian bur invariably called Gods House. Nicholas de Pentric gave a virgate of land in Gussage all Saints to Gods House, his son, William of Pentric, who held the manor

of Gussage St. Michael, at his death in 1253, gave a further 2 acres. Henry de Pentric gave a moiety of wood that he held in Gussage.

King Edward III (1343-1377) gave patronage and mastership of Gods House to Queens College, Oxford. The 1620 Hardy map of Holt Forest shows Mannington Farm, in Horton, as belonging to Queen's College and the Tithe map delineates the boundaries of Gussage All Saints and Horton at Three Legged Cross. The proximity of the Horton and Gussage boundaries at this point and the deeds of Mannington Farm indicates the boundary referred to in the 1231 Close Roll is on the east side of Horton around this area.

The relationship between these two parishes was highlighted earlier in 1224 when the Feet of Fines records that William, Master of Gods House, demanded services and customs from Philip, Abbott of Sherborne, for 3 virgates of land in Brockington. The Curia Regis Rolls of 1199-1236 notes that "William de Pentiz holds a messuage and 1 carrucate of land in Gussich and Brockington and further land in Pentridge".

The Curia Regis Rolls of the second half of the 13th. century show Adam and Joan de Purbeck claiming 24 acres of land, 20 acres of wood and 4s. rent in Horton from Matilda Karentum for her dowry.

In 1273 John de Ponte gave lands in Horton, Brockhampton and Shapwyk to Cecilia Mechua. For this she was responsible to him for all services that went with the land and paid him 1d. yearly. Although the records read as if John de Ponte was the landowner the Close Roll of 1231, mentioned above, shows the parish was still held by the church. Postan argues that the 12th century was a period unfavourable for the direct farming of the demesne. Unrest stemmed from the wars between Stephen and Matilda. The siege of Corfe Castle in 1139 was not far away, with disruption of central government and near anarchy in the countryside. Land was subinfeudated on both sides and travel became hazardous. This brought about a state of "farming of manors", manors and part manors being let out to middlemen. Some reflection of this may be seen in the exchanges of land around Horton. The national population growth and agriculture boom of the 13th century must have had some local effect but how far we can read this into the information available to us is debateable.

Horton property in the possession of John de Ponte is the subject of a Coram Rege Hearing in 1305. Stephen de Chavence, Henry le Clerk of Guildford, Roger de Crethman and William Guildford were accused of stealing goods (clothes, towels, brass, pots etc.) from John and Cristina Lambrok. It transpires that Stephen and his wife Cecilia, formerly the wife of William de Chelferts, rented the house, which had been the property of John le Ponte, and it had fallen behind by 7 marks rent and the removal of goods was in respect of this. The Lambroks denied they owed rent. Neither of the Coram Rege rolls of 1300 introduces us to John de Middleambrok who had a considerable spread of land in the Allen Valley. On this occasion he had summoned Richard, Prior of Horton, Brother John de Littleham, Brother Hamo de Horton, both monks, and others for breaking his close at Horton and taking corn to the value of 100s. Neither Stephen nor John was listed in the 1327 or 1333 Lay Subsidy Rolls.

Whether the names revealed where they came from, John de Ponte, that he lived by the bridge or Henry and William came from Guildford at the time of the Hearing or that the names were of historical origin we no longer know.

We hear of John de Middlehambrok again when in a series of De Banco Roll Hearings from 1312 culminating in a Feet of Fines covenant in 1317 when John and Cecilia Middleambrok negotiated with John de London of Aulton that he should rent them 100 acres land, 4 acres meadow, 12d rent and rent of 11b of pepper in Horton, Kynegston and Brockhampton. They also rented out 100 acres of land and 3 acres meadow to Walter and Cecilia de Colefield in Horton and Kynegston and 20 acres of land and 1 acre of meadow to John de Bere in Brockhampton.

The Youngs of Horton are a family that we hear of from time to time, such as from the Feet of Fines 21st. June 1316 where John is described as “of Horton”.. A Thomas Young was a Prebendary of Wimborne in 1363. Younge was not an uncommon local name. In Canford Magna a Johanna Younge was taxed in 1327 at 4s. 9d, Willelmo Younge at 1s. 9d and Galfrido 3s. 4d. In Knowlton a Johanne Younge was taxed at 1s4d. There were 26 people in 1327 and 32 in 1332 in Dorset paying tax having that surname. We have no indication whether or not there was any relationship between them. At Westminster, 15 days after the Holy Trinity, between John le Younge, jun., querent, and John le Younge, senr, acknowledged the tenements to be the right of John, as by his gift. For this John jnr. granted the tenement to John snr. and rendered them at the court. To have and to hold to John snr. for his life, of John jnr. and his heirs. Rendering therefore yearly one rose at the feast of St. John the Baptist for all service etc. and doing therefore to the chief lords of that fee for John jnr. and his heirs, all the services which belong to the said tenements. And after the death of John snr., the tenements shall revert to John jnr. and his heirs quit of the heirs of John snr. To hold of the chief lords of that fee by the services which belong to those tenements for ever.

Unfortunately we cannot identify the land in question. The rendering of a rose is a symbolic act of confirming the business.

A year later, 1317, John Young received 100 marks in silver for 3 messuages and 2 virgates in Horton, Bernardsley and Shapwyk from James de Winterborneclentone. James may have held the benefice of Winterborne Clenstone (P. Coulstock) and been the same James who in 1328 was excommunicated from the Collegiate Church of Wimborne for contumacy (wilful disobedience of a court order). If so it may have followed the entry in the Close Rolls:

...entered on the Close Roll 1328 is the response of Edward III,s chancery to a signification of excommunication from the Dean of Wimborne, Richard de Clare. The sheriff of Dorset is ordered to do justice to James de Winterbourne, parishioner of Richard de Clare, until he has satisfied holy church for his contempt and the wrong committed by him, as Richard has signified to the King by his letter patent that James is excommunicated for manifest contumacy.
(Quoted by P. Coulstock)

In Court Hearings of 1319 there were 62 cases from Dorset in York. One was Nicholas de Leybroke, who had damaged the property of the dowry of Eustachia wife of William de Leybroke of Caresbrook and Gatecombe in the Isle of Wight to the value of 30 marks. This sounds as if it was some sort of family conflict. Nicholas did not turn up and the sheriff was ordered to take goods and land from him to the value of 15 marks, having already ascertained that Nicholas had sufficient property in Horton and Upwymborne for him to do this. That there had been 60 cases as far away as York substantiates Professor Good’s contention that travellers on legal business created one of the four main groups that did lengthy journeys in medieval England. It is also interesting that there was contact between people in the Allen Valley and the Isle of Wight. While the distance is not great the travelling to the Island could not have been easy. The Leybroke’s figured once before when William de Leybroke witnessed

a deed of a gift of land in 1300 in Sheate [I.ofW.,C.R.O.; JER/SEL/87/4] and as a juror as to whether the manors of Ringwood and Winston on the Island were liable to scutage, (Christchurch Cartulary Vol 47).

A more complex land deal is documented during the Reign of Edward II (1317-18), which like the previous we are now dealing with Norman names instead of the earlier Saxon.

At Westminster, 15 days after Easter Day between John de London of Aulton, clerk, querent, and John de Middellambok and Cristina his wife, deforcians, of 180 acres of land, 4 acres of meadow, 12d of rent, and a rent of one pound of pepper in Horton, Kyngeston and Brockhampto. Plea of Covenant was summoned. John de Middellambok & Cristina acknowledged the rent to be the right of John de London and rendered the same to him at court. To have and to hold to him and his heirs of the chief lords of that fee by the services which belong to that rent for ever. Moreover they granted for themselves and the heirs of of Cristina that 100 acres of land and 3 acres of meadow which Walter de Colefield and Cecilia his wife hold for terms of ? wife life in Horton and Kygeston and 20 acres of land and 1 acre of meadow which John de Bere held for life of the inheritance of the said Cristina in the town of Brokhampton on.....

These court proceedings are recorded as if the participants are in conflict but this is legalese and the process is amiable. A Plea of Covenant, as in the above record, is a breach of an imaginary warranty or covenant previously given. John de London, identified as a clerk may have held a secular or ecclesiastical position.

SOURCES

A.D.Mills. *DORSET PLACE NAMES: THEIR ORIGINS AND MEANINGS*. Roy Gasson Associates. 1986

Medieval Court Roles read at Dorset County Museum, Dorchester and Southampton University



You Can Not Live Here (Newspaper articles) - John Day

The Settlement Act of 1662, said to be one of the most iniquitous of the Poor Law enactments, was designed to prevent paupers from moving around the country. It prevented men from seeking work and was often attended with considerable cruelty. The central provision of the Act authorised two Justices of the Peace to order the removal of any new comers who were liable to become a charge to the parish rates, provided that the complaint against them was made within 40 days of their arrival and they had not rented houses worth £10 or more a year or found security to discharge the parish from all expenses. Continued residence in certain circumstances was allowed if migrants brought with them a certificate from their home parish acknowledging responsibility for them.

Joseph Puckett, borne in Portesham, moved to Tyneham, married and had three children. After fourteen years he moved back to Portesham, where he and his wife died, leaving his children in the care of the parish. One child was apprenticed but the overseers of the poor sent the other two aged about seven years, back to Tyneham, who promptly returned them to Portesham. The overseers of Portesham had them whipped as vagrants! The court ordered that the parish of Tynham should care for them.

Records of this and other Poor Law Acts can be found at the Dorchester History Centre, information can also be gleaned from reading old Newspapers, made easier now the Local History section has moved from Dorchester Library to the Records Office. (There is also a number of classical archaeological books and reports). Reading old Newspapers can be an interesting exercise.

The Dorchester County Chronicle and Somerset Gazette of January 1830 records that at the Dorchester Quarter Sessions was an appeal against the Order for Removal of a pauper, Elizabeth Read, from Dorchester to Holwell. It reads:-

“The question is this appeal was whether the pauper was sufficiently chargeable to the Parish of Holy Trinity, Dorchester, to justify the obtaining of an Order for Removal, or whether she was considered in the light of a casual pauper. It appeared that the pauper came from Weymouth to Dorchester, with the purpose, as she said of obtaining a little money to enable her to proceed to Nether Compton, where she had a friend residing; on arrival at Dorchester she was taken ill and remained there maintained by the parish about two months during which time a suspended Order for her removal to Holwell was obtained, and when she was sufficiently recovered she was forwarded to that parish. On the part of the appellant (Holwell Parish) it was contended that her being taken ill at Dorchester while there *residing in transitu* in her progress towards Nether Compton and her remaining there until she was enabled to proceed, constituted her but an occasional pauper, and that the Order was therefore not justified. The court quashed the Order of chargeability being of the opinion that the pauper applied for relief but as a casual poor.”

In the same but later edition of the Chronicle we read:-

“Sherborne, appellant: Uperne respondent – this was an appeal against an Order for the Removal of a pauper. It was a question of Settlement by hiring a service: and the facts of the case appeared to be that the sister of the pauper had engaged with Mrs. Lipscombe of the Antelope Inn, Sherborne, as nursemaid with weekly wages, and a month’s warning. After some time she was promoted to the situation of waitress, and, at the desire of her mistress, she sent for her sister to occupy her place, with the understanding that the terms were to be the same. The court considered this agreement with the

sister to be a general hiring and the contract with the pauper to be binding, though not made by Mrs. Lipscombe herself.”

In the Hampshire paper of June 1830 we read:-

“St James, Poole, appellant; Millbrook, Hants, respondent. The appellant moved to quash the Order of Removal under the following circumstances: The pauper Sarah Harris, and her two children, were removed to appellant’s parish as the place of her maiden settlement, her husband having absconded and left her totally chargeable to Millbrook; and at the time of her removal the Vestry Clerk of Millbrook engaged to take back the pauper in case the husband should be found, and remove them to his place of settlement. In November last David Harris, the husband, having come to Poole, the Vestry Clerk of Millbrook, was informed of the circumstances, and after some correspondence between him and one of the Guardians of St. James, the Vestry Clerk of St. James, he wrote to the latter on the 26th December last, desiring that Harris and his wife should be sent to Millbrook, which was done. It appears that the respondent finding the settlement of David Harris to be a Parish in Wales, considered that the Justices had no Jurisdiction to remove the paupers thither, and two days before the Session a letter was received by the officer of St. James, from the respondent’s attorney, stating that the paupers had been taken back by the Vestry Clerk inadvertently and in error, and that they would be returned to St. James. They were returned the following day, and David Harris was also sent out of the respondent’s parish. It was contended by the respondent’s counsel that the Vestry Clerk was not an officer connected with the management of the poor: that he had proceeded without the authority of the churchwardens and overseers of the poor, and consequently that they were not bound by his acts. The court quashed the Order with common costs.”

The Dorset County Chronicle & Somerset Gazette of February 1830 for instance has an intriguing report of a different subject, headed “Mysterious Circumstances”

“The village of Wormsley and Tinsdale in this County have been thrown into considerable agitation, by the following shocking event. A married woman has been in the habit of going daily to discharge her domestic duties in the house of a gentleman and lady, who reside at a distance of some two miles, and her husband, it is said, left her home about the same hour to fetch her. In the morning the body of the poor woman was found about midway between the two houses, with evidence of violence on her clothes and person. A Coroner’s Inquest has been held on the body, which returned a verdict of ‘Accidental Death’. This verdict has given great dissatisfaction in the neighbourhood. It seems she had eight shillings and fourpence in her pocket which was left untouched: but a loaf of bread she had bought and was taking home, was broken, and a half taken away.”

This report begs a lot of questions. How comprehensive was it? Would a more comprehensive one have answered some of these questions? Where was the husband the previous day? Had he raised the alarm she had disappeared? What were the details of the injuries? Was there any evidence it was an attack by an animal or evidence of an instrument? Was the missing half of the loaf sign of animal activity that may or may not have something to do with her death. Was the missing half anything to do with a starving pauper who may or may not have been involved in her death? Was it an attempt by a murderer to put the police off his track?

The style of writing is itself of interest. Reading the original Inquest documents may reveal a clearer picture but ‘Accidental Death’ seems an inappropriate verdict.

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Parish Records - Pam Bunting & John Day

This article is part of a proposed longer one on the archives of the Dorchester History Centre. It is aimed towards people who have no experience of using the archives but intend doing so. Of great importance is to have a clear idea what one wishes to research, remember to have plenty of note paper and that pencils only are allowed. This resume of the way the contents of original parish record documents are indexed gives no more than a flavour of the process. This flavour gives a hint of the number and variety of documents available. We record only the indexes and not the content they refer to. We state without hesitation the most valuable part of the History Centre is the knowledgeable and eager to help archival staff and we appreciate the mountainous task they undertook in creating the catalogues and document retrieval system. It is opportune at this stage to applaud the Dorset Family History Society who have transcribed a vast number of original documents. This article confines itself to the indexes of the Parish Records.

The Dorset History Centre contains many documents and information that are valuable to the archaeological researcher particularly the tithe maps catalogued in the parish records.

The Dorset History Centre (formerly the Dorset Records Office) Dorchester has an extensive and wide variety of Dorset documents extending from the 9th century. These are catalogued into different groups; the most commonly used are probably the Parish Records. The catalogues are kept in different coloured binders, to help identify the separate groups. The Parish Records are indexed in 58 red binders, kept in the Search Room. Some binders contain a list of extant parish records of just one parish, such as that for Beaminster others contain a varied number, some as many as 12 parishes. There is no way of knowing how many documents have been destroyed. In Moreton for instance the catalogue index says “1741 A description of a fire on 16th July which consumed the parsonage, ten other houses and destroyed an earlier register”. Parish fires are known to have destroyed parish records as fire was not an unusual occurrence as the history of Dorchester, Blandford and many small villages tell us. The catalogues refer to many such instances such as Cranborne “1713 paid to the sufferers of the fire at Blandford”, and in 1718 “memo on fire at Long Crichel”.

Some documents are in private hands but not all these are known about. Some were removed in dubious circumstances, such as at Osborne in 1807 when indexed we read “the Revd. West who was Curate to serve Osborne church sent a man and took away an old Print Bible and Castletown Bible out of the church and carried it away which gave the parishioners great discontent. The 1806-1836 Minterne Magna Account Book includes within it: “note on Levi Groves perpetual overseer who destroyed or kept all the old parish books”. Such action may be motivated by some deep religious feeling or that the official after years of unpaid devotion to his role felt that the property was his. A totally different episode is a record 1813-1839 for Littlebredy. “1 vol of list of marriages part of which was used as a bogus entry. A memorandum of 1947 explains that one page was removed and inscribed for use in a film of Thomas Hardy’s short story FELLOW –TOWNSMEN in 1973.

The catalogues were compiled by the archive staff and this article is selected copies from their transcriptions. Whilst care has been taken at every step errors may have crept in. This is likely because of the sentence structures, spelling and sometimes legibility of the originals, such as at Charminster in 1640. As” there hath bin neglect of Registrings of names of children baptized by reason of the warres, the curate has undertaken to put in the names”. A word consistently spelt wrong in the original documents is Apparitor, such as in 1745 in Thornford “Paid the proreter for a prayer, and in Melbury Bubb “1841 Paid the Peritor for a prayer concerning the rioting. 1s.”

Examples of odd sentence structure and spelling are frequent. The transcriptions follow the originals. In 1781 Mosterton we read, “for Cote and Apren for Sam Daley. 4s.4d”; 1781 Pd. For Laien out Betty Spurdle and Liker 2s.9d;h“Pd.For the Grave and fichen the Bear. 1s6d”, Pd.for the Cofen for Bettey Spurdle 7s6d. In Owermoigne 1726 “Gif to a man that ws bornt out of al a had. 6d”. Somewhat more contorted is seen in a Portland index, “1757 Buerraling to ded men Cast a Shore upon our Isle.....Dutey was done and performed by Fower men at 2s.6d. each man”. Shorter but equally contorted is: Kinson, 1722. “For Tacking doune the Led and waying at Wimborne and taking the Waite. 2s.6d”. In Wimborne St. Giles for 1735 we read “*for macking maggesses clothes canvas and Dreed*”, which translated from phonetic spelling reads: *for making Magg’s clothes canvas and thread*.

The indexes vary considerably in length, often only one or two words, such as Kimmeridge “1897-1900 Minutes of the Cricket Club”, or more lengthy, such as in Abbotsbury, which is combined with sentence distortion “1745 The account of the acedent happened. The Woman which was Thomas Dennis Sister was in Well, the Well before Ralph Hansford House in Street and the neighbourhood could not gett her out before she was drowned so Ralph Hansford and John Buglie had a quart of Brandy for doing what they could and inffireinng in candlelight”. In Bincombe a lengthy index gives a record of the varied contents. “Poore Lot: copy of part of Bincombe Inclosure Award (1828); scheme of management ordered by Geaville and Cains College for Poor Lot which provided flag, turf and furze for fuel,1831; correspondence re colleges wish to take gravel from it, 1887, and agreement 1898, extract from the Charity Commissioners report”.

The Dorchester All Saints overseers parish indexes comprehensively a 1729 Bastardy Examination. “Statement of a case regarding Mary Dunford (now Watts) and the servant of James Gaylard. Mary had married Richard Dunford but he became ill and left the area. It was assumed that he had died and Mary had (?married) Watts of Halstock. She then had a bastard child by the servant of James Gayland who was imprisoned because he could not pay security on the child. She agreed to Mary him to secure his release from prison (though they were never bedded. Then James Foy, a discharged Dragoon visiting Dorchester, stated that he had met Richard Dunfodt ‘in the north’. The Halstock parish overseers also claimed that Watts had another wife, though she had not been seen for some years. The JP judged that Mary had to remain in Dorchester and not be sent to Halstock because evidence suggested that Dunford was still alive.”

Of a totally different content in the churchwardens accounts of Dorchester All Saints we get the lengthy index for the years 1870-1923 “Correspondence concerning the All Saints Church Estate include attempts to raise more income for the rector to allow alterations to the rectory (1870); ecclesiastical dilapidations (894); the taking over of the charity by the Queen Anne’s Bounty (1893); the sale of the rectory and building of a new rectory (from 1895); survey of the properties with dilapidations (1895); the widening of Icen Way (1897); draft accounts for the building of the new rectory (1897); the building of new houses in All Saints Road (for 1898); the donation of a Roman pavement to the town of Dorchester, USA (1901); Dilapidations for the rectory; accounts of the estate (1918); Insurance of the properties (1919); the sale of some of the property (1921); and the ventilation to the Picturedome. Dungate Street (1920).

Every document is identified with a code.

There are a wide variety of groups of documents within each parish, such as Surveyors Reports; General Correspondence, other correspondence are grouped under the names of the officials who collated them, such as mentioned for Lyme Regis; Charity Records; Church Service records; Church Wardens Accounts.

Probably the most frequently used documents of the Parish Records are the Parish Registers. These are in three divisions, births, marriages and deaths. They total several thousand for Dorset, and like all archives many are lost, some are illegible by poor curation while in church storage, dampness and mice nibbling taking their toll. Every year copies of the registers were sent to the Bishop, some of these Bishops Transcripts are available at the History Centre, sometimes they fill the gaps in the parish originals. The earliest church registers start in 1538 while Civil Registration of births, marriages and deaths (B.M.D's) started in 1837. Baptisms, often called Christenings, when the child is given a Christian name, usually occurs about six weeks after birth. If it happens at a later date this is usually recorded. At Broadway in 1733 indexed is the record "*George Tugarrow a negro servant of Henry Kelaway junior was baptised aged about 18 years*". It was not unusual for parishioners over 60 years of age to be baptised. Baptism was seen as vitally important and a ritual that allowed the child to "*enter into heaven*". In 1895 in Lytchet Matravers a note was appended that "*this child was never baptized and consequently the Rector refused to bury with the church service*". If the baby was unlikely to survive the midwife often performed the baptism rather than the ritual was omitted, and in 1672 at Iwerne Courtney we read "*Christening by a midwife*", while in the same parish in 1896 a statement says "*Christening by a lay person*". The index for Whitechurch Canonorum refers to a baptism in 1844 that seems not to have been completed: *Baptism of Alfred Smith, base born son of some maidservant by a gentleman, it was said- but the parties disappeared during the service and are unknown to me.*

Original registers can sometimes be retrieved in the Search Room by the archival staff, or microfiches examined in the local history room. By far the easiest to read are the excellent transcripts by the Dorset Family History Society in black binders in the Local History Room. These tend to be more comprehensive than those on the internet.

Parish Registers are required by statute. Early copies of Parliamentary Acts do not appear in the Parish Records but later copies often do. Hence we find, Littton Cheny's archives' collates five of these under the title of Miscellaneous 1823-186 Act for amending laws respecting marriages in England 1823 ad 1836. Eighteen thirty six Act for Registering Births, Marriages ad Deaths with a Act of 1835 to explain the Act of 1835; Act of 1837 to alter the mode of giving notices for the holding of Vestries and making Proclamations. Act of 1837 for the amendment of laws respecting Wills, 1838 Act to abridge the Holding of Benefices in Plurality and to make better provision for the Residency of the Clergy. In Long Bredy in 1833 a copy Bill for the abolition of slavery throughout the British Colonies, for promoting industry of the manumitted slaves and for compensating the owners of such slaves. At Bloxworth in 1914 we have indexed "Home Office Directive concerning certificate issued by the French Consuls in the week in cases of marriage between British Subjects and French Citizens". In Bradford Peverell is a 1823 Act for the prevention of clandestine marriages.

Despite legal demands on the keeping of parish records not all parish officers acted with diligence, 1690 at Winterborne Stickland the index records the Parish Clerk kept the Registers up to this year very neglectfully omitting many names. It is notes like this that the researcher must be aware of, though there is no likelihood that that every parish contains such clear evidence of inaccuracies in their documents.

At Mosterton it is recorded that a Proclamation against Profaneness was made, commonly called the Swearing Act. 1s. Laws are not usually made until a problem gets out of hand and I wonder if there is any significance in the fact this is the only parish that to date I have found a copy in the Parish Records.

Dorset is a coastal county so therefore coastal occurrences in Parish Records no surprise, particularly deaths and the outcome of the sea being used as a highway. Drownings are so frequent, often including that of unidentified persons, that a special strangers' cemetery was constructed in Portland. One can give only examples in an article of this nature.

East Stoke

1806 Burial of Sophia Day, "one of 13 who were drowned on the sinking of the Poole and Wareham Passage Boat, on Thursday evening October 2nd."

Lyme Regis

1815 Mrs. Jackson "this corpse was found near this drowned out of the Alexander, East Indiaman; wrecked on Chesil Beach near Wyke, the 25th. March last.

1851 Victor Viel and 2 unknown drowned after wreck of vessel "Angelina" at Whitelands.

1852 Richard Harvey, James Black and Henry Knight, Cox "were lost at sea in an attempt to assist the passengers of the Heroine who had escaped from that vessel which sank shortly after they landed on the East Cliff Lyme.

Portland

1854 Burial of 6 men cast ashore at the Bill from the wreck of the Schooner Lord Duffus of Inverness.

1918 Faculty for the removal of a corpse or body of Louise Jean Poriel from the Strangers Cemetery to convey same to France. (We also read of a Faculty given in 1919 at Wool for the removal of the body of S.P.Ross to Canada).

There were also many occasions when people came from sea voyages requiring help. While most were seamen it was not always so.

Abbotsbury

1715 To one seaman in Great Distress. 5d.

1729 Given to 16 seamen who were Turkish Slaves.

1730 Given to 30 seafaring men who suffered great loss by thundering and lightning, 2s.

1730 Given to 8 seamen who suffered loss by fier whose ship was burnt 6d.

Charlton Marshal

1664 Paid to 2 gentlewomen and thr Chidring whch ther husbands were twooke in to Yurkey and ther houses burnt 1s.6d.

Hamoon

1724 To 7 seamen that came out of Turkey. 6d.

Longburton

1702 Gave to a poore Woman and 2 Children who had been taken by the French, retaken by the Dutch and set ashore at Leminton and a Pass made to Goe into Devonshire. 6d.

Lytchet Matravers

1796 Relieved 3 sailors came out of French prison.

Milborne St. Andrews

1796 Releved 3 sailors came out of French Presen.

Milton Abbas

1675 Gave 11 Seamen come from Dubd castaway in a ship called *John*. 1s6d.

Owermoign

1726 Gif to semen that was taken by Pirates. 6d.

Powerstock

1670 Relief of 6 mariners ransomed from Salley

Wool

1755 Gave to 2 poor seamen from Turkish Slavery. 1s.6d.

1757 Gave 11 sailors that came from the French prison that lodged at The Lane 3s.

1759 Gave 4 sailors broke French prison. 6d.

Tracing burials gives us much information about the spread of infectious diseases, types of prevailing illnesses, accidents and beliefs. Of particular interest is the belief in the magic powers of the King. Though over the years this belief slowly dwindled it can still be seen in 17th. c. Dorset with the belief in the curing of the Kings Evil. This is a tuberculosis disease called Scrofula. It is of interest to this County because a legend exists that the young King Edward VI sat beneath the Remedy Oak at Wimborne St. Giles to perform the ritual of "touching parishioners to cure them of Scrofula. (See *AROUND THE REMEDY OAK * WIMBORNE St. GILES AND WOODLANDS. JOHN DAY.*) Winterborne Stickland 'record tells us that in 1626 "Mary Woolfays being afflicted with the disease called 'the "Kings Evil" and intending to travel to London for his Majesty's touch for the recovery thereof, had not been touching by his Majesty as they verily believed".

Holwell

1682 Paid to Peter Michell towards the helping of his son to London for the King's Evil. £2

Yetminster

1677-1711 Registers form of affidavits for looking for the King's Evil.

The catalogues index a wide variety of illnesses and causes of death. Some of these appear in the Registers of Death, others are noted in the Overseers of the Poor sections and within the Churchwardens accounts.

Affpudle

1808. Note at end of burials of victims of scarlet fever epidemic.

Ashmore

1809 Pd. Mr. Haffs Bill for inoculations medicine etc. for 21 children at 3s.6d. per head.

Beer Hacket

1736 Order to the overseers to look after Elizabeth Patten who has "come into the parish with an infectious disease and the smallpox is visibly broke upon her".

Bincombe

1801 Burials of Mathew Tina and Christopher Bless both of German birth and serving with the York Hussars and shot for desertion.

Bere Regis

1886 Newspaper cutting with an article on the murder of Sarah Scutt committed by her grandson Sydney Russel.

Broadwey

1849 Burial of a railway navvy killed by earth falling on him in a tunnel at Ridgeway

Broadwindsor

1865 Burial of John Antony Brown, aged 26, who was murdered by his wife.

Chalbury

1866 Form of prayer for use during the prevalence of Cholera and cattle plague in the country

Charlton Marshal

1657-1661 laid out 2 poore soldiers that was wounded in the King's Servis.

Chilcombe

1844 William Cole killed by falling down the shaft of a clay pit

Compton Valancee

1754 Paid for all sorts of Dyet for people in the small pox people.

Corscombe

1828 Mr. Daniels Extra Bill for reducing a fracture and an operation for Hydrocele on George Catsby. £5: 4s.

1836 Edward Chubb was found dead in the posture of prayer by his bedside in the morning at his son. He retired to bed in his usual state of health.

Gussage St. Michael

1656 John Drinkwater was killed by a tree

1790 Burial of Jane Howell in the chancel amidst the tears of hundreds of people who to show their regard for so good a woman attended her to her grave.

In order that illness or birth should not fall on the parish if a pregnant woman appeared in the parish it was not unusual to put them in a cart and decamp them in an adjoining parish. There are 2 similar instances in Dorset where soldirers were removed in order they should not become chargeable to the parish of their arrival.

Hampreston

1715 Paid for conveying a dying soldier away out of the parish. 1s.

1748 Pd. For caring of the solgar in a cart to Marten. 3s.

Powerstock

1859 Death of a four year old inquest; a form of cholera from eating unripe apples.

North Wooton

1773 Note on the death of Henry Collis who was killed by a fellow reaper.

Sherborne

1578-1600 Paid to Cuff for the charges of Johane Masters being sick of the plague at severall tymes over and above the money collected. 22s.3d.

1679 Rent free house for Edith Vincent for her services during the late visitation of plague

1865 Jemina Harding age 20 this poor young woman had contracted a sad disease from over anxiety and mortal exertion at the Salisbury Training School.

Sturminster Marshal

1822 Statement that a boy was killed on the Blandford-Poole turnpike road in the parish of Lytchet by a wagon wheel passing over his head.

Bridport

Burial of Rober Knight Hearth Tax collector wounded by Bridport men.

Iwerne Courtney

1835-1880 Register gives many causes of death by various infectious diseases

1863 James Burt aged 14 burnt in the Limekiln at Melbury Hill

The indexes of the Parish Records contain a number of references to Thanksgivings and Prayers to members of the Royal Family and various battles. The following are a selection.

Bradford Peverell

1902 Service on the restoration of peace in S. Africa.

Broedwey

1797 Paid for a prayer for the victory over the Dutch. 1s.

Buckthorne Weston

1800 Paid for a Thanksgiving for his Majesties escape. 1s.

Chalbury

1864 Form of prayer to be used on a day of fast for imploring God's assistance in the restoration of peace in India

1864 Form of Thanksgiving for the birth of a son to the Princess of Wales.

There are 30 forms of prayers and Thanksgiving in the Chalbury archive extending from 1857 to 1952.

Chideock

1868 Thanksgiving for the failure of an assassination attempt on the Duke of Edinburgh in Australia and prayer for the safe return of hostages held in Abyssina.

1852 Prayer for use in churches during the continuance of troubles in Ireland.

Langton Herring

1803 Pd. For a prayer fear of invasion 1s.

Langton Matravers

1780 Paid for the Queen's delivery of a young prince.

1812 Paid for a prayer for the victory of Salaanca 1s.

Lydlinch

1780 By a form of prayer for the delivery of the Queen, this being her 13th. child & all living 1s.

1786 By a form of prayer for the deliverance of his Majesty from the attempt of Margaret Nicholson 1s.6d.

There are occasional references to problem behaviour.

Charminster

1893 Old box seats in north aisle removed and replaced by seats through the bad conduct of boys in the High Seats.

Shaftesbury - St. Peter & Holy Trinity

1625-1638 Tithe dispute. Papers including allegations, deposition and interrogatories in a case held in the archdeacons' court about tithe.

Hamoon

1719 Pd. John Mahun for keeping and carrying off a bad wench. 12s.

Longbredy

1845 Commission to investigation "the grounds of a scandal report" concerning Revd. Samuel Starkey of Charlinch, Somerset who was charged with preaching in unconsecrated places at Preston, Dorset.

Shapwick

1815 Answers and replications re a dispute between the Goveners of Wimborne Free Grammar School and the rector and vicar of Shapwick over the tirhes of Shapwick.

Lydlinch

1722 Orders of the the Minister and principal inhabitants after "great and scandalous Disorders Committed in the Parish Churcli of Lydlinch February 2nd.1722, occasioned by the Ringing and Drinking there late into the night.

Melcombe Horsey

n.d. Copy of a letter Drinking there late at night from the Archdeacon about the playing of fives in the churchyard.

Whinterborne Whitechurch

1888 Letter from Thomas Longman of Longfleet to Revd. Johnston re the Masterman family and the recovery of plate from Milton Abbey and the hanging of those convicted of the theft.

Bourton

1852 Letter to Bishop of Salisbury from Rev. Newal in response to a petition charging Newall with mismanagement of Mr. Barfitts legacy and refusal to produce the account book.

Misbehaviour of one sort or another was felt so undesirable that we read in the Symondsburry index for 1837 "Proclamation for the encouragement of Piety & Virtue, & for preventing and punishing of Vice, Profaneness and Immorality"

Probably the most frequent contents of the Parish Records, other than Births, Marriages and Deaths, are those of the overseers of the poor and other related matter to do with the poor. The following are a few examples from a large number.

Abbotsbury

1820 Memorandum that the principal residents agreed to pay for those unable to pay for themselves in the smallpox epidemic.

1824 Surgeons agreement to attend the poor of the parish for a year for £18 to include surgery, fractures, the venereal disease, small pox or cow pox, midwifery where the midwife is not sufficient without any extra charge.

Allington

1901 Income from a field in Symondsburry to pay for sheets and blankets for the poor and annuity

Ashmore

1831 Order requiring George Street, labourer to pay maintenance for the bastard child of Ann Sutton, single woman.

Batcombe

1959-1960 Correspondence between the church wardens and Glebe Advisory Committee about the Poor Lot Charity.

Bishop Caundle

1794-1830 Vestry Minutes includes minutes about the poor. Statement of conditions under which relief is paid.

Bloxworth

1802 Removal Order from Beaminster of Mary Crab an infant, to Bridport.

Broadwindsor

1828 Return to the House of Commons showing the number of Removals, Settlements and appeals made by the parish for the year ending March 1828.

1811-1816 Register of apprentices.

1834-1839 Returns naming all lunatics and dangerous idiots within the parish

1801 Order to convey John Frome of Broadwindsor to the Dorchester House of Correction after being found guilty of being a rogue and vagabond and leaving his wife chargeable to the parish.

Stourpaine

1839 Decision by the vestry to make a private rate to supply bread to large families unable to support themselves.

Stour Provost

1785 Agreement with William Dover for the use of his house for the poor, he to be the master

1797 Agreement to fit up a house for poor orphan children.

1809 Contract for feeding and managing the workhouse, including details of food.

Sturminster Newton

1830 A vestry held to take into consideration of a more proper method for providing for the labouring poor.

Cerne Abbas

1867-1868 Legal documents including case and opinions on refusal of churchwardens to publish notice of Inspectors annual meeting, memoranda on non payment of rate on Union Workhouse 1669; information and commands to appear before the Justices concerning failure of overseers to collect rates.

1758-1829 Accounts of distribution of Sir Peter Meller's charity money for the relief of the poor; the binding of poor apprentices and the education of poor boys.

Kington Magna

1801 Rules for the guidance of overseers in Sturminster Newton Division about the provision of food for paupers.

Loders

1836-1837 Rent book of the Poor House at Loders giving tenants names and yearly rent. Also its sale by public auction

Manstone

1819 Agreement to stop relief being given to poor people not attending church on Sunday

1823 Paid for cleaning Poor House chimney's 3s.

Mosterton

1833 Order of the Court to quash the unequal and illegal poor rate after an appeal by Anna Priest.

Piddlehinton

1688 Given to a man and 5 male children undone by a earthquake 1s.

1692 Given to a woman that was undone in Monmouths time 6d.

Wyke Regis

Justice Order that John Aplin a mans tailor takes into house as an apprentice Henry Jenkins and provide all necessary's having thrown him out of his house contrary to his indentures.

Cranborne

1706 Order for overseers not to receive poor persons not wearing badges.

Wimborne St. Giles

1747 Parishioners agreement to reduce amount of regular poor relief paid too certain persons.

Wimborne Minster

1827 Letter from F.V. Thompson asking that this be the last payment as the girl will soon be 12 years old and able to earn her livelihood and never trouble me again. *This is probably someone paying maintenance for a bastard child.*

Experienced researchers of parish records will be well acquainted with the amount of money given to parishioners from the churchwardens for "vermin". A typical example is in 1770 Thomas Charles of Osmington was given 1s. for an otters head and in 1772 Sarah Bagg 1s. for a badgers head and in 1782 "upwards of 220 sparrows were paid for."

We hope the reader will agree our choice of examples, a small portion of the available choices, gives an indication of the historical research value in getting ideas from the catalogues of the Parish Records. It is opportune to mention that many of these records contain photographs, Newspaper cuttings and notes on their history. While some of these notes were made in the early days of the compilation of the records many have been inserted at later dates by interested readers.

The most recent index in the parish records that we have come across is" for the sale of two silver Charles II Flagons from Iwerne Courtney, alias Shroton, in 1960. The Courts judgment on the application for a faculty permitting the Flagons to be sold due to the financial necessity of the church is recorded as is also the faculty authorising their sale. Correspondence from Southerbys includes a sale brochure and record of the sale price of £2300. This is followed by correspondence from the Friends of the Friendless Churches Society concerning the parish's decision to sell the flagons and citing newspaper articles from 1854 concerning the sacrilegious sale of church plate by churchwardens in Sandwich. 1970 photographs of 1960 were published in the parish records of the chalice, paten ciborum and cover with other photographs".

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THE END