

CONTENTS include:-

A biography of Francis Knight

West-Country place-names

The re-building of Filton Parish Church

Bristol and Avon Family History Society

Letter to the Editors about Easton Board School

Book Reviews

Typeset and Printed by
Typing Facilities
Midland Road, St. Phillips, Bristol, England.

ISSN 0260 - 2954

Avon Past 10



A.A.C. Officers & Committee Members 1984/85

Chairman:	Mr. V. Hallett
Hon. Secretary:	Mr. T. Courtney
Hon. Treasurer:	Mr. S. Bird

Mr. N. Thomas, Miss J. Evans, Mrs. M. Gilbert, Mr. P. Greening, Mr. A. Schway,
Mr. W. Wedlake, Mr. A. Jeffery, Miss G. Plowright, Mrs. J. Poppewell, Mr. M.
Aston (co-opted).

A.L.H.A. Officers & Executive Committee Members 1984/85

President:	Mr. J. S. Moore
Vice-Presidents:	Mr. T. W. Crane Mr. G. Dear Mr. G. Langley
Chairman:	Mr. R. Angerson
Secretary:	Mrs. L. Hamid
Treasurer:	Mr. J. B. Evans
Information Officer:	Mr. J. Spieral

Mrs. S. Barrance, Dr. T. Bayley, Mr. J. Betsey, Mrs. D. Brown, Mrs. L. Cann,
Mrs. V. Davies, Mrs. J. Jarrison, Mrs. J. Hiscocks, Mr. J. Lewis, Mrs. D. Long,
Mr. R. Martindale, Mr. J. P. Miles, Mr. J. Smith, Miss M. Williams, Mr. B.
Williamson.

EDITORS: Miss P. Jones (A.A.C.),
c/o Bristol City Museum, Queen's Road, Bristol, B.
Miss J. Scherr (A.L.H.A.),
21 Caledonia Place, Clifton, Bristol. BS8 4DL.

Editorial communications should be sent to either of the two addresses above.
Advertising, subscriptions and other administrative matters will be dealt with by
Mrs. L. Hamid and correspondence should be addressed to:

'Avon Past',
Avon Community Council,
209, Redland Road,
Bristol, BS6 6YU
Tel. Bristol 736822

Avon Past is issued twice yearly at an annual subscription of £3.00 (which
includes postage). Subscriptions should be sent to the above address, and cheques
made out to the *Avon Local History Association* please. Back numbers are also
available.

COVER ILLUSTRATION

(Letter to the Editor/Cover photograph): Eaton Board School staff and students
in about 1905 - 10, reproduced by courtesy of Mr. D. C. Willis.

© Avon Archaeological Council and Avon Local History Association.
The copyright of the photographs remains with their owners.

Avon Past

the joint journal of
AVON ARCHAEOLOGICAL COUNCIL
and **AVON LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION**
No. 10 Spring 1985

CONTENTS

	Page
Editorial	
Jennifer Scherr & Pip Jones	2
Francis Arnold Knight: A Biographical Sketch	
Olive Hallam	5
The Rebuilding of St. Peter's Church, Filton, 1844 - 45	
W. L. Harris	21
Letter to the Editors	24
West Country Place-Names and What They Really Mean	
Nicholas Corcos	25
Constituent Societies:	
The Bristol and Avon Family History Society	33
Publications Reviewed	
Geoffrey W. Robson, Ron Martindale, M. W. Ponsford, Gwyneth Hair, S. M. Hopkins	36

EDITORIAL

This Editorial is based on the tenth verse of the First Book of *Timothy*, a sentiment of which you are all no doubt aware. Just recently, within Avon, and, for that matter, all over the country, this quotation has taken on a fresh relevance.

The desire to save ancient buildings is probably a fairly recent one, although there have always been 'cranks' who insisted that places of historical importance should be preserved. The Duchess of Marlborough, when building Blenheim, and flattening the old palace of Woodstock in the process, met with opposition from those who emphasised not only the beauty of the palace, but the historical importance of the location of Henry II's bower of dalliance, and one of Queen Elizabeth's favourite homes.

These days, we are of course far more aware of the environment, and of holding the treasures of the past, including the buildings, in trust for future generations. Unfortunately, *Timothy* 1, 10, rears its ugly head and historic buildings end up in the hands of people who are less than wholly enthusiastic when it comes to repairing and restoring. Bristol, certainly, is littered with interesting and attractive buildings of all ages, listed and unlisted, that are slowly falling into decay, usually helped by a spot of vandalism or a well-placed fire, that are worth more as building plots for luxury flats or offices, or, more horrific, for parking. The laws, as they stand, appear to protect such buildings, especially the listed ones, whereas in fact it is difficult to get an owner to do works he has no intention of doing, and most authorities are loth to tie up their precious resources to purchase or repair any single building, no matter how important it may seem to be.

Another aspect, by far the most appropriate, of *Timothy* 1, 10, appears when one looks at the fate of many churches in the West Country. Under the law of Clerical Exemption, a church, any church, regardless of its age or historical or architectural value, can be demolished, providing a part of unspecified size is retained for the purposes of service. Falling congregations and rising land prices combine to make the demolition of churches more and more attractive to Trustees, and they can always dredge up the excuse, as the edifice crumbles before the bulldozer, that they have a duty to get the best possible financial deal for their parishioners. This leaves the rest of the community and posterity nowhere, and means that no religious building is safe from official 'vandalism' and the present mania for equipping churches with coffee lounges (an apparently vital element of modern religious worship) and plastic seating.

Not just churches fall victim to bureaucratic destruction. The Western Archaeological Trust, based in Bristol and covering Avon, Somerset and Gloucestershire for the purposes of carrying out major excavations on a vast rural and urban basis, has received notice that its Government funding is being withdrawn as of April 1985, and the Trust is now being wound up. The result is that, during a period when archaeological resources are stretched to breaking point with all the developments that uncover sites in need of rescue, another body that might be able to save some part of this aspect of our heritage, has the

carpet pulled from under them, and the consolation that their function will be assumed by a London-based body with few resources and an already inadequate budget, who will find themselves faced with an Aegean stable of archaeological sites crying out for men and money.

Perhaps the most appropriate section of the community who might take note of *Timothy* 1, 10, are those who lurk under the general title of treasure hunters. These are the least reputable sections of the historically-minded members of the community who search out antiques, often using a metal detector. These individuals are only after the loot, and you may see the fruits of their labours in many an antique shop window. The few who spoil it for the many who genuinely care for the past and for the value of the artefacts that they help to uncover, we can all do without, and I direct them most urgently to our text.

In case you haven't guessed, *Timothy* 1, 10 is "The love of money is the root of all evil".

Having said all this, there is still much that can be done. Local Historical or Archaeological Groups do great service in recording buildings in danger, and apply what pressure they can to see that listed buildings receive the care that is intended for them.

So to balance *Timothy* 1, 10, we can say "It is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness".

GEORGE'S

FOR ALL YOUR BOOKS NEW & SECONDHAND

81 PARK STREET, BRISTOL BS1 5PH
Six day opening 9 - 5.30 p.m. Tel. Bristol 276602

B. BRANSTON: LOST GODS OF ENGLAND. Thames & Hudson	£4.95
B. CUNLIFFE: ROMAN BATH DISCOVERED. Routledge & Kegan Paul	£14.95
P. S. FRY: ROMAN BRITAIN. David & Charles	£14.95
J. HASLAM: ANGLO SAXON TOWNS IN SOUTHERN ENGLAND. Phillimore	£20.00
W. E. TATE: THE PARISH CHEST. Phillimore	£14.95
J. WEST: TOWN RECORDS. Phillimore	£20.00

T. C. DARVILL: THE MEGALITHIC CHAMBERED TOMBS OF

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

NICHOLAS CORCOS is a Geography/History graduate with a Local History M.A. from the University of Leicester, where his thesis was on the enclosure of a Somerset parish (Shapwick) from 1515 to 1839. From June 1983 to June 1984 he was attached to Weston Civic Society's Heritage Centre as a local history research assistant.

MRS. OLIVE HALLAM is a retired Mathematics teacher, whose hobbies are local history and botany. She is the author of a history of the National Farmers' Union in Somerset (1971) and editor of a prize-winning W.I. history of Trull (1953). She was President of the Somerset Archaeology and Natural History Society (1977-78) and her presidential address was on vegetation and land-use in Exmoor.

LESLIE HARRIS was, until retiring, Headmaster of Shield Road School, Filton. He is Secretary of Filton Historical Research Group, of which he was a founder member, and the author of *Filton, Gloucestershire* (1981) which can be found in branches of Avon County Library.

Publications from:

BRISTOL THREATENED HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society exists to promote and help finance archaeological excavation and survey within the City of Bristol. Supporting membership is £2 per annum. Details of membership and orders for publications from: The Secretary, c/o Dept. of Archaeology & History, City Museum & Art Gallery, Bristol BS8 1RL. Add 25p for post and packing.

Excavations at Grey Friars - M.W. Ponsford	70p
Excavations at St. Bartholomew's Hospital - R.H. Price	70p
Excavations in the Medieval Suburb of Redcliffe, Bristol - B. Williams	70p
Medieval Kiln Wasters from St. Peter's Church, Bristol - D.P. Dawson et al	15p
Model of Bristol Castle	£1.65
Set of 3 Postcards of finds from Peter Street, Bristol	25p
NEW	
Excavations at Tower Lane - E.J. Boone	70p

FRANCIS ARNOLD KNIGHT: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

by Olive Hallam

Francis Arnold Knight, Quaker, schoolmaster and author, was born in Gloucester on 21 January 1852, the fourth and last child of Henry Knight and Sarah Matthews, *née* Scholefield. The house in Barton Street was their fourth home since their marriage in 1839. It was "hemmed in by bricks and mortar; not a green field in sight, not a tree anywhere." Frank's father taught him to love birds and beasts and flowers, taking him to the neighbouring hills to look for snail shells, harebells and bee orchids, and once pointing out a kite soaring above a beechwood. "My father was a townsman, too, a Londoner; but a man more keenly alive to the sights and sounds of nature I have seldom known. His was a chequered career." Not another word does Frank write about his father's life. The present writer is indebted to F. A. Knight's great-nephew, Howard M. Knight, for an account of Henry Knight's career.

Henry, the eldest child of Jeremiah and Martha Knight, was born on 8 December 1811 at Houndsditch, off Bishopsgate, in London. His father, a tailor, died when Henry was seven years old. The boy attended a Friends' school at Islington, and at 14 he was apprenticed to a grocer in the City with whom he moved to Thaxted, Essex, in 1827. In 1834 he went into partnership with his mother in Bristol as a chemist and druggist. In April 1847 a minute of the Bristol Friends' Monthly meeting recorded that he had "failed in the just payment of his debts," and in October he was disowned. By then he and his wife and two children, Charles and Agnes, were living at Coleford in the Forest of Dean, where the third child Howard Forester was born. Henry and Martha appear to have kept a small private school for girls at another address near Coleford, and then moved to Gloucester where Frank was born. The next move was to Nailsworth where Henry is described as a commercial traveller in the 1861 Census. Here the house in which they lived was "so small that it was almost possible to shut the door with one hand and take the kettle off the fire with the other, although fireplace and doorway were on opposite sides of the room." It was probably from Nailsworth rather than from Gloucester that Henry took his youngest son for expeditions on the hills.

All Henry's children went as boarders to the Friends' School at Sidcot, Winscombe, Somerset: Charles from 1849 to 1854; Agnes 1852 to 1856; Howard 1858 to 1862, and Frank 1862 to 1866. Some time between 1862 and 1867 Henry and his family moved to Belfast. After this move Frank would have had a long journey home, but only twice a year, because the school year at Sidcot was divided into halves, not terms, until 1903. By 1878 Henry had presumably retired, and he and Sarah had settled at Weston-super-Mare, where Agnes was living with her husband Edgar Marriage Brown who was in business as a grocer. Henry had by this time been readmitted to the Society of Friends. He died in 1885 and Sarah outlived him by some twenty-three years. Considering how many years he spent in cities it is surprising that Henry Knight was



Photograph of F. A. Knight reproduced courtesy of Chris Richards.

evidently a keen naturalist. The years between 1827 and 1834 are unaccounted for and might provide a clue to the development of his interest. The fact that he was at one time a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain presumably indicates that he had acquired some knowledge of botany.

Frank Knight was probably taught by his parents before he went to Sidcot in 1862 at the age of ten. Henry Dymond and his wife Edith were Master and Mistress for the first three of his four years as a pupil. He remembered 'Gaffer' with affection and recalled his "pleasant smile and gentle manner." In figure and personality 'Mother Duck' presented a marked contrast to her husband. "Her rule was absolute." Boys and girls were completely segregated at Sidcot at this time, but Frank relates that Henry Dymond was "more interested in the girls than in the boys, which, indeed, was only fair, considering the undoubted predilections of his consort." The Master took "little part in the teaching, his rare lessons being almost if not entirely on Biblical History."

Josiah Evans, teacher of the First Class, had a far greater influence on the boys' side of the school than had Henry Dymond. He was strict, but "his whole energy was bent on the advancement of his class." Frank Knight was fortunate to enter the school when Josiah Evans had reformed the old order. Howard Knight had been a scholar in 1859 when there was a boys' rebellion against teachers who had been in the habit of inflicting corporal punishment for trivial offences. Josiah Evans' "love of plants and insects and fossils, his keen interest in all scientific subjects" helped to develop the interest in natural history which Frank's father had first inspired. Games were not compulsory at this time and boys often went on natural history expeditions on Saturday afternoons. The Boys' Literary Society encouraged the formation of collections of plants, insects, birds' eggs, shells and fossils. Essays on historical and literary subjects were read at meetings held every month, and penmanship and delivery counted as well as composition. There was also a 'Budget', not an estimate of expenditure, but a summary of current affairs. In 1860 Josiah Evans had introduced a system of curatorships for astronomy, botany, entomology, geology and ornithology, to which conchology and archaeology were added later. The curators reported on events or discoveries in their subjects. A Society of Arts was also established, whose members drew, painted, did map-making and turnery and made models of ships. All these activities took place outside school hours. On Saturday mornings lessons in drawing and painting were given by Theodore Compton, an honorary instructor.

The first cricket match was played and lost in 1861 against Woodside, a Friends' private school at Weston-super-Mare. For many years the game against Woodside was the only match the boys played. Round-arm bowling was introduced about this time. Football was a scrimmage in which all the boys in the school played, usually in the playground. There were 58 boys at Sidcot in 1862. Every Tuesday the boys went for a half-day walk. There was no lack of variety in the Mendip country and they explored Dolbury Camp, Blackdown, Sidcot Hill, Kingwood, Burrington, Maxmills, Cheddar and Barwell Hill where fir-cone fights took place.

During the last year of Frank Knight's time as a pupil Josiah Evans and his wife, Mary Hannah, succeeded the Dymonds as Master and Mistress. The standard of comfort was raised and the teachers were treated with greater consideration. Knight left in 1866 and returned the next half as a pupil teacher. Fourteen was then the usual age for leaving school, and he later dated his teaching career from this time. He remained in this position for the seven years of Evans's mastership, that is until 1873, but two of these years were spent at the Flounders' Institute at Ackworth, where he studied but had no training in the technique of teaching. All the pupil teachers who served under Evans went to the Flounders' Institute; four of them had been boys in his class. Almost all of these young men later took degrees and six of them became headmasters, including Knight himself, Arthur Henry Eddington and John Lawrence. The last established a curatorship of archaeology in 1868 "for which he did much brilliant work." By 1873 Lawrence had become teacher of the Third Class and was far the best bowler in the school. The staff had alternate Saturday afternoons free and their expeditions took them as far as Brockley, Brent Knoll, Ebbor Gorge, Wells, Glastonbury, Bristol, Clevedon, Portishead, the Lias quarries of Dunball and the stone circles of Stanton Drew. For some of these excursions they took advantage of the Cheddar Valley Railway Line which opened in 1869. It was constructed by two old Sidcot boys, Francis Fox and John H. Fox, the former being Chief Engineer of the Bristol and Exeter Railway Company.

Scientific lectures, often experimental, were given weekly by the head or the senior masters on Geology, Physiology, Chemistry, Astronomy, Sound,



"Wintrath" reproduced courtesy of Mrs. C. Parrott. (see page 15)

Light, Heat. The junior teachers lectured on such varied subjects as Greek Mythology, the Fall of Troy and the Natural History of Birds.

In 1870 a meeting of eight old scholars, Knight and Lawrence among them, led to the formation the following year of the Sidcot School Old Scholars' Association. Their attempt to entertain the General Meeting was not a success; two of them recited 'Lochiel's Warning' during which the chieftain threw a plaid over the wizard. The Friends objected strongly to this "theatrical representation."

In 1873 the Evanses left to become Heads of Ackworth School and Frank Knight to be a teacher at the Friends' School at Croydon, where he only stayed a year. He returned to Sidcot in 1874 as a teacher of the First Class under Edmund Ashby. Arthur H. Eddington taught the boys' Second Class for the first year of this period. He had been a junior teacher at Bootham School, York, from 1867 to 1870, studied for a second time the following year at the Flounders' Institute, took his B.A. (London) in 1871 and returned to teach at Sidcot, being the first Friend graduate on the staff. From 1875 Joseph Lane was teacher of the Second Class for the remainder of Knight's time at Sidcot.

Frank Knight encouraged ornithologists to make notes and keep diaries instead of taking birds' eggs. Geologists made good collections of fossils from the Lias as well as from the Carboniferous Limestone; botanists noted the dates of first appearance of flowers and recorded several species previously unknown in the district. Excavations were made at Dolbury, cave-hunting was popular and Roman remains were found at Charterhouse-on-Mendip. Studies of nature and of archaeology were not part of the curriculum, but they captured the imagination of the boys in a way that routine school work did not. Half yearly excursions were made to places as far afield as Brockley Combe, Ebbor Gorge, Berrow and Woodspring, the means of transport being rough spring-carts, ten of which were needed to carry the staff and boys. On one occasion they went by train to Teignmouth where the colour of the sea impressed those who had only known the muddy waters of the Bristol Channel. Occasionally Knight took his First Class boys to Brean Down on foot and the return journey was made in spring-carts.

One of his old scholars wrote of him as "Q, that born teacher and leader of boys. How many men, I wonder, not only throughout the length and breadth of England, but all the world over, have reason to remember Q? How many men see birds and beasts and flowers and insects that they would never have noticed, but for him, and have learnt something of Nature and her children because of the love for her which he first planted in their hearts?"

Another of his old boys wrote: "There must be many to whom Sidcot and Frank Knight were almost synonymous. In school, making our lessons full of living interest; out of school, setting us the pattern of the kindly, courteous gentleman, his personality was remarkable He delighted to cultivate our tastes in every branch of natural history During the evening meal-time he would read to us masterpieces of fiction which otherwise we might not have learned so soon to love The rich, clear voice, the powers of elocution were

as rare as they were excellent. Even now memory brings back those resonant tones, now rising in declamatory passages, and now falling silvery soft where pathos called for tenderness. And his powers of humour were of no mean order and often, with the smile that none of those who knew him well can ever forget, he would bring out some droll saying in the Somerset dialect, enjoying the fun as much as his hearers did. His *bon camaraderie*, whilst it never took from the authority of his position, made us all feel that he understood our difficulties and shared our pleasures."¹

A minute of the General Meeting at Sidcot in 1870 expressed the opinion that "an improvement in the standard of education of the girls in this school would be acceptable to many of its members." In 1872 Jane Redfern was appointed to the First Class, and in her hands the whole tone of that side of the house was changed. The character of the work was altered and greatly improved. "The study of English Literature was introduced, Euclid, Algebra and the Higher Rules of Arithmetic were taught, and lessons given in Science..... The Literary Society flourished; the games were improved; the girls were taught to play cricket walks were made interesting by the encouragement given to the study of Natural History."

No wonder that Knight was attracted by Jane Redfern; he married this paragon at Stockport on 24 June, 1875. Their only child Louisa Mary (Louie) was born in Weston-super-Mare on 16 July 1879, and the family lived at Sidcot for two more years.

For seven years Knight, as teacher of the First Class, had been senior master responsible to the Head for the boys' side of the school. In 1881 Edmund Ashby obtained the Committee's approval for his plan to introduce departmental teaching, and the old system was changed. Knight, had he stayed, would have had to specialise, and this might have proved difficult since he had no degree. He did not approve of the new system, believing that a class gained much in discipline and attainment from being taught all subjects by one teacher. This was probably one of his reasons for leaving Sidcot in 1881. He may also have felt that, after so many years in one school, it was time to make a move. His parents and his sister Agnes were living at Weston-super-Mare, and the town was on the edge of the Mendip country he loved, so it was natural that he should consider settling there.

About 1857 a private Friends' school for boys had opened at 2 Victoria Villas, Weston-super-Mare. The headmaster was Till Adam Smith, who had been a master at Bootham School, York. In 1859 he moved to Woodside, Atlantic Terrace, a building later occupied by St. Peter's School. Woodside was the school against which Sidcot had for many years played their one and only cricket match. About 1867 T. A. Smith died and the school was taken over by Isaac Sharp, one of the masters, who was joined by his brothers and sisters. The school flourished for about ten years, with 60 boarders filling three houses, but then numbers dwindled to 11, and it was rumoured that Isaac Sharp was about to give it up. John Lawrence, who had been a scholar and a junior master at Sidcot with Knight, suggested that the two of them should take over

Woodside; but they were too late: a retired naval officer had already bought it.

Lawrence and Knight looked around Weston for a suitable house in which to start a school, found one called Brynmelyn, and took a lease on it. This was one of a pair of semi-detached houses in the approach road to Landemann Circus from Bristol Road. The tenants of the adjoining house, Newington Lodge, were two elderly maiden ladies. Brynmelyn School opened on 9 September 1881 with eight boarders and five day-boys. Woodside School being no longer in the hands of Friends, there were prospects of increasing numbers at Brynmelyn with boys of their own persuasion. With 11 boarders the second term, Knight and Lawrence asked the ladies next door if they would give up their lease, which they were glad enough to do. The whole block was turned into one, and a playground replaced the back gardens.

John Lawrence left in 1881 for Dalton Hall, Manchester. He had taken his B.A. (London) in 1878 and obtained his M.A. in 1885 and his D.Litt. in 1893. From 1900 to 1906 he was a lecturer at Bedford College, London, and from 1906 until his death in 1916, Professor of English Language and Literature at the Imperial University, Tokyo.

It was a great disadvantage that Brynmelyn had no playing field adjoining the premises. At first Knight rented a small field near the cemetery, but later he was able to acquire the use of a good ground that had belonged to the former Weston Cricket Club. Masters and boys played together in matches, and they managed to beat Sidcot many times at cricket, but were nearly always losers at football. Games in the playground were an annoyance to the neighbours, one of whom sent back, with an irate note, 70 cricket balls he had picked up in his garden.

Excursions were a great feature of the school; favourite places included Steep Holm, Brockley, Cheddar, Glastonbury, Sedgemoor, Turf Moor, Burrington, Dunhall Quarries, Brean Down, Maxmills and Hale Well, near Sidcot. Knight wrote, "We went to Cheddar once with three carriages, three saddle horses, and five bicycles. There was a time when nearly every boy either rode on horseback or had a bicycle."²

Knight's school prospered, reaching a maximum of 43 boys, some of whom were day-boys, while a number of boarders had to sleep out; but with the headmaster's declining health the numbers dwindled to 29 by 1896. Among those who gave away the prizes at Brynmelyn were Dean Plumtree of Wells, Dr. Edward Long Fox of Clifton and Professor C. Lloyd Morgan F.R.S., head of University College, Bristol.

In 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, there was a heavy snowfall in March. The staff and boys spent most of a day building a snow statue of Her Majesty. This was photographed and a print sent to the Queen with a loyal address from the school in the form of a sonnet, composed no doubt by the headmaster. Another print, with a reply from the Queen's private secretary, was framed and hung in the dining room for as long as the school existed. Later the same year W. G. Grace sent for two of the masters and two of the boys to play for him in a match at Thornbury.

Weston-super-Mare was noted as a health resort, and delicate boys were often sent to Brynmelyn. The school had an excellent health record; only two mild cases of chicken-pox and once serious case of pneumonia occurred during Knight's 16 years there. The first name on the school register was Hubert Rutter and the first boy who actually crossed the threshold was Cecil Gibbins. Unfortunately the register has not survived, but the names of a number of boys are to be found in the minute books of the Brynmelyn Natural History Society, later called the Literary Society. The activities of the Society followed the same pattern as at Sidcot, with curators of all the natural history subjects, and there was scarcely a boy who had not some hobby connected with one of these subjects.

In November 1890 Harry Knight read a paper on the history of the Gunpowder Plot, and Mr. Gott lectured on the Life of Chaucer. Harry was Alfred Henry, eldest son of Frank Knight's brother Howard, whose second son Francis Howard came later to Brynmelyn and stayed at least until 1896. Subsequently he won three scholarships at Cambridge, taught at the Bootham School, York, and became headmaster of Stramongate School, Kendal, another Friends' School. Wilfred Tangye read the 'Budget' in October, 1891, "specially alluding to the number of famous men who have died since our last meeting." Wilfred was the youngest son of Richard Tangye, senior partner of Tangye Limited of Birmingham, who began his engineering career as an apprentice at Sidcot from 1848 to 1852. "receiving board, lodging and clothing and £1 per annum."³ Richard Tangye was knighted in 1894 and he was one of the most generous donors to Sidcot School. He presented a silver challenge cup to Brynmelyn. On November 9, 1891, T. F. Carlyle recited 'The Spanish Armada' and Louie Knight Holmes's 'Chambered Nautilus', and Walter Flower played a sonata on the piano. Thomas Fairfax Carlyle, nicknamed Lump, was the eldest of four brothers, all of whom were day-boys at Brynmelyn. He was twice mentioned in despatches in the Boer War, and served later as a district officer in Nigeria. Louie was Frank Knight's daughter, aged 12 at the time, the only girl ever to be educated at Brynmelyn. She matriculated in 1896, the first pupil to do so.

Undoubtedly the most brilliant Brynmelyn boy was A. S. Eddington (later Sir Arthur), known at school as Stanley, who was to achieve international fame as an astronomer. His father, Arthur Henry Eddington, who had been at Sidcot with Knight, became headmaster of Stramongate School, where he died in 1884 in his 34th year when his son was little more than a year old. His widow went to live at Weston-super-Mare, and when he was about ten she sent Stanley to Brynmelyn. The minutes of the Literary Society record that, as curator of Astronomy in November 1894, aged 11, he "read an amusing paper on the recent transit of Mercury, of which he alone of our members was fortunate enough to catch a momentary glimpse." In November 1897 he reassured the members that "The comet in 1899 will *not* collide with the Earth." His contributions to the Literary Society were not confined to astronomy; at the age of ten he read an essay on Pizarro.

In December 1894 Eddington gained third class honours in the Cambridge Local Junior examination and the following year he passed the same examination with a first class honours and distinction in Mathematics. At Easter 1895 Knight wrote to Mrs. Eddington that he was greatly pleased with all that he saw and heard of Stanley's work and conduct, and went on to suggest that she might consider sending him on either to the Leys School, Cambridge or to Bootham School, York. A year later he wrote "Several people have expressed a fear lest Stanley's head should be turned by success, or by too much praise. But so far as I can judge, he still keeps his simplicity, and betrays no sign of that priggishness which so often makes clever boys unbearable." On 29 July 1896, Knight wrote "I don't think the school was ever in quite so satisfactory a condition, and I am quite sure that the work was never so advanced Stanley fully maintains his good reputation and has made very substantial progress under Mr. Landon's very able tuition."

These letters exemplify Knight's care for each individual pupil. It may be inferred that he was in the habit of writing personally to parents every term as well as sending printed report forms filled in by the form masters.

In the event Eddington stayed at Brynmelyn for the rest of Knight's time there and for another four terms, gaining honours in the Cambridge Senior examination and winning a Somerset County Council scholarship of £60 a year for three years, which enabled him to go to Owen's College, Manchester, in 1898, before his 16th birthday. H. E. Landon, who was assistant master and later headmaster of Brynmelyn, had the distinction of directing his mathematical and scientific studies for nearly three years.

After John Lawrence left, Knight usually employed two assistant masters, and his wife helped with the youngest boys. Several times Knight was obliged to part with a master who would not keep to the rule that no corporal punishment was allowed. The Knights were total abstainers and they expected their assistant masters to follow suit during term time. Masters were allowed to smoke in their study after 9.0 p.m., but at no other time on the premises and never in front of the boys.

In September 1896, Arthur Alan Brockington, who had been living in Canada, came to join Knight at Brynmelyn with a view to taking over the school on the latter's retirement. At 44 Knight's health was already failing. That autumn he was having a bungalow built at Sidcot, and he left Brynmelyn in April 1897. Brockington became headmaster, but did not stay long. He was ordained deacon at Wells the following year and took a curacy at St. John's, the parish church of Weston. In 1899 he was ordained priest, and in September that year he appointed Landon as headmaster with a salary. This arrangement lasted for two years, after which Landon became owner of the school (though not of the premises) and continued as headmaster until his death in 1923. Knight continued to take an interest in Brynmelyn, giving a natural history prize each year. In July 1902 he contributed an article on the history of the school to the MS magazine known as *The Eagle*. That year the school celebrated its 21st birthday, and John Lawrence presented the prizes on speech day, and a party of

old boys visited Knight at Winscombe the following day.

Knight left behind him at Brynmelyn a visible reminder in the form of cases of stuffed birds which adorned the walls until the school closed in 1928. His memory lived on in the hearts of his old boys, one of whom, Newman Flower, wrote "There must be many too who like myself know that F. A. Knight brought them nearer to real religious thought than any other man, not so much by what he said as by what he did."⁴

During his years at Brynmelyn, Knight made his name as a writer, contributing regularly to *The Daily News*. These articles were collected and published in book form, and enjoyed wide popularity. The first *By Leafy Ways* was published by Elliot Stock of London and went into four editions, the third appearing in 1889. Sub-titled "Brief Studies in the Book of Nature," the articles were mainly about birds. Illustrations are by Edward T. Compton, who had been Knight's contemporary as a schoolboy at Sidcot. Compton later settled in Bavaria and became well-known as a painter of high alpine scenery.

Knight's successful first book was followed by *Ilyds of the Field* (1889) and *The Rambles of a Dominic* (undated), both illustrated by E. T. Compton, the latter book dedicated to "The Old Boys who have shared and brightened these Rambles among the Mendips, on Dartmoor, and in Bavaria." *By Moorland and Sea* was published in 1893 and dedicated to P. W. Clayden Esq., who may perhaps have been the owner of the schooner on which Knight spent several holidays in Scottish waters. This book contains four articles on the Hebrides; it also has an account of a ride from Paddington to Plymouth on a railway engine, which must have taken place in 1892, the year when narrow gauge superseded broad gauge lines on the Great Western Railway. Probably his Sidcot connections enabled him to obtain a pass for this journey through Francis Fox. An article on Sedgemoor had been contributed to *The Contemporary Review* and another to *The Speaker*, but the rest were as usual from *The Daily News* with alterations and additions. *By Moorland and Sea* was illustrated by the author's own photographs.

The last of the books published during the years at Weston-super-Mare was *In The West Country*. It was dedicated "Without permission, but with love and gratitude too deep for words" to "The devoted Companion whose Rambles with me in the West Country began now nearly five and twenty years ago." This no doubt was his wife Jane whom he first met in 1872, thus giving 1897 as the probable date of publication.

Knight's style in these five books was extremely discursive as was that of most writers of this genre in the late Victoria era. Such epithets as "feathered woodlanders" or "syban minstrels" do not appeal to readers today, but probably pleased those of a hundred years ago. In a few of the articles such as the description of his ride on a railway engine, he showed that he could tell a less varnished tale. His work may be compared not too unfavourably with that of Richard Jefferies and of W. H. Hudson, each of whom had a more philosoph-

ical approach than he. As a naturalist Knight is at least their equal in powers of observation. His views on the need for nature conservation were more enlightened than those of Jefferies, but W. H. Hudson was in advance of either in this respect. Knight was fond of quoting a few lines of verse here and there, but he seldom ascribed them to their authors. Occasionally he added a verse of his own showing great verbal dexterity but little originality of thought. For example, at the end of an article entitled 'A Paradise of Birds', he wrote of rooks "How sharply cut their drifting figures

On broad wings steering home;
As they seem to sink o'er the shadowy brink
Of the sea of fiery foam,
Where the sun has flung his golden shield
Over the margin grey;
And the cloudy shore is flooded o'er
With a line of gleaming spray."

After 31 years as a schoolmaster Knight retired, to live another 18 years as a writer. His friend and former schoolfellow John Grubb owned land at 'The Down' close to Sidcot School, and was generous enough to allow him to select a building site there. A secluded plot was chosen at the end of 'The Avenue' not far from Winterhead Farm. The first idea was to build a wood bungalow with a corrugated iron roof, but his friend also owned a quarry in the Dolomitic Conglomerate nearby, and gave him permission to use stone from this source. Building began in the autumn of 1896, but was not completed in April the following year when the Knights left Brynmelyn. The family stayed at the farm until the house was ready. Mrs. Knight and Louie actually carried mortar and set some of the stones.

The Knights were their own architects and they built a bungalow on sloping ground with a semi-basement below it, which could only be entered from outside. The plot was on old lead-mining land, known locally as 'gruffy ground.' There were six old mine-shafts within the boundary of the garden, but the house, still known as 'Wintrath', has not shown signs of the collapse that was predicted 86 years ago. At first gardening was difficult owing to the mine refuse in the soil, but Mrs Knight persevered and was able in time to make a flower and shrub garden and even to grow some vegetables. She had brought with her their cook from Brynmelyn to be maid-of-all-work in the house.

Knight himself was not able to help actively; his role was to make an income from writing. The first book to be completed was *The Sea-Board of Mendip* published by Dent in 1902. This represented an immense amount of work, comprising an account of the history, archaeology and natural history of the parishes of Weston-super-Mare, Kewstoke, Wick St. Lawrence, Puxton, Woole, Uphill, Breaton, Bleadon, Hutton, Locking, Banwell and of the Steep and Flat Holms. Most of the illustrations were from photographs by his brother Howard. This book was more scholarly than his previous work which had all been in the form of short popular articles. It had involved research in the British Museum and the Public Record Office, contact with the incumbents of the parishes and the study

of church registers and parish accounts, as well as embodying the experience gained during his long residence in the Mendip country.

For the first five years of his retirement Knight was still writing regularly for *The Daily News*, but in 1902 the paper changed hands and his contract was not renewed. In 1904 J. M. Dent & Co. published *A Corner of Arcady* in which most of the chapters were reprinted from articles contributed to *The Daily News*. 'Arcady' was his name for the Mendip country he loved and knew so well. The first article, 'A Lodge in the Wilderness', gives an account of Wintrath, its building, garden and surroundings. It is dedicated to his wife, this time as 'The Gardener-in-Chief.' His daughter Louie appears as 'Atalanta', the fleet of foot, who was captain of her college hockey team, but no record has been found of where she finished her education. She taught at Sidcot School from 1902 to 1904, and married John Rowe Dutton in 1905. He had been a pupil at Brynmelyn and was a motor engineer at the time of his marriage. From 1907 to 1909 Louie was again teaching at Sidcot, and she and her husband lived in the basement at Wintrath. Her hobby was metal work for which no doubt she used the work-room beneath the verandah. From about 1902 until her death in 1908, aged 95, Knight's mother Sarah was also living at 'Wintrath'.

Many of Knight's old pupils used to come and visit him individually. Of one he wrote "And did the tall doctor, who had his share of hard service on the staff of a field hospital recall, as I handed him the cigar-box, the day when, long ago, I caught him caricaturing me on the black-board, and how I protested against the addition of a pipe, on the ground that I never smoked at all?" It is interesting to note that he had cigars to offer an old boy, considering his almost total ban on smoking by the masters at Brynmelyn.

A collective visit took place every Easter when the Sidcot Old Scholars' Association held a reunion. After a bonfire and fireworks in the school garden, the school song was sung as a procession moved along the road to 'The Down' and on to 'Wintrath' where Frank Knight was serenaded. He had written the song in 1876, and it still remains the school song, the tune being a modification of 'The Marseillaise.' After leaving 'Wintrath' the old scholars proceeded to Shute Shelve where they sang again at midnight. The first of the song's four verses and the refrain follow:

"In the heart of the Mendips old Sidcot stands
How her name like music thrills!
Long, long may she rest like a white rob'd queen
In the arms of these grand old hills,
Proud tales are told of her sons of old,
The old ship is floating still,
And her loyal crew are yet staunch and true
To follow their captain's will.

Then long may the School in our memories be
The dearest spot in the West Countree."

Knight's penchant for interior rhyming may be noted. The song may serve to show that his verse stands the test of time less well than his prose. Admitt-

edly it must be very difficult to write a school song that is not sentimental, and Knight was imbued with Victorian tradition. To celebrate the Sidcot School Centenary in 1908 he wrote an Old Scholars' Song which was set to music by F. A. Goudge.

It was as an historian that Knight made his major contribution in the centenary year with the publication of his long and detailed *History of Sidcot School, 1808 - 1908*, from which much of the story of his early life has been drawn. He was particularly well equipped for this task, members of his family having been at the school from 1849 to 1862 and himself from 1862 to 1881, with only two or three years of absence. At Weston-super-Mare he was not far away, and after retirement he was in close touch. He had access to school records and he invited old scholars to contribute their reminiscences. The result was a singularly readable account of a hundred years of Quaker education in the Mendip country.

At this time Knight was working in collaboration with his daughter Louie on the Somerset volume in the series of *Cambridge County Geographies* published by the Cambridge University Press in 1909. This is an admirably concise text-book with chapters on history, architecture, natural history, industries and climate. It contains topographical and geological maps, eight diagrams and 173 photographs, many of them taken by H. St. George Gray, Secretary of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. Knight had joined this Society in 1890 and he made much use of its *Proceedings* and of the first volume of the *Victoria County History of Somerset*.

In his next book, published in 1911, Knight gave free rein to his imaginative powers. *The Rajpoot's Rings* resembles a boys' adventure story in many respects, but it contains too much love interest to be characteristic of that genre. The blood and thunder part is set in India and in a tropical island, while the light romance happens on the lower slopes of Dartmoor. Coincidence plays rather a large part in the plot, but this is true of many a novel of the period. The author must have enjoyed the light relief of writing fiction after the accurate assembling of facts for the preceding text-book. His narrative style makes for easy reading, and it is regrettable that he did not write more than this one novel.

From 1909 to 1914 Knight edited *The Annual Monitor*, the obituary of the members of the Society of Friends in Great Britain and Ireland.

In 1913 Percy Bigland, a member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, painted Knight's portrait. Bigland had been a pupil at Sidcot during Knight's time as a junior teacher. The portrait was unveiled by J. C. Morland, Chairman of the School Committee, on 22 March. Knight owned it for a few minutes before presenting it to the school. Dr. Bevan Lean, the headmaster, accepted the portrait and said it would find a suitable abode in the school library. At 61 Knight already looked an old man.

About this time he suffered a coronary thrombosis, and for the next two years he struggled against severe physical handicaps to complete his last book *The Heart of Mendip*, published only a few weeks before he died suddenly of heart failure on 11 February 1915. The Fifth and Sixth Form pupils attended his funeral at the Friends' Meeting House at Sidcot on 15 February. In memory

of their old master, the Old Scholars' Association sent three ambulances and the old Brynmelyn boys a touring car for the use of the Friends' Ambulance Unit in France and Belgium.

The Heart of Mendip may be regarded as a companion volume to *The Sea-Board of Mendip*. The parishes covered are Winscombe, Shipham, Rowberrow, Churchill, Burrington, Christon, Loxton, Compton Bishop, Axbridge and Cheddar. The book also contains an account of the ancient mining station at Charterhouse-on-Mendip. Knight acknowledged specially his debt to William Edward Tanner, M.A., who "has searched scores of volumes, old and new" and to Ernest E. Baker, F.S.A., of Weston-super-Mare "whose generous loan of valuable works and whose masterly comments and criticisms have been of inestimable help." It must be regarded as a tribute to Knight as an historian that his last book was reprinted in 1971 by Chatford House Press, Bristol. The two Mendip books are those by which he is still remembered outside Sidcot. They were a considerable achievement for an amateur, and can be read with advantage by the intelligent layman if not by the professional historian.

A few years after his death Knight's widow moved to 'Restharrow' at Breen, where she was joined by Louie and Jack Dutton. Mrs. Knight lived until 1928. Jack Dutton was a radiologist at Weston-super-Mare Hospital. Louie outlived him and died in Bridgewater in 1950.

From 1919 'Wintrath' was the home of David Burlingham Grubb, son of the John Grubb who had given Knight the land on which the house was built. After the death of his first wife in 1918, David Grubb married Erica, widow of Stanley Redfern, who was related to Mrs. Knight. David Grubb died in 1964, and Erica left the house the following year, so for more than forty-five years 'Wintrath' was occupied by connections of Frank and Jane Knight.

During the last dozen years of his life Knight had become very friendly with William Edward Tanner who lived at Fordlynch, Winscombe, and had been a lecturer at University College, Bristol. He was not himself a member of the Society of Friends, but was married to Mary Tregelles nee Sturge, who was a member. Knight's obituary in *The Friend* was written in three parts, the first by an old Sidcot scholar, the second by an old Brynmelyn boy and the third by W. E. Tanner. This study of the life of Francis Arnold Knight shall close with an extract from the perceptive appreciation written by the close friend of his last years: "But all who knew him at all intimately must have felt that his personality was something greater than his books. His temperament was that of a man of action, and of a leader of men. He would have shone gloriously as a leader of an Arctic expedition (or, may it be whispered in *The Friend*, of a British regiment?) Yet he bore uncomplainingly the increasing weakness which deprived him of all the active pursuits which were so dear to him - he was essentially an outdoor man, even the sport of target-shooting with a miniature rifle at last became impossible. But his warm sympathy and geniality were unflinching. So was his humour: it often took the form of the ingenious and sometimes excruciating pun, but was by no means confined to this. So too was his generosity, in word, deed and thought, and his appreciation of all gallant deeds.

Probably no one ever came into his strong, sane presence without feeling the better for it."

REFERENCES

- 1 Obituary in *The Friend*, March 1915.
- 2 *The Eagle*, July 1902.
- 3 *Sidcot School Register of Old Scholars, 1808 - 1912*.
- 4 Obituary in *The Friend*, March 1915.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to thank the following for information and help with research: Howard M. Knight, Dr. Gwendoline D. Knight, Edwin and Cecily Parrott, A. D. Hallam, David Bromwich (History Librarian, Somerset County Library), Miss Holtham (History Librarian, Weston-super-Mare Branch of Avon County Library), Edward Milligan (Librarian, Society of Friends).

NOTE

Quotations in the text, unless attributed to other sources, are from books by F. A. Knight, principally from *A History of Sidcot School* and *A Corner of Arcady*.

PUBLICATIONS OF F. A. KNIGHT

By Leafy Ways. London: Elliot Stock, 3rd edition, 1889.
Idylls of the Field. London: Elliot Stock, 1889.
Rambles of a Dowager. London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co. n.d.
By Moorland and Sea. London: Elliot Stock, 1893.
In the West Country. Bristol: W. Crofton Hemmons, n.d.
The Sea-Board of Mendip. London: Dent, 1902.
A Corner of Arcady. London: Dent, 1904.
A History of Sidcot School. London: Dent, 1908.
Somerset. (Cambridge County Geographies). Cambridge: C.U.P., 1909 assisted by Louie M. (Knight) Dutton.
The Rajpoot's Rings. London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1911.
The Heart of Mendip. London: Dent, 1915.

OTHER PUBLISHED SOURCES

E. Winifred Newman, ed. *Sidcot School Register of Old Scholars 1808 - 1912*. 1919.
Mary D. Blaschko, ed. *Sidcot School Register of Old Scholars 1808 - 1950*. 1958.
The Island (Sidcot School Magazine), July 1913, April 1915.
Crookford's Clerical Directory, p. 182, 1927.
Obituary, *Weston Mercury*, 20 February 1915.
Obituary, *The Friend*, 12 March 1915.
Obituary, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, 61, 1915.
John Bailey in 'Round About', *Weston Mercury*, 14 October 1983.

MS SOURCES IN WESTON-SUPER-MARE BRANCH OF AVON COUNTY LIBRARY.
F. A. Knight. Letters to Mrs. Edlington. Easter 1895, April 1896, July 1896.
Editorial & articles by F. A. Knight and H. E. Landon, *The Eagle*. (Brynmelyn School Magazine), July 1902.
Minutes of Brynmelyn Literary Society, 1890 - 1897.

MS SOURCES IN POSSESSION OF THE WRITER

Howard M. Knight. Memorandum on Henry Knight (1811-1885) 26 September 1983.
F. A. Knight. Letter to H. E. Landon, 15 April 1896.
Copy of Entry of Death of Francis Arnold Knight. 11 October 1983.

FOR ALL THOSE ENTHUSIASTIC
AMATEURS INTERESTED IN
LOCAL HISTORY

EXPLORING LOCAL HISTORY

OFFERS A PLATFORM,
INFORMATION, REPORTS,
PHOTOGRAPHS, LETTER,
FEATURES, ETC.
EVERY MONTH

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION
£9.50 (inc. postage)

PLEASE SEND YOUR CHEQUE/
POSTAL ORDER TO

EXPLORING LOCAL HISTORY
ELMCREST PUBLISHING
MAGGS HOUSE
78 QUEENS ROAD
CLIFTON
BRISTOL
BS8 1QX

THE REBUILDING OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH, FILTON, 1844 - 45

by W. L. Harris

When Joseph Leech, the Bristol Church-Goer, arrived at Filton Parish Church on Sunday 26th April 1845 on one of his Rural Rides to attend morning service, he was disappointed, and greatly surprised, to find it in ruins. Except for the tower, all that remained were "two-thirds of the chancel and half the Ten Commandments".¹ The remaining half was soon to go, and he noticed that the board depicting the Royal Coat of Arms had disappeared. Gone was the small, low fabric, consisting of a nave and a semi-transept projecting on the south side, which was how Bigland had described it towards the end of the previous century.²

By the 1840's, the building was in such a state of disrepair that the Rector, James Bedford Poulden, commissioned the architect John Hicks of Corn Street, Bristol, son of James Hicks, vicar of the nearby parish of Rangeworthy, to rebuild it. John Hicks, born in 1815, had built St. John the Evangelist, in Apley Road, Clifton, in 1841; had assisted with other ecclesiastical structures and repairs, and throughout his life specialised in church restoring and rebuilding.

In August 1844, a Vestry Meeting agreed to a Church Rate of 3s 4d. in the pound, payable over five years, to enable the sum of £200 to be borrowed at 5% interest, to help to pay for the new structure at Filton. Demolition began later in the year, the only parts not pulled down being the tower, a hagioscope leading from the south transept, with nearby portions of the chancel and transept. Under the south transept, eight feet below floor level, was found a stone coffin, now to be seen in the churchyard. It had no inscription, and on being opened contained only dust; but it may once have held the remains of the founder of the church.

During the demolition some herring-bone work was discovered, suggesting that a very early church, possibly Anglo-Saxon, stood on the site.

F. W. Potts Hicks, writing in 1949, when vice-president of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, said the church was Perpendicular.³ He described the tower as Early English, but it has been suggested that its base, built of local stone and having no buttresses, may also be of the earlier date. The door in the west wall of the tower, below the Decorated window, was blocked up, but was re-opened during the enlargement in 1961.

Dr. C. J. P. Beatty, of Oslo University, who is particularly interested in the work of John Hicks, visited the church recently to look at the 1844/5 rebuilding in pursuance of his researches. He was pleased to learn of the re-use of much of the stone from the former building, which Pevsner dates at c.1340,⁴ and of the oak beams and doors from St. George's Church, Kingswood, not used when that church was rebuilt; a practice, he said, Hicks continued in subsequent work. The new church was built on the old foundations, except for the extension of



Reproduced courtesy of Filton Parish Council.

the chancel, and a new south aisle and porch. The floor was raised some two or three feet above the old one, which was often wet. That floor, with a number of flagstones marking the burial places of former inhabitants of the village, remains largely intact below.

In the building erected by Hicks may still be seen the fine coxels in the chancel and nave. Those in the former depict Jesus, Mary, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John and St. Barnabas. Among those in the latter are, according to W. J. Robinson in *West Country Churches*, representations of St. Aidan, St. Columba, St. Hilda, St. Augustine, St. Aldhelm and the Venerable Bede, all of whom were eminent in the early English Church.⁵ The font and a panel of the pulpit of Hicks' time also remain. He built a parapet to the tower, above the 14th century gargoyles, which was discarded in 1961. The total cost of the rebuilding was £760, of which the parish contributed £200, £221 was raised by subscriptions, and the remaining £339 was paid by the Rector himself.

The new church in the Diocese of Gloucester and Bristol, "erected", reported *Felix Farley's Journal* in October 1845, "at Filton, Gloucestershire, upon the site of the old church, one of the most ancient on record in the Diocese", was finished in time for the opening service on Tuesday 28th October 1845, when the sermon was preached by the Rev. S. E. Day, vicar of St. Philip and St. James, Bristol. For a short time the new and enlarged church was used as the Barracks Chapel for Horfield Barracks, with the Rev. J. B. Poulsen officiating as military chaplain.

Some five years later, having in the meantime built the vicarage at Rangeworthy, John Hicks moved to Dorchester, Dorset, where he continued his profession, working largely at church restoring or rebuilding. In 1856 he took on as an apprentice the sixteen-year-old Thomas Hardy. Articled for three years, later extended to four, Hardy and a fellow apprentice found time to indulge in discussion during working times on the classics and religion, Hicks himself, who was a kindly, educated, well-read man, on occasions joined his pupils in these debates.

While practising his profession as an architect with Hicks, and for a time in London, Hardy became interested in writing poetry and, later, novels, Hicks died in 1869 at the age of 53 with several commissions on his books. One of these was that of St. Juliot near Boscastle, which Hardy carried out, largely on his own, for Hicks' successor, G. R. Crickmay of Weymouth. While completing the contract, Thomas Hardy was working on *Desperate Remedies*, his first published novel. Afterwards, he devoted himself entirely to writing.

REFERENCES

1. J. Leech, *Rural rides of the Bristol clerebourn*, edited with an introduction by Alan Sutton. (Gloucester: Alan Sutton 1982), 273-4.
2. R. Bigland, *Historical, monumental and genealogical collection relative to the County of Gloucester*, Vol. 1, 1792.
3. F. W. Porto Hicks. Letter to the Librarian of Bristol Aeroplane Company, January 1949.
4. N. Pevsner, *North Somerset and Bristol* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958).
5. W. J. Robinson, *West Country churches*, Vol. II, (Bristol Times and Mirror, 1914), 105-107.

Avon Present

We have an original and unique
selection of presents for everyone

BRISTOLGUILD

68/70 Park Street, Bristol 1, Tel. 25548

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

From Mr. Dan C. Willis (Court House, Kingston Seymour, Clevedon, BS21 6XE), whose father taught at Easton Board School, where he was "beloved as well as respected", according to Harold Brown.

I was most interested to read in *Avon Past* No. 9 (Autumn 1983) the article written by Harold Brown concerning Easton Board School (pp. 22-28).

My father was on the staff at Easton at the time Harold was a pupil there. As a young person I had heard of and met some of those mentioned by Harold, including Mr. Cooke (who I liked), Bert Veator (who later became a headmaster at Rotherham) and "Uncle Owl".

I enclose some photographs of Easton Boys' School pupils and staff. One of the staff and pupil teachers, is perhaps earlier than 1910. I only know some of the staff: starting from the left, back row:-

second from left, Mr. Agar; fourth from left, Bert Veator, sixth from left, Mr. Cooke;

front row, first from left, my father, Mr. Willis; third from left, Mr. Frankham (sic - could this be the headmaster Mr. Slacombe? Eds.); sixth from left, "Uncle Owl".

In some of the other photographs my father has sprouted a moustache. Certainly the boys don't look half-starved. They are all well-dressed, and look well - one has a watch-chain!

I also enclose the letter sending my father to the staff of Gotham (Municipal School it was then called). He stayed there until 1947, when he was over 70. I think he started at Easton in 1899. I have other interesting certificates about the teaching of my parents dated in the 1890's.

Does anyone recognise other faces in these photographs on our cover? The postcards themselves are annotated "By appointment to Her late Majesty", which could be a clue to the actual date.

AVON LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Write, for details of individual or society membership, entitling you to a free quarterly Newsletter of local historical and archaeological events, to:

The Hon. Secretary, A.L.H.A., c/o Avon Community Council
209 Redland Road, Bristol 6.

Copies of back issues of *Avon Past* may be obtained from the same address, at £1.50 per issue. Some numbers (1 to 4, 7) are in short supply. Cheques should be made out to the Avon Local History Association.

WEST COUNTRY PLACE-NAMES AND WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN

by Nicholas Corcos

Amidst much publicity, Abson Books have recently issued a booklet by Cyril Davey on *West Country Place-Names and What They Mean* (1983).

This slim volume of 38 pages is divided into two sections: a short introductory sketch entitled "The Origins", which purports, *inter alia*, to explain the historical and linguistic basis of the most common groups of English place-name elements, followed by an alphabetical list of selected place-names from Avon, Somerset and Wiltshire. The latter section is preceded by a brief note on the etymology of the three county names. This second section of the book is the more innocuous of the two: that does not really say much because it would be more accurately described as the lesser of two evils, but still a worthy successor to the introductory section. Nobody will catch much harm from reading it, but on the other hand it is difficult to see what they would gain by doing so. The etymologies of the names (as far as these are known) are not given, only meanings: as far as the latter are concerned, we are simply expected to take Mr Davey's word that his explanation is the right one. Despite the author's denial (on p.1) that his work is "not a mere transcript of" Ekwall's *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, it is clear that 95% of it is just that.¹ Consequently, many of the meanings given by Mr Davey will be correct simply because they have been lifted straight out of Ekwall, the interested reader would do far better to dispense with Mr Davey's book and search out a copy of the Oxford volume, where he will find that etymologies are given.

As for Mr Davey's word-list itself, although generally solid enough as far as it goes, there are also lapses and questionable assertions; these do not reflect upon Ekwall, whose dictionary was last revised in 1960, since when there has been something of a revolution in English place-name studies. Rather, these errors bespeak an obvious lack of even the most basic research on the part of Mr Davey, a manifest ignorance of probably all the modern work that has had such a profound effect on specialist thinking since the early 1960's, and a general shoddiness of approach most evident in the first section of the book, discussed below.

The most serious examples occur regularly throughout the word-list because they are derived from erroneous etymologies put forward by the author in the first section, and subsequently followed by him in the second. Others clearly are simply the result of ignorance. To take a few examples at random, where did Mr Davey get the idea that St. Congar died at the end of the 10th century (p. 19)? As far as is known, Congar was one of that group of peripatetic saints which included St. Kew (from whom Kewstoke, by tradition, derives its name) and St. Ernin (or Hermin), and which carried Celtic Christianity into Somerset in the 6th century.² Congar may indeed be buried at Congresbury, but the tradition which places his relics there seems to be relatively 11th

- 12th centuries) late.³ Again, there is no evidence, apart from tradition, that Congar founded the church at Congresbury (the small abbey or minster he is supposed to have founded is actually placed at Yatton by one source), and it is worth noting that the supposed association of Congar with the hillfort which *perhaps* once bore his name is unproven.⁴

Stanton Drew (p.32) was not, of course, so named for the stoniness of its soil, as Mr Davey would have us believe, but for its most immediately striking feature, namely one of the most impressive groups of Neolithic stone circles in the south of England.

It is, though, the first section of the book, on the origins of English place-names, that will cause the most serious concern for both specialists and informed laymen alike. I make no excuse for repeating the point that it is quite clear that Mr Davey's background research has been negligible; had he taken the trouble to actually *ask* to a specialist, which obviously he did not, the book would either not have been written at all (to the great benefit of an unsuspecting public), or might at least have benefitted from the insights into the subject which *only* a specialist can afford.

To particularise: the implication (p.2) that Stonehenge, Avebury and Silbury date from the Iron Age is strong enough to mislead. Mr Davey adds the incredible comment that "perhaps" they might also be assigned to the "later Bronze Age"! As far as the latter assertion can be said to be even partially true, there is of course no "perhaps" about it. Silbury is not of Bronze Age date at all, but probably late Neolithic; so is Avebury, and so is the earliest phase of Stonehenge, although at the latter sporadic building activity continued all the way through from this period up to the later part of the Early Bronze Age (roughly from 2750 to 1500 B.C.).⁵

Caesar's invasions of 55 and 54 B.C. did not "begin the conquest of Britain"; (p.2) they actually had very little real effect in any respect, apart from that of bringing Britain sharply to the attention of the Roman world.⁶ Vespasian's campaign in the West Country with Legio II Augusta was probably over by A.D. 47 at the latest, having of course begun not long after the Roman invasion itself in the late summer of A.D. 43.⁷ Mr Davey gives A.D. 45-50 for Vespasian's activities in this area.

That "the legions were withdrawn from Britain in A.D. 425" (p.2) is meaningless nonsense. The *piecemeal* withdrawal of regular legionary and auxiliary forces from the province, on a significant scale, was begun early in the 380's by the first of a succession of pretenders to the purple thrown up by the army in Britain. By 407 or 408 the process of military denudation was virtually complete, and the only nominally "Roman" troops left by 410 were a small number of auxiliaries, most of whom by this time would have been natives recruited from within the province; by 425, most of these had probably simply melted back into the indigenous population. The latter date, plucked by Mr Davey as though from thin air with no explanation of its origin, is of no *proven* historical significance: it is simply the year in which the semi-legendary figure of Vortigern, a British prince, is supposed to have gained control of Britain, by

tradition going back to the Welsh chronicler Nennius at the beginning of the 9th century.⁸

Mr Davey's treatment of legend as historical fact, giving hard dates to add a spurious authority to his case, is worrying: "the magnificent British revival led by 'king' Arthur between 505 and 538 was no more than a last stand by the old British resistance and had no real significance" (p.3). I can find absolutely no basis at all for the significance of the first date; the second is doubtless intended to refer to the account in the Welsh Annals of the deaths of Arthur and Medraut at Camlann. Even here, Mr Davey errs: the date as calculated from the Annals for the Battle of Camlann should actually be 537, not 538.⁹

The statement that "Britain became England" (p.3) is typical of Mr Davey's uncritical approach to his subject. His compression of the timescale involved for the transformation of *part* of post-Roman Britain into Saxon England is a large part of the problem. The actuality of a unified Saxon state under one king did not really come about until the time of Athelstan in the second quarter of the 10th century, although Alfred had certainly entertained the concept, and it was he who laid the foundations upon which his grandson was to build so successfully.

It is untrue to say (p.3) that the Saxons "for the most part appear to have subjugated the (indigenous) inhabitants ruthlessly". In the period following the initial stages of colonisation and settlement, most of which were accompanied by fighting of varying intensity, a large section of the indigenous Celtic population was gradually absorbed into Saxon society (a minority, admittedly, as slaves) and eventually became a part of it. There is clear evidence for this in the Laws of Ine (King of Wessex, 688-726 A.D.), which date to the very end of the 7th century. A number of these laws relate specifically to the rights of the native Celts; slaves, and peoples subject to "ruthless subjugation", would not usually expect to enjoy such special provisions, which would surely have been unnecessary had not the Celts constituted at least a substantial free minority within West Saxon society at the time.¹⁰

I doubt very much whether "in the main" is half strong enough a qualification for Mr Davey's assertion that "the Norman Conquest was a peaceful takeover of Saxon England" (p.3). A few pages on, he reiterates his belief that the event was an "almost bloodless" affair (p.8). What is Mr Davey's definition of bloodless/peaceful? He seems to be forgetting the unpleasantness at Hastings, involving the bloody annihilation of the greater part of King Harold's *fyrð* (army of Saxon and Scandinavian levies), already seriously weakened in the victorious battle against Harald Hardrada at Stamford Bridge. What of the Conqueror's savage ravaging of the north in 1069-70, a campaign of destruction so thorough that its effects are clearly visible in the pages of Domesday Book, compiled 16 years later, in the form of a very high incidence of land described as "waste" in these areas? In many parts of the region this required the establishment of new settlements later on to replace those destroyed, and the recolonisation, by a population specially brought in for the purpose from unaffected areas, of land which had fallen into disuse because the original inhabitants had either been killed or had fled!¹¹ Then, of course, one must consider the post-

Hastings succession of minor (and some not so minor) native insurrections with which King William had to contend, most being put down in characteristic fashion, and the last of which came in 1071, a full five years after Hastings, A bloodless/peaceful takeover, Mr Davey? I think not.

Individually these (and others passed over) may seem somewhat niggling points, but collectively they add up to a worrying impression of laxity which is confirmed and reinforced when one reads what Mr Davey has to say on the origins of the place-names themselves (beginning on p.4). There are so many points in this section which need refuting that it will not be possible to deal with them all here; only the more serious need concern us for the time being.

We are told that "The.....Iron Age peoples left nothing of their language behind them and none of our place-names go back to that period." (p.5). The first of these points is simply rubbish, as any Welsh or Cornish speaker would no doubt vehemently confirm. Mr Davey actually makes this point himself further down the same page! The second is wrong in so far as although we know of no place by its Iron Age name, we can be fairly sure that many of the place-names of Roman Britain are simply Latinised versions of Celtic words.¹² There are also some Celtic words, mostly of a topographical nature, which passed into use as place-name elements in the Saxon period. One such came into Old English as *pyll*, (related to Welsh *pyll* meaning "pool"), and eventually came to have the meaning of "a stream". In Somerset this element is found in Pilton, Pylle and, in our own area, Uphill. The Somerset dialect term "pill", meaning a tidal creek, is a direct derivation of it, and it is in this form in which it occurs in Uphill.¹³ What does Mr Davey see as the difference between the "Iron Age peoples" and the "British Celts"? His terminology as it stands is woolly to say the least.

Mr Davey's emphasis on the lack of Celtic survival, and the total domination of the English language in place-names, is completely obsolete (especially as far as the West Country is concerned), having first been comprehensively discredited as long ago as 1953 by Professor Jackson, and in subsequent regional studies by other specialists.¹⁴ Mr Davey asks, almost accusingly, "why..... did the Saxons not give new names to the rivers? That they did not do so is clear, for almost all the river names are British." In answering this, I can do no better than to quote Dr. Gelling, who states that Celtic or pre-Celtic names "are most likely to be the names of the greatest rivers,.... larger hills..... and more extensive forests since these were known to a great many people and this gave them a greater chance of survival than the names of the smaller features of the countryside."¹⁵ On the same page, Mr Davey, apparently unknowingly, in fact gives his own examples of exactly this principle in operation, although that was clearly not his purpose in citing them!

Specialists will be surprised to learn (p.6) that the elements *-burg* and *-burgb* "appear to come from a British word." Both these (cognate) terms are, as far as is known, purely Germanic in origin, and owe nothing to the Celtic language.¹⁶ The true meaning of Gloucester is not known: the second element is *-ceaster*, the standard Old English term for a place known by the Saxons to have been a

Roman town, usually with walls. Of the first element, probably Old English *Gleazau*, Dr Gelling states that it "cannot be derived by regular phonological processes from Romano-British *Glev*", and it is suggested that the English substituted their own word *glaw*, 'wise, prudent', for the unintelligible British name."¹⁷

On p. 7 we are faced with one of Mr Davey's really serious blunders, all the more unforgivable because it concerns an important element which in recent years has been the subject of considerable re-evaluation. Mr Davey's throw-away treatment of it is really quite shocking, and although this is not the place to deal in detail with modern thinking on the matter, a brief sketch of the main points may help to clarify some of the difficulties involved.

When one sees the term "ing" in a modern English place-name, it will (usually) have one of two possible derivations: either from Old English *-ingas* or *-inga*, which, as Mr Davey correctly suggests, indicates the presence of a tribal or kinship group, or from Old English *-ing*, which was generally used to denote simply "manorial" ownership by an *individual*. In modern spellings it is impossible to distinguish between the two types, and where there is no available spelling, at least as old as Middle English, which definitely shows either *-ingas* or *-inga*, it is extremely dangerous to assume that the kinship/tribal group meaning is indicated. In fact, in our part of the world, most names with an "ing" are of the *second* type, and are probably relatively *late* in date, perhaps 10th century for the most part. The vast majority, therefore, of names with *-ington* whose meaning is given by Mr Davey as "the farm of x's family", should actually be taken to mean simply "x's farm". Thus Woolavington is certainly not "the farm of Wiglaf's family"; Mr Davey's eye lit on "Wiglaf" from the previous entry in Ekwall's dictionary (Wollaston, Gloucs.). In fact the name is actually *Hünlaf* (or possibly *Wiglaf*), so Woolavington means "Hünlaf's farm". In Domesday the name is rendered as "*Hunlavintone*" (substitute modern "v" for "u"), again as shown by Ekwall, but for some mysterious reason Mr Davey does not include it in his category of names recorded in 1086. Another example: Mr Davey gives Puckington as "the farm with the goblins"; this is utter nonsense: the meaning is actually "Pūca's farm", as given by Ekwall. The latter quite clearly explains that the personal name "Pūca" is a nickname from the Old English word *pūca*, "goblin". Mr Davey has obviously totally misunderstood quite a straightforward etymology.

The implication of comprehensiveness implicit in Mr Davey's description of Domesday ("armies of clerks.... noted down every town, village and farm of consequence", p. 9), is thoroughly misleading: many places, large and small, which can be proved by other means to have been in existence long before 1086, are *not* mentioned in Domesday, either because, for whatever reason, they were simply missed, or more usually because their assessments were included in those of their parent manors. The most obvious example of this from Somerset is the massive "composite" manor at Taunton, which included holdings in at least fifteen places unnamed in Domesday, and which received customary dues from a further nineteen places which *are* mentioned.¹⁸ On p.10, Mr Davey again appears to be suffering from inverted reasoning: "more

than half the place-names of Wiltshire, Somerset and Avon appear in the Domesday Book". The very strong implication is that the remainder were *not* in existence by 1086; rubbish! As has already been explained, simply because a place is not mentioned in Domesday is no indication that it did not exist at that time. Mr Davey's assertion would have been less misleading if he had said simply that many of our present place-names do not appear in Domesday, even though most of these places are known to have been in existence since long before then. Most people will surely not need telling, and in *italics* yet, that "the majority of our towns, villages and hamlets have been in existence for well over a thousand years" (p.10), a fact which Mr Davey seems to consider a startling revelation; perhaps, to him, it was.....

Also on p.10, Mr Davey has the heading "Some possibly misleading elements", but the words which he includes in this category (pp.10-11) are probably a lot less misleading than others which he passes over without comment. For example, an element which has been of central importance in the drastic reassessment of the chronological sequence of English place-names appears in modern spellings as "ham". As with "ing" though, the real picture is very much more complicated than Mr Davey seems to imagine. Modern spellings containing "ham" derive usually from either one of two Old English words: *hām* (long "a") or *hann* (short "a"); in most cases these are impossible to distinguish from one another in modern spellings. However, the two words have quite different meanings: on the simplest level, *hām* can be interpreted as "village" (this is the element, apparently the only possibility known to him, from which Mr Davey derives his modern "hams"), while *hann* means "meadow".¹⁹ Work by specialists, particularly since 1966, has shown that *hām* names tend to be concentrated in the south, east and north of the country, and that they are very early in origin, in fact probably the earliest habitative names used by the incoming Saxons in this country. The element passed out of use for place-name formation at an early date, and in the south is probably very rare west of Wiltshire. The vast majority of West Country names with modern spellings containing "ham" derive, therefore, from *hann*, "meadow" an element which stayed in use for place-name formation throughout the greater part of the Saxon period, and indeed into modern times. One specialist has even gone so far as to state his belief that "there just are not any *hāms* in Somerset."²⁰

All this makes a nonsense of most of the meanings given for (modern) "ham" names in Mr Davey's list. Burnham, for example, is not "the farm on the stream", but "the meadow on the stream"; Claverham is not "clover village", but "clover meadow", which topographically makes excellent sense: the place lies on low ground on the eastern fringe of the Northern Levels. Feltham is not "the hay village", but "the hay meadow", a far more plausible explanation of the name; and as a final example one could do no better than Mr Davey's explanation of Keynsham, perhaps the very best illustration of his apparent total inability even to transcribe accurately, and manifest incomprehension of, Ekwall's careful interpretations. Mr Davey, as might be expected, gives the meaning of Keynsham as "Caegin's village"; Ekwall shows that it should actually be "Caegin's meadow", citing, *inter alia*, a spelling *Caegineshamme*, dating

from c. 1000, which demonstrates quite unequivocally that this is the correct meaning. Mr Davey, ignorant of the differences between *hann* and *hām* both in meaning and, apparently, in spelling (indeed, ignorant of the very *existence* of *hann*), confronted in Ekwall with *hann*, probably thought that it was either a misprint or an error of Ekwall's, ignored it and substituted *hām*; I would rest my case there, apart from the fact that I am unable to resist the comment that Mr Davey, when it comes to place-names, has shown himself to be a complete "ham".

Modern "ing" spellings are most definitely not "always" preceded by a personal name (p.12). Here is what Dr. Gelling has to say on the matter. "...the singular suffix *ing* could also, in the Germanic languages, be used to form place-names.... A typical specimen of this type of formation is Clavering, Essex, in which *ing* is added to Old English *clāwfre* 'clover' to give a meaning 'place where clover grows'.²¹ Last but by no means least, we have Mr Davey's explanation of the element *-hān*, the most common habitative element of all in English place-names (p.12). It is not so much wrong (as far as it goes), but rather totally inadequate for an element of many diverse meanings, which Professor Smith considers important enough to devote ten pages to alone.²²

It might be said that in one sense Mr Davey has performed a great service in providing a superb, published example of how *not* to approach the subject of English place-names. The principle on which it is based is, I would venture to suggest, perfectly sound; any non-specialist with a serious interest in place-names could have made an infinitely better job of it than Mr Davey has done, had they bothered to try. This book should quite simply never have been published: the reader will by now, I hope, have long realised that it should never have been written. When will would-be authors of Mr Davey's ilk get it into their heads that writing accurately and competently about English place-names is the province of the *specialist*? Most place-name scholars are linguists with long experience behind them in such diverse languages as Old English, Latin, Old French, Old High German and the various Scandinavian tongues; some historians, geographers and archaeologists acquire a high degree of competence in the handling of place-name evidence, but would be the first to admit that this does not make them specialists.

At the risk of repeating myself, I would emphasise again that had Mr Davey taken the trouble to take his manuscript to a specialist, the latter would have been only too happy to acquaint him with the shortcomings of his production. This would have saved Mr Davey a great deal of time and trouble, and the public much confusion. On p.1 of his book, Mr Davey says that it "fills a gap because when I looked for a simple booklet on the subject I could find none." For a start the book does not *fill* a gap but *creates* one, widening the gulf, for the general reader, between understanding and incomprehension; and secondly, had Mr Davey done even the most superficial homework, and had been bothered to ask himself *why* no work such as he describes was available, he might have hit upon the answer: namely that any *specialist* would think twice before putting his name to such a book. The study of place-names, even a simple list of meanings, is not, as I hope I have demonstrated, something which can be success-

fully explained to the non-specialist within the compass of 36 pages.

Further Reading

A full list of useful books and articles dealing with place-names in general, and with the West Country in particular, can be found in Avon Past No. 3 (Autumn 1980), pp. 8-12: "Place-names in Avon and the South West: a guide to current sources", by Jennifer Scherr.

REFERENCES

1. E. Ekwall, *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, O.U.P., 4th ed., 1960.
2. L. Alcock, *Arthur's Britain*, Penguin Books, 1971, p.219; M. D. Costen, 'A Celtic saint at Wear', *Som. Dors. N.Q.*, 30, 1976, pp. 219-220.
3. D. H. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, O.U.P., 1978, p.90.
4. Farmer, *ibid.*; M. Aston, I. Burrow, (eds.), *The Archaeology of Somerset*, Somerset County Council, 1982, p. 95.
5. R. S. Newall, *Stonehenge*, DoE Official Handbook, 1977, pp. 30-31.
6. M. Todd, *Roman Britain, 55 B.C. - A.D. 400*, Fontana, 1981, p.15.
7. S. Freere, *Britannia*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2nd ed., 1978, p.89.
8. J. Morris (ed. and trans.), *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals*, Phillimore, 1980, p.39.
9. Morris, *ibid.*, p. 45; for a photograph of the relevant section of the Welsh Annals manuscript, see M. Wood, *In Search of the Dark Ages*, B. R. C., 1981, plate 6.
10. D. Whitlock (ed.), *English Historical Documents, I, c. 500-1042*, Eyre Methuen, 1955, pp. 364-372.
11. T.A.M. Bishop, 'The Norman Settlement of Yorkshire', in R. W. Hunt *et al.*, (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History, presented to F. M. Powicke*, Greenwood Press, 1948, pp. 1-14; B. K. Roberts, *Rural Settlement in Britain*, Hutchinson, 1977, p.141 and note 21.
12. M. Gelling, *Signposts to the Past: Place-Names and the History of England*, Dent, 1978, pp. 30-62; for a detailed examination of the place-names of Roman Britain, see A.L.F. Rivet and C. Smith, *The Place-Names of Roman Britain*, Batsford, 1979.
13. M. Costen, personal communication.
14. K. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain*, 1953; for a discussion of the possible extent of Celtic survival in Somerset in the post-Roman period, see the very important paper by P. A. Rubtz, 'Celtic Society in Somerset A.D. 400-700' (O'Donnell Lecture 1981), *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 30, Parts I and II, November 1982, pp. 176-200. A more popular version of this paper may be found in Aston and Burrow, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-107.
15. Gelling *op. cit.*, p. 90.
16. A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements, Part I*, (English Place-Name Society, Vol. 23), C.U.P., 1956, pp. 58-62.
17. Gelling, *op. cit.*, p.55.
18. H. C. Dalby, R. Welldon Finn (eds.), *The Downland Geography of South-West England*, C.U.P., 1967, pp. 138-9, 202-4.
19. Gelling, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-129; Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-231.
20. M. Costen, personal communication.
21. Gelling, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.
22. Smith, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 180-158.

CONSTITUENT SOCIETIES

THE BRISTOL AND AVON FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

The B.A.F.H.S. was formed ten years ago to encourage interest in researching family history. For some five years prior to the formation of the society, interest in family history had grown not only in this country but throughout the world.

There had been for many years societies for genealogical research in many countries but with the increase in interest more were needed at a local level and societies based on an area or county were beginning to form. The B.A.F.H.S. was started by a small group of interested persons in July 1974 and by the time of the first meeting in September over one hundred persons had joined. After several venues for the meeting, a permanent place was found in All Saints Church hall, until the start of the second year when a room in the Hawthorns Hotel was used, for the next three years. Due to the increase in numbers, meetings have for the past six years been held in the Folk House on the third Monday of every month (excluding July and August).

The common interest in family history has attracted a wide variety of members from every age group. Many married couples attend, particularly the retired, as the mutual interest and the more time available makes family history an admirable hobby for the retired.

Also in 1974 the Federation of Family History Societies was formed, which has acted as a co-ordinating body to which societies are affiliated; not only county societies but also groups that specialize in the study of a single surname. The Federation also acts as a central body to look after the interest of affiliated societies in their relationship with local and National record offices, ecclesiastical bodies and similar organisations.

What does the membership of a family history society entail? As in many societies of a similar nature, members are encouraged to help and support society's activities as well as to receive help and guidance in their own researches. They will also obtain advice on the availability of records and methods of research throughout the country.

Members of the society come from all over the country, with many from overseas, generally with ancestors in the Avon area. Many local members have ancestors in other parts of the country but join the Society to support the activities and avail themselves of the opportunity of contact with other researchers.

The main activities of the society can be seen in four distinct areas: the meetings, the local recording of records, the research facilities and the *Journal*.

The meetings, which are held every month, last about two hours and are open to visitors on payment of a small entrance charge. The first part of the evening consists of a talk on a related subject and is geared for the range of experience present at the meeting.

To illustrate from the 1984/5 programme, the subject matter could be: sources in the record offices, tracing Roman Catholic ancestry, recording and writing up the results of research - to quote a selection of talks planned.



Silhouette reproduced courtesy of R. Brown

Speakers are often from the local societies or specialists in a particular field of research. The talks are often amplified and illustrated by slides or the use of an overhead projector, with a considerable opportunity for discussion at the end of the meeting. During the remaining part of the meeting, there is time to examine or borrow books from the Society library, to read or borrow journals from other societies and to purchase books from the society's bookstall. The records and indexes of the society are also available for examination. Beginners to family history are also welcome and a recent feature is a beginner's table where help can be obtained from experienced family historians. The meetings have grown in popularity over the years and now up to 150 members attend regularly.

Members of the society are also encouraged to take part in various projects. Since the formation of the Society a project to index the marriages in the Avon area in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has been carried out and this work is now well on the way to completion. Two volumes of *Bristol Marriages* have now been published and the third volume is in preparation. The index is available for members and others to use and requests for searches come in from all over the UK and from overseas.

The 1851 Census for the Avon area has also been indexed and is largely completed. The work has been carried out by members working on microfilm copies in the central library and the index is now available for research purposes to determine family details; in particular age and place of birth.

Another research project is the recording of memorial inscriptions in the churchyards of the area. This project continues the work by a member commenced prior to formation of the Society. Groups of members have, over the past years, met at churchyards to record and the results are indexed and then made available for general enquiries.

The third activity is the use of the various records produced by the local society together with information on other indexes being produced throughout the country. Many societies are engaged in similar projects for their areas the results of which are being published and made available for general research purposes. The records produced by the Mormon Church from their extracts from many parish registers are also available for use by society members.

The fourth area is the issue and circulation of the *Journal*. This is produced four times a year and as well as articles of interest in connection with research procedures and on local history topics also lists, for each member, details of the family names they are researching.

As the *Journal* is not only circulated to all members but is, in addition, exchanged with other society journals, there is always the possibility of members linking up with people researching identical families and many contacts have been established throughout the world by members in this way.

But research into family history produces more than just a list of names. Many members research in depth the backgrounds, social situations, working life and interests of their ancestors. For out of a series of facts gleaned from records step very real people: people who, although living in a very different world from ours, had the same basic problems, experienced the same joys and sorrows of life.

Then in many different ways a researcher will put down the result of his or her searches, perhaps even to the extent of publishing a book or paper which can be circulated amongst the family or deposited with appropriate libraries or societies.

To sum up, family history - with all its varied interests and contacts - is a hobby that has fascinated many people over the past few years. Many have also found great help and encouragement in belonging to a society, with the personal contact with other researchers, and the wider contacts possible.

Family history, as a hobby is here to stay and no doubt will grow in support over the next few years. Membership of a Society certainly is of great value to a researcher and brings with it added interest and help in all the varied aspects of family history.

Robert W. Brown

"I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH": 150 YEARS OF LOCAL CHURCH WORK IN BRISTOL by Keith and Alan Linton 263pp; Bristol: C. Hüller (CP. & P.) Ltd., 1982 (Available from the authors at 22 Bromley Drive, Downend, Bristol)

This fascinating account of the movement popularly known as 'Plymouth Brethren' throws new light on a group of Christians little known to most of us. Drs. Keith and Alan Linton, lecturers in the Department of Microbiology at Bristol University, have provided us not only with a brief history of the Brethren movement as a whole but have given us a comprehensive account of its various societies in Bristol with a fund of local and background knowledge. Not least amongst its fascinations for Bristolians is the account of the Orphanages founded by George Muller, one of the early leaders of the Brethren.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 presents an overall history of the movement's origins in Plymouth and Bristol and its subsequent development, especially in Bristol, with cameos of each of the numerous churches in that city, and concludes with the authors' suggestions for the challenge of the future drawn from the lessons of the past. Part 2 includes further information on the history of some local assemblies and gives an account of the outstanding activities of the youth camps and houseparties which were specifically designed for young people after the second world war.

The Brethren movement – the name Plymouth Brethren originated with a group of believers who started to meet in Providence Chapel in Plymouth in 1831 – was motivated by a desire to escape from the too rigid confines of the established churches with their clericalism and also to afford the opportunity for any member to take a more active part in worship, especially in the sharing of a common meal instituted by Our Lord Himself. At this time George Muller was pastor of Ebenezer Chapel in Teignmouth. In his student days he came in contact with the work of the famous Franks Orphan Home in Halle and it was this inspiration that was to blossom into the Muller Orphanages when he moved to Bristol in 1832. The Brethren movement was shortly to be torn by internal doctrinal disputes and resulted in two separate strands, the Exclusive or Closed Brethren being a tightly knit denomination who admit no outsiders to their forms of worship, and the Open Brethren about whom this history is written.

The reader will find in these pages not only a history of religious movement which is now worldwide but also a wealth of local history intertwined with a fund of sociological details which have added to and enriched the many strands which go to make up the rich tapestry of the history of Bristol.

Geoffrey W. Robson

COLLIERIES OF KINGSWOOD AND SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE, by John Cornwell. 84pp.; illus., maps. Cowbridge: D. Brown, 1983. £6.95.

Alas this is not the definitive history of the Kingswood Coalfield, but nevertheless it is a useful pictorial supplement to the pioneering work already carried out by Southway (*BIAS Journal Vols. 3 & 4*), and others in the field.

The author has combined a life-long interest in coal mining industry with a specialized approach to photography to produce a unique collection of illustrations of the Kingswood and South Gloucestershire Coalfields. As he has pointed out in his recent highly-successful public lectures on the subject, the Kingswood area possesses the most extensive remains of any redundant coalfield in Britain, and he has here combined photographs of extant remains with reproductions of former installations, some dating from the mid-nineteenth century. Working methods and conditions are, too, well-recorded, with a series of photographs taken underground at the Frog Lane Pit in 1905 contrasting with more advanced techniques and equipment sixty years later at the Harry Stoke Colliery.

Reproduced also to the same high standard are a number of useful maps and plans from sources not readily available to the local historian, showing surface layouts of individual collieries, as well as extensive networks of underground workings.

Coverage of the existing sites, and former workings where little can be seen today is highly selective, and the accompanying introduction and text sparse. But the real value of the book lies in the quality of the generously sized photographs which enable clear identification of precise detail, not always possible with many similar publications being produced today by cheap reproductive methods. This alone makes the book a good buy.

Ron Martindale

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN DEVON AND CORNWALL by T. Clart. 160 pp., Ashbourne: Moorland Publishing, 1983. £4.95.

This is the second guide to a region in archaeology prepared by this author (the first being of the Lake District, which I have not seen). The work is organised geographically (i.e. by site) and consists of a short typological and chronological introduction to the area's monuments and archaeology, followed by more detailed accounts of 36 of the best-known palimpsests and fortified buildings in the south-west peninsula.

The sites are described from west to east, each introduced by its title and national grid reference. A plan follows, itself numbered to indicate where the ensuing cross-referenced three-dimensional sketches of the monuments are to be found. The drawings, many of which must have been made in the field, take the place of photographs (and some again are partly drawn from photographs) and are views of what the visitor can actually see when visiting. It is therefore a visitor's guide meant to be taken to the spot rather than read at home. It can, however, be read and understood adequately without visiting the site at all. The descriptions make some deference to lack of knowledge and

are written simply but archaeologically. An italic text in a box may be found within each site description summarising the main points. Unfortunately, the boxes are not always at the beginning, but can appear anywhere in the text, which can be several pages long. The work also boasts a page and a half of glossary (which may not be extensive enough for the layman) and a reasonable index. The longest account, sensibly, is of 'Exeter City and Cathedral' while the others are adequately covered.

Although an interesting approach has been adopted, I was left wondering for which audience it was intended. The informed amateur would find it useful, the beginner may think it a little confusing because of the amount of material crammed into some parts of it. In at least one case (Carn Euny), it takes three pages to discover the date of the site. The technique of illustrating everything by line drawings demands that reconstructions be attempted of some of the structures (there are only a couple, neither very good), something already done in words in the text. Some of the drawings, too, are much better than others (perhaps because taken from photographs?) and one wonders why photographs were not used in part; was it cost alone? If the idea was to achieve uniformity, then there should have been some quality control over the illustrations. The academic content appears thorough and the text had been seen by the counties' two professionals prior to printing.

The book lacks a bibliography (while the details require one) and there is no mention of the fact that you need an Ordnance Survey map to use it properly. Criticism aside, I am sure that many visitors to the south-west will find this reasonably-priced book extremely useful and that sales will amply repay the author's expenditure on drawing pens.

M. W. Ponsford.

ISAAC ROSENBERG OF BRISTOL, by Professor C. Tomlinson. 19pp. Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1982. (Local History Pamphlet, 53) 80p.

The First World War poet and artist Isaac Rosenberg was born in Bristol in 1890, and left with his family for London seven years later. In spite of the desperate poverty of his background in the immigrant Jewish community of East London, Rosenberg managed to spend some time at the Slade School of Art before illness and then enlistment in the War intervened. It is as a war poet that Rosenberg is best remembered, and Professor Tomlinson concentrates on the poems of 1915-16.

Most of the pamphlet consists of an appraisal, with lengthy quotations, of these war poems, and presents both a fascinating poet's-eye view (for Professor Tomlinson is himself, of course, a prominent modern poet), and a welcome reminder of the contribution made by Rosenberg to twentieth century poetry.

Local historians, however, are likely to be frustrated by the biographical details offered. We are told that Rosenberg "seems to" have been born at 5, Adelaide Place, which no longer stands, and that the family subsequently lived at Victoria Square and Harford Street, both also now destroyed - though no

dates are given for these moves. It would be interesting to discover if Rosenberg attended school in Bristol: he may even have left the city at seven years old speaking no English, since his family were recent arrivals from Lithuania. Certainly the poet's formative years were spent - and most of his education received - in London. Even the most fervent Bristolian cannot help but see Rosenberg's links with the city as almost coincidental to his development.

The pamphlet is illustrated with four black and white reproductions of Rosenberg's paintings and drawings. It is a pity that they are not mentioned in the text.

Gwyneth Nair

THE RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS OF KEYNSHAM, edited by Patrick McGrath. 24pp; 14 photographs, 1 fig., 1 map. Keynsham Civic Society and Keynsham and Saltford Local History Society, 1983. 90p. Available from Keynsham churches, bookshops or the editor at 17, Wellsway, Keynsham (plus 17p p&p).

This informative and well produced booklet aims at "stimulating interest in the rich religious history of the town" and will surely also create further interest in the two local societies who have worked together on the project.

In a series of articles by different authors, the history of each building or group of churches is traced with a useful map at the end of the booklet pinpointing their location. The life and buildings of the Medieval Abbey are described by Barbara Lowe who also designed the striking cover. Each remaining account covers two pages, regardless of a church's age or its impact upon the community.

Local people interested in local history will enjoy this booklet. I was particularly struck by the co-operation and links between the different groups. During the war, evacuees from London in the charge of Catholic Sisters used the Methodist rooms as a school; the Quakers were loaned chairs by the Baptists for an early meeting; the Salvation Army held early meetings in the Methodist Chapel; choir stalls at St. Francis Church were made from oak pews provided by Chewton Keynsham Church and the pipe organ was bought for £50 from a disused church in Midsomer Norton.

This is just the kind of publication needed to heighten local awareness especially in a town such as Keynsham where so many old buildings have disappeared in recent years. Hopefully the local churches will continue where the booklet leaves off.

S. M. Hopkins

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Avon's past from the air* (Avon County Council Planning Dept., 1984, £1.00)
A catalogue of historic maps in Avon (Avon County Council Planning Dept., 1984, 75p)
CRAWFORD, A. *Bristol and the wine trade* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1984, 90p.)
JONES, P. and HOWLETT, R., eds. *Mangotsfield past: memories of Downend, Staple Hill and Mangotsfield* (Downend L.H.S., 1984, £1.50)
LARGE, D., ed. *The port of Bristol 1848-1884* (Bristol Record Society, 1984, £9.00)
PERRY, C.H. *The voluntary medical institutions of Bristol* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1984, 90p.)
ROSS, E. *Tales of the falls* (Bristol Broadside, 1984, £1.95 (pbk), £6.95 (hard))
WILLIAMS, M.E. *Civic treasures of Bristol* (City of Bristol, 1984, £4.75 (softback), £8.50 (hard)).

BRISTOL AND AVON ARCHAEOLOGY

The new, fully illustrated Journal of the Bristol & Avon Archaeological Research Group

Contents of Volume 1 (1982) Price: £2.00

- "A Late Roman brooch and medieval building at Stockwood, Bristol" P. Belsey and M. W. Ponsford
"Excavations at Peter Street, Bristol, 1975-76" E. J. Boore.
"Excavations at Bristol Bridge, 1981" B. Williams
"Timber Staircases in North-west Houses" L. Hall
"Archaeology and the Churches of Bristol, 1540-1850" D. P. Dawson
"An 18th Century Bakery at Christmas Steps, Bristol" J. Bryant and D. Kear
"Avon Archaeology 1981" R. Iles

Contents of Volume 2 (1983) Price: £2.00

- "Surface Concentrations at Priddy, 1977" J. Taylor and R. Smart.
"A Romano-British Settlement at Filwood Park, Bristol" R. G. I. Williams
"Romano-British Burials at Henbury School, Bristol" J. Russell.
"Santonbury and District in the 10th Century" - M. Costen
"Environmental Sampling in Redcliff Street, 1982-83" J. Shackleton and J. Douglas.
"Excavations at 68-72 Redcliff Street, 1982" R. H. Jones.
"A Possible Tide Mill at Kingston Seymour" J. Evans
"A 17th Century House at 10 Lower Park Row, Bristol" J. Bryant and J. Winstone
"Avon Archaeology 1982"

ALSO STILL AVAILABLE
B.A.A.R.G. Review No. 2 (1982) Price £1.50

Contents include:

- "The Scope of Industrial Housing in Avon" C. Powell
"Archaeology and the Medieval Churches of Bristol" D. P. Dawson
"Excavations at Redcliff 1980" B. Williams
"Bristol's Answer to the Luftwaffe" N. Roberts
"Keston Village, Minor House and Garden Remains" J. Edge and B. Iles.

The above B.A.A.R.G. publications are available at the above prices (plus 50p postage and packing) from the Hon. Secretary, B.A.A.R.G., Bristol City Museum, Queens Road, Bristol BS8 1RL, or from the City Museum Shop.

A Conservation Project by The JT Group



The Restoration of 70 Prince Street

A Grade II* listed Georgian house built in 1726 to a design by John Strahan has been completely renovated for the Head Office of Sheraton JT Ltd.