

Avon Past 14

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Postcards and photographs in local history

The first school in Weston-super-Mare

The Clayfield-Irelands of Brislington

Schooldays in World War I

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COVER ILLUSTRATION

Frances Ireland, second wife of Squire Ireland, painted by Joshua Reynolds
in 1767 and now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon. (Photograph repro-
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Avon Past

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EDITORIAL

You may have read recently of the opposition to development plans for Avebury Manor, in the village of Avebury, close by the famous stone circle. The owner, builder-developer Ken King and his wife Gillian, plans to create an 'Elizabethan Experience' with items such as waxworks, steam roller rallies, old-time fairs, Civil War battles, jousting and veteran car rallies.

Anthony (an agricultural scientist and architect) and Vicky Jarvis, have also bought an Elizabethan house, Doddington Hall in Lincolnshire. They, too, renovated the house and they, too, hold events; concerts are given in the Long Gallery, the house was used as the set for a television play, school parties come to study the house, the premises are occasionally used for parties, Cavaliers and Roundheads re-fought old battles in the grounds, and every August there is a special exhibition, usually about embroidery or needlework.

So what is the difference? Both houses are being used as a backdrop for events that each of the owners see as suitable to the venue. The difference lies in the attitude of the owner to public enjoyment, each one tends to tailor their 'display' to their own vision of what the customer wants.

For every Anthony and Vicky Jarvis, surely there are bound to be a Ken and Gillian King. It is the responsibility of the local council, and indeed English Heritage, not baldly to refuse any suggestion that comes from any owner who wishes to develop a leisure side to an old house. It is up to them to ensure that the fabric of the building is not harmed, that the grounds are treated sympathetically, and that neighbouring areas are not put at risk.

It is all very well for people who don't like waxworks to say that it shouldn't be allowed. Why not? I like waxworks, and I am sure a lot of other people do too. The stone circle at Avebury is well able to survive without a carpark, interpretation centre, amusement arcade, branch of MacDonalds, or any of the other paraphernalia that attach themselves these days to ancient sites, but the future of Avebury Manor may lie in good, wholesome fun, rather than in a pristine, protected future under glass.

Perhaps the house may exhibit all the frolic, becoming 'front man' to Avebury, and thereby helping to preserve the rest of the area from similar, undesired treatment.

Pip Jones

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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KARIN CROSS studied for the Art Teachers' Diploma at the West of England College of Arts from 1933-1937. She joined the staff of the Tourist Guide Course in January 1974 and was Tutor-in-Charge from January 1975 to January 1986.

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JEFFREY SPITTAL is a founder member and former Information Officer of ALHA who has previously contributed several articles to *Quest* and *Avon Past*. A retired university librarian, he currently fills part of his week as Librarian of the New Room, Bristol.

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POSTCARDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY

by C.J. Spittal

Since the Croydon Natural History Society in 1916 sponsored Gower, Jast and Topley's book *The Camera as Historian*, many hundreds of photographs must have been taken, many hundreds more thoughtlessly destroyed and many hundreds additional to those disinterred from attics and other repositories of household and family memorabilia.

Perhaps exceeding the total number of all of these is the sum of postcards printed and purchased. Round about 1960 it became apparent that there was money to be made from these productions and today booksellers' shelves, stallholders' boxes, and letters of solicitation from Holland addressed to the 'Lord Mayor' of some Avon villages show expectations of profit have not dwindled. In fact the average private collector or local history society must today hope for accretions to collections greater by reason of private benevolence than by the fortunate discovery of bargains in places of sale.

The following remarks are derived mainly from personal observations and experiences during the making of one collection and record some information sought out during the same time. If this article provokes a letter or calls forth additional comment or corrections it will have served its purpose which is only to be the cause of greater 'wit in other men'. There are no remarks on the arrangement of collections and their indexing, something which in the enthusiasm of collecting may be unpardonably deferred. Anybody requiring expert guidance on that subject should refer to an article by Professor Norman McCord in the *Local Historian* for February, 1978¹. Professor McCord's studies in the social history of the Durham and Newcastle-Upon-Tyne areas have made great use of photographs and his advice on the management of such records reflects the best ways of exploiting a large collection to the best advantage through proper indexing.

Like-wise no comments are offered on technical process for the sole and simple reason that the writer has not the knowledge to do so and has always been helped in such matters by an expert. However one piece of advice is tendered - stop and think before dismembering old picture frames too impetuously. Only recently I came to learn of a photograph, just over eighty years old which, when removed from its equally ancient frame, began to fade with alarming rapidity. The change could almost be measured within twenty-four hour periods. Happily a couple of hurried telephone calls and a quickly-organised exercise of resuscitation saved this possibly unique record (Plate 1) from total extinction.

Postcards, because of the circumstances of their commercial origin, may present dating problems. Unlike photographs, taken at a specific time and for a specific purpose and usually annotated for recording, postcards often require investigative analysis before they can be put in a collection. Because postcards were meant for sale they were produced in such a way that they should be vendable for as long as possible. This requirement had two results: firstly



Plate 1. Workers engaged in the excavation of Winterbourne Down railway cutting circa 1902. The line was opened for passenger traffic on 1st July 1903.

manufacturers usually avoided anything which would betray a date and, since the picture on the card was meant to be of interest to somebody other than the purchaser of the card, 'conventional' and 'romantic' views were preferred. As one writer has recently expressed the point, the typical 'postcard view' is 'orthodox, unpeopled and often distinctly dull'²¹. The favourite candidates for postcard photography were the village green, the river, a bridge over that river, thatched cottages or, failing these, vast expanses of open country, the 'good view' that all excursionists and holiday-makers are supposed to enjoy. From an extensive study of 'view' postcards it is easy enough to get an impression of the late Mr. Gillie Potter's "unoccupied England" but horizontal extent is by no means so useful historically or archaeologically as the vertical distance viewpoints of aerial photography. The limited choice of subject and preferential emphases found in postcards²², the selection of a single edifice or isolated landscape feature may be injudiciously interpreted as typical in age, style or period of a larger whole and we know that very few human settlements really exemplify a total conformity in any of these things. The particular value of the postcard is therefore (since the same conventions appeal to succeeding generations) as a record of change over a period of time in a building and its surrounding area - improvements in road conditions, growth of new housing, provision of public amenities and the like. The views of the Post Office in present-day Frampton Cotterell (Plates 2-4) illustrate this. To the list of favoured rural scenes given above may be added large hotels and civic monuments in urban areas and always, in town or country, the church, the archetypal example of a preference for the 'conventional' in social terms. If you find a postcard of a local chapel you will be extremely lucky.

Postcards, intended to be vendable as long as possible, so remained in the shops. The commercial purposes of manufacturer and shop-keeper coincided and I have been told of a local shop selling local views identifiably twenty years out-of-date. One hopes that this is a rare example of indolent salesmanship (though lead me to any shop still doing it) but it does emphasise that dating by postmark is a method not to be implicitly and undeviatingly trusted. On this point of dating it may be helpful to point out that privately published postcards with a halfpenny stamp were allowed by the Post Office after September 1st 1894 and divided back postcards were introduced in 1902 for inland transmission only. From 1908 these divided back postcards could also be sent abroad and a statement to that effect sometimes appears on them. The inland postage rate was raised to one penny in 1918 and, wherever a stamp affixed on the appropriate square has not obscured the record, the rate was printed and is thus helpful for dating²³. Subsequent increases can be traced through the yearly volumes of Whitaker's Almanack or the Post Office Guide (earlier British Postal Guide). If stamps themselves are used for evidence of dating reference can usefully be made to a bi-annual publication from the firm of Stanley Gibbons and Co. entitled 'Collect British Stamps'. This work illustrates stamps and indicates dates of issue; its coverage however is selective only.

Many commercial postcards were issued from 1870 by Messrs. Frith of Reigate in Surrey. When the firm closed down almost one hundred years later,



Plate 2. The present Frampton Cotterell Post Office as it appeared circa 1806



Plate 3. The present Frampton Cotterell Post Office as it appeared circa 1823

the stock was dispersed and part of it made available for purchase. Recently it has also become possible for individuals to purchase copies of Frith photographs collected to illustrate particular villages. Frith cards issued after the Second World War bore a seemingly mnemonic device on the bottom left-hand corner of the card. On Plate 4 this appears as 'ENGL'. I should be very interested to learn of any other examples of this practice.

For many or all of the reasons enumerated above many collectors prefer to concentrate their activities upon photograph collecting rather than the acquisition of postcards. This is perfectly understandable for collections of enduring historical value will inevitably be comprised of photographs. However it should be noted that up to 1939, or possibly somewhat later, postcard size photographic paper was produced and used by developing agencies (as well as by individuals who purchased it for home developing) to print snapshots and photographs. The letters 'PC' appeared on the back of prints made on such paper and there was a dividing line down the middle. Local photographers – the Plantagenet Evanses of some local community – advertised themselves through such prints and local stationers also entered the postcard business. It is possible therefore that an identical view may be found as a private photograph or as a postcard locally produced or even bearing the mark of a national publisher²⁵. The range of subjects may not be greatly extended for the local shops probably proceeded upon the same criteria as national manufacturers but local provenance argues for wider local knowledge and the stallholders' boxes of postcards should not be totally neglected when building a collection.



Plate 4. The present Frampton Cotterell Post Office as it appeared circa 1956

Indeed it would be useful to have a record of any such photographic agencies or shops formerly active in producing local views in the present-day county of Avon. In fact any kind of investigative listing should prove useful to serve an occupation where even those most closely involved gain most of their knowledge through a growing accumulation of chance discoveries: serendipity in this matter is the primary instructor. Catalogues of postcards do exist but the listings they give reflect commercial interests. A broad subject classification and indications of current market values is the general pattern. Since the postcard boom broke around about 1960 such catalogues have been issued by Messrs. Pictons, IPM (International Postcard Market) and most recently by Messrs. Stanley Gibbons and Company²⁶.

If, as I have suggested, the dominant subjects of appeal in the production of postcards are buildings and views conventionally admired, the favoured subjects of photographs, at least in those of the last century, are work and recreation. It may be that the preference shown for pictorial records of people labouring or relaxing reflects not the inclinations of most of those pictured but the wishes of some superior in the work force or organiser of a group; a long working day almost co-terminous with hours of daylight may be a fortuitous reason. I cannot wholly dismiss from my mind the impression that in those days there was a much greater sense of personal pride in work well done and a much greater sense of spontaneous communal enjoyment in recreational pursuits: that which was to be enjoyed only infrequently was highly-prized accordingly. Again, whilst we are used to photographs of craftsmen, generally taken by some interested observer not part of that society to which the craftsman belonged, it should be noted that groups of unskilled workers are also commonly recorded. Today the distinction between work and recreation is neither so sharp nor so strong as it was then.

The work convention is self-evident and within the convention of recreation we may distinguish between 'customary events' (the annual church or chapel outing, the annual carnival or some traditional ceremony enacted yearly) and 'exceptional events' (induction of a new vicar or minister, coronation festivities or pictorial evidence of some natural calamity). Plate 1 may be taken as illustrating the work convention and Plate 5 the recreation convention. Sometimes one may be fortunate to find photographs of some event peculiar to a very small group and its activities. For example I have a number of photographs of carts decorated for an annual Whitsuntide chapel procession in the Made-For-Ever district of Kingswood which are of the greatest interest. The processions concerned were totally separate from the main central Kingswood festivities of that season.

It should be remembered that photographs may be invaluable for details which the photographer of the time thought unimportant. Amongst my own collection is a picture of coronation celebrations in Frampton Cotterell in 1901. Only dimly discernible in the background of the picture, compositionally insignificant, behind the crowd of village children in their best clothes and a procession filling the breadth of the road, is a small single-storey building. Before the photograph was acquired the existence of a village porchouse erected



Plate 5. *The Rising Sun, Frampton Cotterell, circa 1887*



Plate 6. *Accommodation for the elderly poor and infirm. Part of the village Poorhouse, Frampton Cotterell as it appeared in 1902*

on that site, both before the legislation of 1834 removed responsibility for the care of the poor to the Chipping Sodbury Union and before the evolution of adequate photographic techniques, was known. What the 1901 photograph incorporated was a front view of accommodation for the elderly poor, today hidden from sight behind a domestic garage. By skilful enlargement it was possible to rescue a view of the building as it existed, already somewhat dilapidated but with all the original architectural details discernible, in 1901 (Plate 6). It is doubtful if anyone would ever have photographed it for its own sake.

Now, from historical windfalls in photographs to historical pitfalls. It has often been said that 'the camera cannot lie' but the photographer - or those who commissioned his services - was sometimes prone to latent mendacity. The posed photograph of a special occasion was a suitable opportunity for the employment of such ruses. Again the psychological motivation was that of presenting something which the beholder was judged to expect to see irrespective of whether or not the picture depicted general truth. Children in their best attire for a coronation photograph are acceptable and you might be forgiven for thinking the same of the attire of children in a school photograph of the last century or the early part of this one. In such photographs it was however not uncommon for the better-dressed members of such a group to be congregated at the front so obscuring a view of their more under-privileged classmates. Again the very appearance of a man with a camera in a small village at the end of the last century at the end of the last century sometimes encouraged those hoping for a place in the picture to 'dress up' in something that, whilst not exactly in the fashion of the day, was still respectable. Allied to this kind of false evidence was the fondness of some photographers for taking pictures of men or women engaged in specialised but obsolescent occupations. This point is discussed in an article by S.T. Miller in the *Local Historian* for November 1983⁽⁷⁾.

The same excellent article records the story of what was probably the most famous example of photographic fraud, one which the writer of this article heard of in the East End of London many years ago but had since forgotten. In the early days of Dr. Barnardo's Homes Barnardo made use - for purposes of agitating the public conscience - of a photograph of a young London match-girl by the name of Katie Smith. His social purpose was laudable but his method of putting it into practice was not. Katie, standing obviously posed for her photograph, was made to appear specially ragged and some of Barnardo's critics, who believed that he commonly practised deception by contrived sartorial degradation, prosecuted. A court case followed and Barnardo lost it.

One proven way of recovering old photographs and postcards is to launch a local exhibition. The competitive impetus encourages many people, who seem to think their own possessions as being of little value singly and are surprised by requests that they should be copied, to produce them in surprising numbers. An effort should be made at the time of any such exhibition to list subjects and owners. If a photographer can be engaged to make copies (say for an hour or two each day after the exhibition closes) for sale to anybody placing an order the expenses of mounting such an exhibition can be cleared with a profit.

References

- (1) McCord, N. "Photographs as historical evidence", *Local Historian*, 13 (1978/79), 23-36.
- (2) Fowles, J. & Draper, J., *Thomas Hardy's England* (Cape, 1984), 35.
- (3) It is perhaps rather surprising to find an exemplary commercial prescription from Thomas Hardy. At a time when some postcards were issued based on his novels he said that all he stipulated was that "each picture shall be pleasing and romantic in itself, and that no view shall be used, however truthful in fact, which is bald and prosaic as a picture." Quoted in Fowles & Draper, *op. cit.*, 23.
- (4) Sowan, P.W., "The Craham Hurst Barvey", *Bull. Croydon Nat. Hist. Soc. Ltd.* 74 (April 1984) 5.
- (5) I am indebted to Mr. M. Tuxer of PII for this information.
- (6) Other useful works are Hawlett, M.R., *Priced Catalogue of British Pictorial Postcards and Postmarks 1884-1939* (Chippenham: Picton Print 1971); Caysh, A.W., *Dictionary of Picture Postcards in Britain 1894-1939* (Antique Collectors Club 1986); Ferr, M. & Stasiak, J., *The Actual Book: The Photographic Postcard Boom 1900-1920* (Northampton: A.H. Tolly (Editorial) Ltd., 1986).
- (7) Miller, S.T., "The Value of Photographs as historical evidence", *Local Historian*, 15 (1982/83), 468-473.

The Francis Frith Collection 1860-1970, is now available by county and the Aon issue can be had in two forms; as a microfiche edition, and as a working document with photocopy reproductions, 6.5" x 8.5", in book form. The microfiche edition is £230 plus VAT, whilst the latter is available by town or village, with prices ranging from 60p for two photographs of Swainswick to £117.50 for 393 views of Bath. Contact the Francis Frith Collection, Andover, Hampshire, SR10 3BE for further details.

THE FIRST SCHOOL IN WESTON-SUPER-MARE

Brian Austin

The accepted history of Weston-Super-Mare has it that there was no organised education in the parish until the Rev. Stiverd Jenkins opened his own school in the 1820's, and it is commonly believed that nobody cared about education anyway until the arrival of Hannah Moore in the later 18th century.

My interest in the subject was aroused by a reference in a well-known letter written in Weston in 1819 by Mrs Piozzi, which is often quoted purely as proof of early tourism. About halfway through her letter, this lady, in an intriguing and somewhat cryptic aside made more difficult by her artistic punctuation, seems to be describing an old school in the town:

"There are a few people here that I know, one lady however challenged me as an acquaintance of her brother's - just seventy years ago when he was a little boy at Weston School and used to come home for Holydays with Sir Robert Salshury Cotton Father of this Lord Combermere..."

My early suspicions were met with the answer that "she must have meant Weston near Bath, where she lived", but since that was a dangerous assumption to make without at least checking, I decided to look for possible clues among the records of various rates payments for Weston-Super-Mare. Several interesting references to gentry who were not local did turn up in the parish registers, but nothing to point specifically to a school of any sort. However, the rates of the Overseers of the Poor, to my genuine surprise, produced a series of references much better than I had been expecting. School there was, but a hundred years before Piozzi, not fifty, and small it may have been, but a school is a school.

The Weston School was established by the Overseers in 1702 with an arrangement which was at once elegant and pragmatic. Ann Carter and William Masy had both recently lost their respective marriage partners and had each been left with several young children to care for; both were local families then being supported from the Poor Rates. Roger and Elizabeth Barber were not born in Weston but by this time were living there and accepted as locals. This couple were close to poverty and receiving occasional handouts from the parish. Presumably Elizabeth was known as an intelligent woman, for her presence seems to have sparked off the idea of employing her to educate the poor children of the parish. The wage she received would be no more than what she was given anyway in the form of poor relief, and the education of children probably seemed like a wise investment for the future.

Between 1702 and 1705 there are thirteen specific references to Elizabeth Barber teaching. The actual form of the entries in the Overseers' Book depends of course on the individuals who wrote them, and they vary from the very first note of 1702 for the "scoling of Ann Carters children", to the generalised entry of 1705 stating simply, "for ye teashing of the poore children one whole year £1".

From the point of view of local research we must bear in mind that the simple fact of these entries in the accounts does not preclude the existence of a school

after or even before the dates which they cover, or that other children who needed no subsidies might have attended. Perhaps Elizabeth Barber was known to be a teacher anyway, no matter where she may originally have come from.

Over the four years during which she was paid as a teacher, Mrs. Barber received a total of £4 3s 8d, and as the earlier references are more specific, we can see that her earnings amounted to 2d per week per child. The note of 1706 may indicate an idle Overseer or the existence of an 'arrangement' by which the weekly subsidy had become in effect, a salary.

The venue for the lessons may have been the Rectory, or perhaps the vestry. Somewhere within the church seems most likely, as the private houses available were few and small, and the Rectory was continually the subject of complaints of dilapidation. There are indications that the Barbers had a house or cottage of their own by 1710, when Mrs. Barber gave "house room to the Wench". In any event, wherever it was that this educational establishment lay, it certainly existed, was referred to by contemporaries as providing "schooling", and was therefore a school.

I believe that the possibility of a later, mid-eighteenth century establishment, as might be inferred from Mrs. Piozzi's reference, must not be dismissed. The surnames which she mentions are upper class, and a school for such children, since it would receive no subsidy from the parish, need not have been noted in local accounts. Gentry were in the area chiefly because of the influence of John Pigott, the local squire, and already by the early nineteenth century Weston was regarded as a semi-fashionable and interesting watering-place. It provided, for example, an agreeable and secluded location in which 'young gentlemen' could bone up on their Latin. The word 'school' does not appear again in Weston for one hundred years after Elizabeth Barber (so far, at least), but I am inclined to keep an open mind; perhaps a careful perusal of the early newspapers, for, say, Bath and Bristol, would prove fruitful.

Note

With the exception of the registers, which are at the Somerset Record Office, Taunton, all the parish documents referred to in this article are currently held at Woodspring Central Library, Weston-Super-Mare.

TRACKING DOWN THE CLAYFIELD-IRELANDS

by Barry Williamson

The Clayfield-Irelands were Squires of Brislington from about 1770 to 1923. The first Squire, James Ireland, was typical of the many eighteenth and nineteenth century Bristol merchants⁽¹⁾ who moved from the city to the clean country air of this North Somerset village.

He bought an estate, built a mansion and set up his family in position and power. The process is familiar but in this example details about the family are frustratingly sparse. When the last Squire died in 1923 and neither he nor any of his ten brothers and sisters left any children, the whole estate passed to a distant cousin, Col. Armstrong, "from another landed family". No letters or diaries or account books were preserved in the Bristol Record Office, itself founded only in 1924. The estate was sold, the mansion demolished in 1933.

Brislington School is built on part of the estate. It has a tradition of including local history in the syllabus, especially for the Schools Council History examination at 16+. A large collection of local material has been assembled, from Census Enumerators Books to postcards to log books. But the Clayfield-Irelands have remained a blank. A few years ago the History Department set out to track down all they could about the family. It was no good studying nineteenth century Brislington without its Squire who built the village school, lived in the Hall, restored the church and chaired the local Board of Guardians.

We began by collecting the memories of older inhabitants. Only a few could recall the family in the days before Squire Alfred died in 1923. We were incredibly lucky that we tracked down and interviewed the daughter of the family coachman only two weeks before she died. She confirmed what others had said. The Squire's sisters were strange but well liked by the village for their generosity. The family entertained the inmates of Keynsham workhouse to tea once a year, "a most humane thing to do" and there were parties for village children at Christmas and after Harvest. Her most vivid description was of Miss Constance: "She said 'I'm a lady born and I would like your child to curtsy to me.' So my sister and I had to. People used to take their caps off to the family. Those were far-off days." Another elderly resident recalled the Squire's obsession with his trees. Her father was a tenant farmer at Linton farm. "The Squire used to go round with his silver topped walking cane. If you dared to ask to cut a rotten branch of a tree he'd send for Shipley (the Bailiff) and tell him to prop it up with logs. He was very strange."

So far so good; but nothing about the eighteenth or early nineteenth century family. Burke's *Landed Gentry* gave information about the genealogy. The first Squire came originally from Dorset. Before we had time to investigate, an amazing piece of luck came our way. An elderly lady in Brislington had collected newspaper cuttings about the village. Among them was one from 1939, announcing the death of Col. Armstrong, the heir to the last Squire. He was described as "of Garry Castle, Banagher, King's County, Ireland". Therein lay the explana-



Edward Rolle Clayfield, Bristol wine merchant and husband of Frances Ireland (1768-1825). Painted in 1803 by William Armfield Hobday. Reproduced by kind permission of Brislington School

son for the absence of the name Armstrong from Burke's *Landed Gentry* and our failure to trace him. He was from an Irish family and duly entered in Burke's *Landed Gentry of Ireland*. Was there any chance the family still lived at Garry Castle?

We wrote to "The Occupier" and back came a reply. Garry Castle had ceased to exist as a castle in the fifteenth century. It is now the name of a townland. An enterprising postman had been undaunted by the problem. He opened the letter and knew that a lady in Banagher was descended from an Armstrong grandmother although Armstrongs themselves left the district long ago. She it was who replied and directed us to her brother in Suffolk. He was about to sell three portraits of the Clayfield-Irelands, inherited by Col. Armstrong in 1923. We were almost too late but put in an offer from the profits of a local history booklet. He was pleased to accept since it would mean the portraits returned to Brislington after sixty years. They are:

- Edward Rolle Clayfield (1767-1825) by William Armfield Hobday.
- James Clayfield-Ireland (1804-1864) artist unknown.
- Letitia Clayfield-Ireland (1812-1886) by Frank Holl.

The last named is a magnificent portrait by one of the greatest Victorian artists whose sitters ranged from the Prince of Wales to William Gladstone. It was an inspiration to hang it in the school entrance hall but it also added another question to the ever lengthening list - why should the widow of Brislington's Squire have gone to the greatest portrait painter of the day for her seventieth birthday picture?

Back to the first Squire. The entry in Burke's stated that he came from Beaminster in Dorset. An enquiry to the Dorset County Record Office produced his grandfather's will made in 1743⁵⁹. We hoped there might be some clue to the status of the family and its connection with Bristol. All we could deduce was that the grandfather had been a craftsman of some sort (he left his "working tools" to his elder son) and that calamine (a link with Bristol's brass industry?) more probably meant calamink, a "woolen cloth of Flanders". James had obviously come to seek fame and fortune in Bristol, the second largest town in the country. The Bristol Burgess Books⁶⁰ gave proof of his success. An entry for 1752 stated that James Ireland, grocer, was admitted "into the Liberty of this City for that he married Constant Norman, daughter of John Norman dec'd and hath taken the oath of Obediance and paid 0. 4. 6d." The marriage to Constant Norman, daughter of a freeman, had been the means of gaining a step up in local society. A search through the Bristol Record Office index revealed material relating to Ireland properties, deposited by a Bristol solicitor, but it was sparse. James had owned a sugar house in Horse (Hest?) Street in 1773⁶¹. Sketchley's *Directory of Bristol*, 1775, showed him living at 1 Red Lodge Street.

The move to Brislington could not be dated precisely but another deed⁶² gave James as the owner of property there in 1776 and described him as "of Busseton alias Brislington." The move was probably connected with his second marriage to Frances Godde the daughter of a wealthy London merchant in about 1770.



*Letitia Clayfield-Ireland. Painted in 1883 by Frank Holl.
Reproduced by kind permission of Brislington School*

Perhaps she provided the extra wealth to pay for land and mansion. Frances Godde remained only a name until much later we came across the will of James Clayfield-Ireland, Squire from 1864 to 1898. He left "the portrait of our great grandmother Frances Ireland, (nee Godde) by Sir Joshua Reynolds..... to my sister Annette". The City Art Gallery indicated that Reynolds kept unusually detailed sitters' notebooks. The world authority on Reynolds is Dr. Nicholas Penny of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. He kindly looked up notes made by the late Sir Ellis Waterhouse for his books on Reynolds. Sir Ellis saw the portrait of Frances Godde in Dijon in the Musee des Beaux Arts in 1950. It was in very poor condition. Reynolds painted her in 1767 and was paid £36.15s.0d⁽⁶⁾. Its route from Brislington to Dijon is a mystery.

No diaries or letters or personal papers survive for the first Squire, known to all as Justice Ireland. He was a friend of John Wesley and brief references to him appear in Wesley's Journals, all complimentary⁽⁷⁾. Clearly he made a great impression on contemporaries. His memorial in St. Luke's Church speaks of a man "extensively known and universally beloved in his neighbourhood.... he was affable, condescending and affectionate." More revealing was his will made shortly before he died at the age of 89 in 1814⁽⁸⁾. He left a complicated Trust and named his second grandson James as eventual heir to the Brislington estate. This explains why the grandson and his wife spent so many years without a settled home since the estate did not become theirs until the last trustee died in 1854.

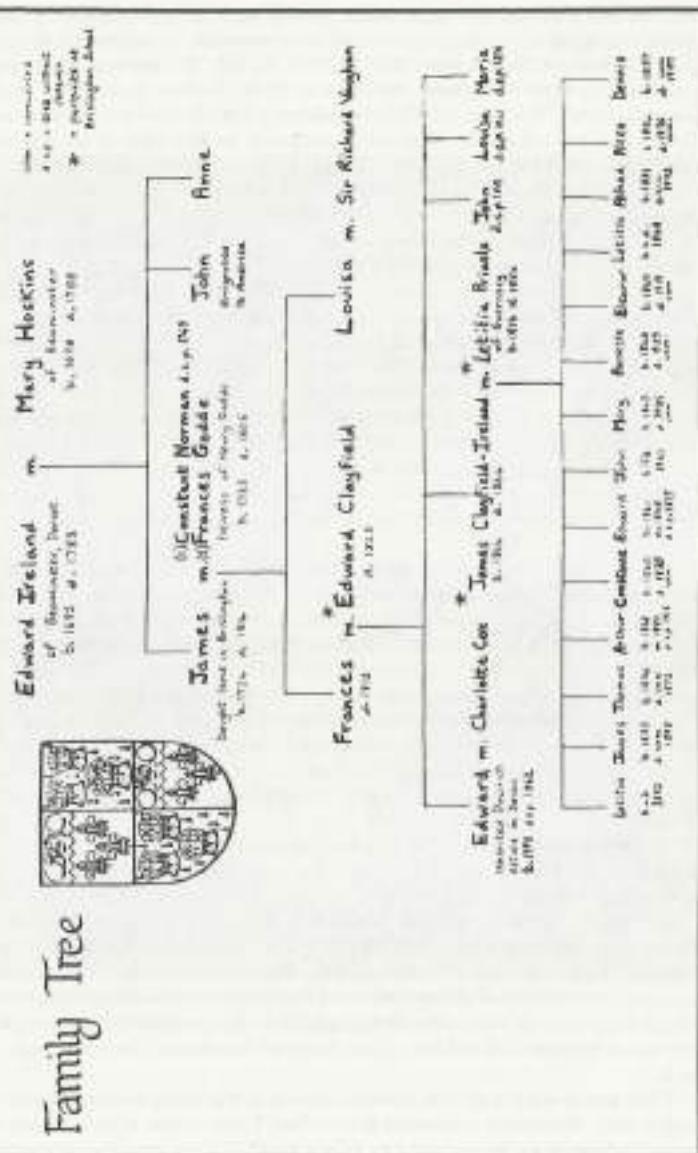
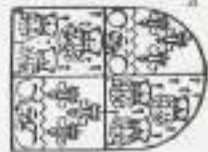
Justice Ireland had two daughters, Frances and Louise. The elder married Edward Clayfield whose portrait we bought. He looks enormously satisfied with life but the City Art Gallery⁽⁹⁾ helped us to look deeper into his character. Whereas his Beau Brummel style clothes were the height of fashion, his hair style betrayed an extremely conservative thirty-six year old. His hair was powdered and tied back in a queue but in 1803 when the portrait was painted, this style was worn only by staid, old fashioned people. Pitt's tax on flour from which the hair powder was made encouraged most people to change. The family genealogy indicated that Edward brought an estate at Dowrich in Devon into the family. A visit there and to the Devon Record Office and Library gave a few more details.

The Dowrich estate was about four hundred acres and belonged to the Morgan family whose elder daughter Mary married a Bristol Wine Merchant Michael Clayfield in 1769⁽¹⁰⁾.

Eventually the estate passed to Edward, her eldest son and thence to the Brislington family. It was sold in 1921⁽¹¹⁾ and all papers and records destroyed. One useful piece of evidence emerged from the visit to Dowrich - one hundred and one years old Mrs. Robinson who had worked for the last Squire at Dowrich remembered him as peculiar and strange. He had allowed fields and hedges on the estate to grow wild and kept an enormous sum of money in a box under his bed.

What was lacking in all this was the bedrock of the family's economic position and wealth. How much connection did the first Squire retain with his sugar and wine business once he migrated to Brislington? Did his grandson continue to

Family Tree



have mercantile interests or rely solely on the income from land (small enough, with only 797 acres in Brislington and an annual income of £2,811 from rents in 1872⁽¹⁰⁾. How did they spend their time and how much were they involved with village affairs? How did James the Grandson come to marry an heiress from Guernsey, Letitia Priaux? There were no answers to all these.

In the end the Priaux connection provided the best material. We wrote to the Guernsey Record Office to ask if they had any family papers. An official called the Greffier of the Royal Court passed on our enquiry to the Priaux Library. We had not known of its existence. Letitia's cousin, Osmond de Beauvoir Priaux founded a free library for the people of the island in 1869 and some family records remained there. Complicated genealogical tables show the connection between Priaux, Ireland and Armstrong (Letitia's sister married a John Armstrong of Banigher); an album of family photographs gave faces to many who were names only, including most of James' and Letitia's eleven surviving children. Best of all the Library put us in touch with a lady who was Letitia's great great niece. She found and kindly sent us the Clayfield Family Bible, a letter from Dennis Clayfield-Ireland about the family's connection with Chatterton and a picture painted by Letitia of the Priaux coat of arms. She remembered her mother talking about the family and staying with them before the First World War. Her memories confirmed the local stories: "Constance used to come down to dinner dressed in extraordinary clothes and at Christmas wore a holly wreath on her brow. Mary used to climb ladders to enter other bedrooms and ended up in Dr. Fox's Lunatic Asylum." But why had only two of the eleven children married? The explanation might be that there was madness in Letitia's family (her cousin had also been treated at Dr. Fox's and died there in 1827). The desire not to pass this on to another generation inhibited all but two of the children from marrying. Nineteenth century knowledge about mental illness was very limited. That also explained why Miss Eleanor used to run round the village screaming "I'm all Ireland, I'm no Priaux".

The last generation lived and quarrelled at the Hall for sixty years. Letitia's husband died in 1864 and his will gave a clue to the family's connection with Frank Holl, the great portrait painter. He mentioned their house in London and it happened to be in the same street as the artist's. The portrait may have been painted more through friendship than professional contact. In the same will the old Squire left £1,000 a year to nine of his children – a stark contrast to the average wage of £35 enjoyed each year by the eighty-nine farm labourers in Brislington at that time⁽¹¹⁾.

The penultimate Squire was Chairman of the Keynsham Board of Guardians and apparently took special pride in the work. The Minutes books in Somerset Record Office⁽¹²⁾ show that Keynsham workhouse was five star in the context of the times. Diet allowances were generous, medical attention was a reality and humane considerations were uppermost. His will which we obtained from Somerset House left all to his brothers and sisters including the Reynolds portrait to Annette. The wills of Alfred, Annette, Constance and Alice showed their charitable instincts. The last Squire was concerned about his roots in Dorset and Somerset and left money to the churches in Beaminster and High

Ham to maintain family graves. His sister Alice left £ $\frac{1}{4}$ million by today's values, mainly to Bristol charities and institutions.

At the end of the day what conclusions can be drawn from this exercise?

1. A great many people in Record Offices, Libraries and Museums are prepared to give much time to answering seemingly trivial enquiries. Is it fair to give them this burden?
2. As an experience of how to find out about the past and of the frustrations and failures involved, it was superb teaching material.
3. The collecting of material and the chasing of clues was vastly entertaining but it wasn't history – unless basic questions can be answered from a variety of weighty sources, the collecting of facts about a family becomes as pointless (but as absorbing a hobby) as collecting stamps or Wedgewood plates.
4. At some stage there must be an attempt to weave the information, however inadequate, into a story so that knowledge can be communicated to others⁽¹⁰⁾.

References

- (1) The 1884 First Edition OS 25" map shows at least ten mansions, few of which now survive.
- (2) Deceat Archdeaconry Court Probate Records DA/W/1747/37.
- (3) Bristol Record Office, Burgess Book 1748-1758, 04859 (11).
- (4) Bristol Record Office, Lease of land to James Ireland, 04666 (1).
- (5) Bristol Record Office, Deed 04550 (22).
- (6) National Portrait Gallery Archive and Library Department.
- (7) e.g. Journals vol VIII, September 14th 1789, "I spent an agreeable hour with Mr. Ireland.... at Brislington."
- (8) Bristol Record Office, Title of James Clayfield-Ireland to Lands at Brislington in the County of Somerset, 04550 (30).
- (9) Sarah Levit, Assistant Curator of Applied Arts.
- (10) From the Clayfield Family Bible (see below).
- (11) Devon Record Office, Sale particulars of Dowrich estate, 62/9/2 Box 7/48.
- (12) Return of the Owners of Land 1874.
- (13) Census Enumerator's Book for Brislington, April 7th 1861.
- (14) Somerset Record Office: D/G/KO/8A.
- (15) A booklet, *The Clayfield-Irelands of Brislington*, is on sale price 50p from Brislington School, Hungerford Road, Bristol 4.

ADDENDUM

To "Civil War and St. Thomas à Becket" by Connie Smith (*Avon Past No. 13*). The illustration of the church of St. Thomas à Becket, Widcombe, Bath, on page 37, should have been captioned "From a print of 1837; the property of Mr. Maurice Scott (17 Hatfield Buildings, Bath)."

SCHOOLDAYS

Part 1: 1913 -1916

by Jessie Sheppard

1913

In September 1913 when I was five I went to my first school, the Newfoundland Road Board School, Bristol, which is still there. I remember very little, except the first day when I was taken into the classroom which seemed much smaller than I expected – about forty children. There was a coal fire burning brightly and the teacher took me to sit in a little wooden armchair right by the fire. I was very proud to be allowed to put coal on the fire and this was where I had my first lesson in safety, the teacher standing by to make sure I did it correctly. First she made sure that my clothes were well out of reach of the fire and that I had the poker by its handle so as not to burn my hands, and to stand away from the direct heat to my eyes – all this I have never forgotten. Except for fighting for space on the form which acted as a table for four of us, this is all I remember of my first school.

At this time I was living with an uncle and aunt. The house had a lovely garden and I had a swing between hollyhock plants which grew on either side and were always filled with bees. The one disadvantage of this lovely house and garden was when you needed to go to the toilet: having filled a bucket with water and taken it to the end of the garden which was a very long one, you then flushed the privy and had to bring the bucket back; on a very dark night you had a little lamp to light the way down the garden.

1914

Mother married again in May 1914 and I went to live with them at Clarence Place – now a block of flats. From there I went to my next and last school; the Girls Entrance to Kingsdown Council School was in Southwell Street and the Boys entrance was in Walker Street. The other local school was St. Michael's School, known locally as 'Silly Madman' – our school was known as 'Kingsdown Cats College'. Every June St. Michael's used to come to the Girls Entrance and there would be a free for all; in December we went to St. Michael's top return the fight – no side ever won.

I was in the class above the babies – class five. I did very well in this class, I was the only one who knew more than the four times table – I knew up to seven; also the only one who could tell the time right round the clock. After being there about a month or so, I was sent to the babies class to teach them their twice times table! Dad had taught me my tables and to tell the time; I was also reading children's books; he used to say to me "If you can read, you can find out anything you don't know."

That Christmas was a happy though a quiet one. We went to the Morning service (Salvation Army) and then came home for dinner; this was chicken, the first one I had ever tasted, followed by Christmas pudding – I had a silver 3d. piece in mine, and mince pies. For my Christmas present I had a Teddy Bear, a pair of scales and two or three packets of sweets to go with the scales; as well

as that, the usual nuts, an orange, apple and a piece of coal to keep me warm for the next year!

1915

On May Day we danced around the Maypole in the Hall with our parents, but my mother couldn't come as she worked every day as a 'cook-general'.

Until now the fact that we were at war had made little impression on me except that some of my friends lost their fathers, brothers or relations, killed in action, others were taken prisoners of war. On Empire Day, we had our usual Service before class and after that we had special history lessons: the war and events leading up to it. We then went back into the Hall where our large Union Jack had been moved from the back to stand behind the desk of the Governess - Miss Taylor. We then sang 'Flag of Britain' whilst marching around the Hall - eyes right at the Flag. Afterwards we had the visiting Vicar, the Rev. Bland, who prayed for all those engaged in the conflict; we then all sang 'Hearts of Oak' and were dismissed for the rest of the day.

The summer of 1915 was very good to me. I went to Weston-super-Mare for a day. The sea, of course, was out when we arrived but I had donkey rides and ice-cream cornets - ½d. and fish and chips. The sea came in about half past three and I paddled, nervous at first because this was the first time I had seen the sea. I had to wash off all the sand which covered me as I had been making wonderful sandcastles with Dad's help.

On Sundays we used to go to Failand, taking sandwiches and lemonade made from sherbert; picking primroses, cowslips, and violets. On the Sundays we did not go to Failand, I used to go out on Dad's bike in the morning; in the evening we went for walks. One evening stands out in my memory, we were passing Ashton Bridge, Hotwells Road end, just as the Irish Coaster was unloading her cargo of live cattle. Dad, thinking I would be pleased to see them, took me over to watch. I was terrified! These great big animals with their huge horns and the awful noise they were making, frightened me. I ran across the road screaming and swearing. Dad came after me trying to coax me back saying that my mother used to milk cows every day when she was a young girl. This did not convince me however, but he calmed me down and told me that if I went across the road with him I could have a ride up the Rocks Railway. This was a special treat and so, frightened as I was, over I went holding tightly to his hand - I am still nervous of cows. Unfortunately it is no longer possible to have rides on the Rocks Railway; it used to cost a penny one way or 1½d. return. One other evening I remember, I am not sure where we were but it was just getting dark and Dad told me to look over to Ashton Gate which was all lit up for the White City Exhibition, it was a wonderful sight.

After the summer holidays - four weeks only in those days - I went up to the next class, Miss Dowsett. I now started to notice the war. Uniforms were everywhere, people I knew gone as soldiers and a lot of talk about the 'Huns' and 'Kaiser Bill'. The first thing at school was that we were all asked to bring pieces of blanket, wool, flannel and knitting, in fact anything containing wool. On our sewing afternoons we used to pick all these pieces to shreds, then they were

packed up and collected by the Red Cross for pillows, etc. We were also asked to collect hips and haws, and to keep our eyes open for any shreds of wool from sheep. Dad was very good and took me out on the bike and we collected quite a bit all the way round.

In November Dad joined up. He wanted to go into the Bantams Regiment with two of his friends but was a half-inch too short - being only 4ft.11½ins. instead of five foot! November 15th he left for Aldershot, then to France and we didn't see him again until April 1917.

When Dad left us on the station platform, his Aunt Dot who had been seeing her husband off, took us back to her house in Bedminster. We had tea and sandwiches and she gave me a little cream and brown jug which I still have. Leaving Aunt Dot, we came back through town and Mother decided we should go to the pictures (cinema). We went to the Dolphin in High Street. The first thing I saw on the screen as we went inside the curtains, was an old man with long white hair and a beard with a shepherd's crook. In a loud voice I asked my mother if it was Moses crossing the desert - mother shushed me. I had not been to the pictures before; belonging to the Salvation Army, it was considered evil. I now slept with my mother for the rest of the war. For Christmas, Dad had left me a little china doll in half a walnut shell lined with silk and a little doll's house made of cardboard along with two hyacinths in flower.

1916

While the war was on, I used to go to a little tea shop near the end of Clarence Place, Oxford Street end, and get a jug of tea for 3d. There was enough tea for two cups each! I used to get there about eight o'clock in the morning, put my jug on the counter, take two empty quart jugs from Mrs. Emery who kept the shop and go to Cases, the dairy, for milk. By the time I got back, my two friends Tom and Mike - Australian soldiers billeted at Tower House, now Cotham School - would be there. We had become very good friends and I usually had some chocolate or fancy biscuits from them in the morning. There were several others, but these two were really friends. They left in March 1918, and I have often wondered if they returned safely to Australia.

Food was now getting short. The corner shop run by Granny Lord used to supply 3d. worth of sugar and 1d. of tea to all her customers on a Saturday without ration points. She took care however, to make sure no-one got more than a fair share, knowing all her customers.

With the help of the tea and sugar from Granny Lord and our jug of tea each morning, we were fairly well off for drink. The biggest trouble was butter and margerine; 2 oz. butter, if you could get it, and 4 oz. of margerine per person was the ration. Before rationing came in, the only way to get margerine was to go down to the Maypole in High Street at about five o'clock in the morning and if you were lucky, come away with 4 oz. at about seven o'clock - butter was hopeless. On Saturday mornings, Mother used to go about 3.45am and I would go to relieve her at 7.00am if she hadn't returned by then. Mother would then go to her place of work where I helped to wash up and clean knives, etc and we would both come home at one o'clock and bring dinner with us - already cooked.

Mother used to work for different people each day. On Fridays she worked for a Dr. Dymock and brought home a washstand jug half-full with soup with pieces of meat in it. We would have the soup for tea on Friday, take the meat out and have a pie on Sunday. Meat was also very difficult at that time, but not rationed. The butcher used to let most of it go to his richer clients.

Just before Christmas we did the usual cards and calendars and the teacher said that if we wanted to make necklaces and boxes and a Christmas tree she would help us.

First of all the tree, we had to take branches with twigs and green crepe paper; having covered the twigs with paper we were all given a length of tinsel to wrap around, we were also asked to bring silver paper for a star with which we covered cardboard for the top of the tree. The teacher then gave us two bags of sweets each and a small sugar mouse, pink for the girls and white for the boys.

Those of us who wanted to make necklaces had to take wallpaper or a thick coloured paper and if we had them small beads, also a large hook and eye. We then cut the wallpaper into strips of about 1½ ins long, rolled it around a matchstick and glued it at the edges. When this was finished they were left overnight to dry. Next afternoon the teacher came round with a jug of perfumed liquid and sprayed all our beads, these again were left overnight to dry. Those of us who had their own beads – mine were blue glass – threaded them and covered the hook and eye with embroidery silk, mine again being blue.

Those of us who also wanted to make boxes had to bring the box we wanted, the teacher provided coloured paper and if you wished you could buy small shells to decorate the top, these cost ¼d. a bag. I had some little pink cockle shells from Weston and a little mirror which I wanted to put on the top. The teacher glued these on for me and it looked very attractive. We were then told to use polish on the inside if made of wood, if paper they would already have been lined.

Christmas that year was very quiet, Dad had sent me a French doll which mother had kept hidden until then. We had a play at the school in which I was a brown elf with two lines to say, how I envied the Fairy Queen and Flowers but then I wasn't a pretty child – hair like rats' tails (except Sundays when I had ringlets, after a night spent with it rolled in rags) and a frown. Parents were invited to this and mother came – I still have a photo of us all dressed up but now bent and broken with age.

(To be continued)

HAVE YOU SEEN ANY 'BLUE BADGES' LATELY?

by Karin Cross

For many years visitors to London have become familiar with the 'Blue Badge' worn by tourist guides who have undergone intensive training and stringent examination to fit them for the job. Not only must they have endless information and general knowledge available on instant recall but also the ability to interpret this to people of diverse social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Equally important are skills such as the planning of tours on foot or by coach within strict time limits and the pitfalls of innumerable regulations, the marshalling of large parties in crowded places, and resourcefulness in dealing with unexpected situations.

Since the West Country receives more visitors than anywhere outside of London, it is fitting that the West Country Tourist Board was the first Regional Board to set up comprehensive training courses for guides, leading to the award of their own Regional 'Blue Badge'. These courses, it was decided, would be run through Colleges of Further Education, with content and examinations agreed and moderated jointly by the W.C.T.B. and the Colleges. The first course began at Salisbury College of Technology in 1972, followed by South Devon Technical College, Torquay in 1973, Brunel Technical College, Bristol in 1974, Plymouth Polytechnic in 1978 and Somerset College of Arts and Technology, Taunton in 1986.

Emphasis is placed upon the importance of achieving competence in the skills and techniques of guiding, and naturally the material used for developing and practising those skills and which will be required when actually 'on the job', is a detailed knowledge of all aspects of the area – geography, history, natural history, agriculture, architecture, the arts and so forth. This of itself implies the need for a knowledge of reputable sources and some skill in research. The West Country Tourist Board has always insisted that guides shall be as accurate as possible in the information they give, distinguishing clearly between proven fact and speculative opinion, history and legend, while presenting it as interestingly and entertainingly as possible. Perhaps it is opportune here to say how greatly guides appreciate and rely upon the work done by professionals and the serious 'learned societies' in patiently unearthing and evaluating new data about our part of the country, in whatever field of knowledge. Alas! Sometimes even the most careful exposition will not succeed in surmounting barriers of historical and time perception, or mis-perception, as in the case of one gentleman from across the Atlantic who was thrilled to visit Stonehenge because he knew he was descended from the Vikings and now at last he was seeing where they came from (the guide was given treatment for shock and is making a slow recovery...!).



Contrary to widespread belief, the greatest expert in knowledge is not always the ideal person to impart it to lesser mortals. There is a considerable danger that he will talk at great length without ever noticing that the members of the party are shifting from foot to foot, wearied by standing, that they are glazed of eye from an excess of detail which they cannot absorb, and that they are rather bewildered because they do not in fact possess the degree of background knowledge which the speaker assumes to exist. Blessed indeed is the 'authority' on a subject who can communicate effectively, with due regard for the physical and mental limitations of others. Good guides will always be mindful of people's needs and will keep their own enthusiasm for a subject well under control. For most professional guides the party will only occasionally consist of people united in a specialist interest. Most often it consists of individuals who vary widely in background knowledge, culture, attention span, beliefs and prejudices and in understanding of English. A number of guides of course conduct tours in various languages for parties with a common tongue, but for mixed groups what is often required is just to choose simple vocabulary, speaking extra clearly and a little more slowly (not more loudly!) for the benefit of those with limited grasp of English.

What sort of people, then, apply for places on the Tourist Guide Course? Clearly they will be people with a love of their city, village, region, country, eager to share with others the reasons for their affection. That is as it should be, because that love will be expressed in the guide's whole demeanour and will get across to the visitors even though they may have understood only half of the words used. Anyone who essays to become a guide because what they really want is a captive audience for their own ego-trip will soon be found out. The students are of all ages from about twenty to seventy and they are, or have been factory workers, teachers, housewives, nurses, architects, engineers, librarians, chemists... need we go on? They are not required to have specific qualifications such as a degree or A-Levels but obviously must have an educational background good enough to enable them to follow the course and benefit from it. An attractive, warm personality and an ability to express oneself by the spoken word both clearly and fluently is obviously of prime importance. Classes are part-time over an academic year, with practical work at many weekends and intensive private study. There are no 'set books' but advice is given on appropriate reading and how to locate information, and students are expected to acquire a collection of recommended maps, and information booklets produced by the various tourist attractions of the area. All these, of course, will be their 'tools' for the future.

That the basic course is tougher than some anticipate is undoubtedly true and it does make heavy demands upon time, energy and determination. One student put it like this:

*You're everlasting buying books,
The money's running out.
The children all look hungry,
You kick the dog about.
Hold on, hold on, you tell yourself,*

*The end is almost here -
Heavens above! another trip?
Antiquities! Oh dear!*

Slightly tongue-in-cheek, because the guide has made himself extremely well-informed on the 'antiquities' and is never happier than when showing visitors round the great prehistoric sites at Avebury and Stonehenge.

The Tutor, too, has moments of anguish, especially on the Practicals when as one of three Examiners, one or two unfortunates are seen to be forgetting the carefully instilled principles, probably because they are nervous:

*The Practicals - now don't despair!
One effort more - you're nearly there!
(Watch out! Don't let the party stray...
Oh good! They've thought to look this way.
HOW MANY TIMES... ** ! / * * ? Oh, what's the good?
I really thought they'd understood!
You hear that curious pattering sound?
MY GNASHED-OUT TEETH upon the ground!'*

There are far more moments of joy, however, as students expand their horizons and confidence blossoms. One of the happiest results of courses over the years has been the long-lasting friendships which have developed among delightfully varied people with so many common interests, in which the Tutor has felt it an honour to be included.

Short courses culminating in an examination are run at the respective Colleges to enable guides to study in more depth than is possible on the basic course, areas of special interest such as Cotswold or Mendip, or subjects such as heraldry or furniture. Success in the examination entitles the guides to an 'Endorsement' in the subject and will recommend them for selection when a specialist tour is called for. Many guides also make use of their own professional expertise, or equip themselves by private study, to cater for special-interest groups, whether the interest be famous gardens, early Methodism, or the best pubs!

Relatively few guides can make this work a full-time career though the number is growing. Many work freelance, building up their own connections to obtain work. Others have joined together to form organisations which act as agencies, to anyone seeking the services of a guide can apply. Members of the City of Bristol Corps of Guides conduct daily walks in the city, provide commentary on the Open-Top Buses, help at the Tourist Information Centres and on certain Sundays conduct tours of the mansion at Ashton Court, as well as undertaking other types of guide work as required. Other organisations in Bristol are Tourist Guides Bristol, West Country Couriers, Shanks Tours and Page-a-Guide, and in Bath, Parade Guides of Bath and Sulis Guides. All can provide qualified guides for all kinds of work, including car tours for very small numbers.

In case any readers are fired by the idea, it should be mentioned that for each course only about twenty students can be taken, selected by written application and interview from probably four or five times that number of applicants. Also, courses are not run every year, to avoid producing more guides at one time than demand may reasonably be expected to absorb. We are proud, however, that demand is growing as the 'Blue Badge' is increasingly recognised as an indication of a good standard of guiding.

Let it not be thought, however, that 'Blue Badge' guides do not recognise that there are voluntary guides in many places who for years have provided excellent tours of the local scene, generally on foot. The Mayor's Corps of Honorary Guides in Bath is a noted and widely respected example of such bodies. Usually, however, these guides confine their activities to a fairly restricted area, unlike the professional guide who has to be able to undertake many different kinds of tour in almost any area.

What we all have in common is the hope that we have been able to open a few windows of knowledge and imagination for our visitors, and left them happy that they came.

AVON LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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LETTER TO THE EDITORS

From Mr. Trevor Fawcett (Secretary of the History of Bath Research Group), 25 Northampton Street, Bath BA1 2SW.

It now looks as if the tennis court that existed in Bath by c.1735 at the angle of Gay Street and George Street (referred to in my article in *Avon Past* No.13) was by the elder John Wood, though not hitherto ascribed to him: designed and financed by Wood, that is, though actually built by Richard Jones, clerk of works to Ralph Allen. The evidence lies in the early ratebooks for Walcot Parish where Wood is recorded as paying rates on the 'Tennis Court' from 1736 to 1738. In 1738 the court is stated to be 'uninhabited', which may mean either that it lacked a resident player or was simply unused. Its early demise must relate to the rapid spread of Wood's new housing development up Gay Street (then called Barton Street), for the buildings just below George Street corner were going up c.1738-39 and already rate-paying in 1740. Wood's tennis court may have been conceived as a counterpart to his St. Mary's Chapel at the opposite diagonal of Queen Square, which catered for the spiritual needs of local residents just as a tennis court would for the physical. In a small way it fulfilled Wood's urge to provide his native city with a sporting amenity on the imperial Roman model.

BRISTOL AND AVON ARCHAEOLOGY

The fully illustrated Journal of the Bristol & Avon
Archaeological Society

Contents of Volume 6 (1987): (Price £2.50)

Domesday Keynsham M. Whittock

Excavations in Bristol 1985-86 R. Burchill et al.

The Lesser Cloister and a medieval drain at St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol
E. Boore

Common types of earthenware found in the Bristol area G.L. Good & V. Russett

Also, shorter notes on finds, fieldwork and excavations in the Bristol area, a round-up of Archaeology in Avon 1986-87 and book reviews.

Volumes 2 (price £2.00) and Volumes 3, 4 & 5 (price £2.50 each) are also still available. Volume 7 is due to be published in Autumn 1989.

The above BAAS publications are available from the Hon. Treasurer, BAAS, 3 Priory Avenue, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS9 4DA (add 50p to your order to cover postage & packing). They can also be obtained from the shop at the City Museum, Queens Road, Bristol.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

SOURCES FOR DOING VICTORIAN LOCAL HISTORY IN AVON SCHOOLS

Avon County Council Planning Department. 40pp. 1984. £0.65.

Essentially this publication is a teacher's vade-mecum but that is not to say that members of the public who are not teachers, as well as members of some local history societies who do not wish to exist forever upon a monthly diet of imported expertise and other peoples' opinions, will not profit from buying it. It is a pity that it has so uninspiring a title for the matter contained in it should indeed dispel 'classroom antiquarianism' although - unless my so far brief experience in dealing with school children has been very fortunate - I do not believe this to be a particularly widespread disease. Intellectual rheumatism is far more likely to be diagnosed in older age groups and in other forms of organisation.

The plan of the work is business-like and to the point; the teacher's professional art of summarising and note-taking has clearly shaped the division of each of the thirteen sections on different kinds of record into comments on 'origins' (or 'background'), 'location' and 'suggestions for use'. Each has useful information and valuable hints. It should however be noticed that this process of synopsis has at times led to some misleading generalisations, some too curt judgements and some bad omissions. It was never intended that the 'Povner and Verrey guides' (page 23) should deal with a large number of buildings and it is unfortunate that after mis-leading readers about the objectives of that series the authors should fail to mention the street-lists of Bristol buildings produced (though not put on public sale) at the same time as 'Bristol, and Architectural History' by Gomme, Little and Jenner appeared from the press in 1979. A reading of the final paragraph of the preface to that work - not included in the bibliography on pp.38-39 - would have told the compilers of its availability. Also omitted from the bibliography is the *Avon Local History Handbook*, edited by J.S. Moore (Phillimore, 1979), which, apart from other very obvious reasons for including it in a work dealing with the Avon area, would have increased the compilers' range of bibliographical reference at no cost to themselves.

Some comments could have been better pondered and examined comparatively before being rushed into print. If family reconstruction from parish registers is rightly judged 'very complicated and not advised' (p.19), any answer to the question posed on the opposite page 'Did the school improve literacy? (see Parish Registers)' seems to be invited rather rashly. It certainly cannot be answered satisfactorily from classroom resources and indeed only circumspcctly from parish registers which do at least offer abundant data for family reconstruction.

It also seems wasteful in a publication which had to be kept reasonably brief and is intended for an informed readership to include two pages wholly devoted to annotated drawings of the inside and outside features of churches. Likewise a full page map of the 'Old Counties of England before 1974' seems superfluous.

A superimposed representation of the extent of the new ones could have made this more useful but, given the fact that this work deals with Avon sources, what is the purpose of such a map anyway? These, along with the comparative literacy maps for 1830 and 1870 could have been excluded possibly in favour of listings of all relevant material for one or two villages or urban areas or fuller bibliographies. Two guides to the study of the Victorian period - Lionel Madden's *How To Find Out About The Victorian Period* (Pergamon, 1970) and R. Storey and L. Madden, *Primary Sources For Victorian Studies* (Phillimore, 1977) should have been mentioned for the benefit of teachers who may wish to investigate their subject more fully. It is also a pity that the existence of a local branch of the Victorian Society has not been noticed.

It is primarily therefore blemishes of balance and the significance of added comment - the washing line across the classroom recommended on page 23 seems more appropriate for Christmas cards than it would be as a visual aid for local historians three to four feet in height - which reduce the value of this otherwise praiseworthy piece of educational initiative. Given more editorial reflection and a greater measure of prior consultation before publication a present mark of 'Good: shows distinct promise' may hopefully be altered in favour of 'excellent' for a second edition.

C.J.Spittal

GLOUCESTER, A HISTORY AND GUIDE

by Carolyn Heighway
Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1985. £5.95

In the preface to this short and extremely well illustrated book (only about half of the 196 pages being devoted to text), Carolyn Heighway makes it plain that this is not the definitive history of Gloucester, but '... a summary of the main events of Gloucester's past, together with an account of the physical survival of that past...'

The ten self-contained chapters, each based around a different historical theme, form a chronological narrative, from the city's origin as a Roman legionary fortress to its massive nineteenth century expansion; a brief epilogue summarises the major changes this century.

The author draws on a wide range of archaeological and documentary evidence to follow not only the changes in Gloucester's military, religious, political, and mercantile importance, but also the city's social history, encompassing the lives and lifestyles of the ordinary inhabitants. Local characters often illustrate the story, and contemporary atmosphere is added by references to sanitation and free-roaming livestock.

Each chapter ends with a list of the more important buildings, monuments, and local museum displays to be seen, while the numerous photographs, plans, and reconstruction drawings, along with the location of historical features in relation to the modern city, allow the reader to envisage what no longer exists.

Occasionally the book gives the impression of having been rushed too quickly

into print. The photograph on page 131 is badly out of focus, there are too many typographical errors, and in places the style is so awkward that it betrays an absence of material control. On the whole, however, this is a very easy book to read, written in a simple and concise way, which strikes a balance between the twin dangers of short books on long subjects, being neither an anemic oversimplification, nor an indigestible inventory of fact and figures.

The chapter by chapter bibliography at the end of the book should provide ample further reading for anyone stimulated to make a deeper study of the city's past.

Like many towns and cities throughout the country Gloucester has suffered its share of insensitive re-development, yet in the epilogue the author declares 'Today Gloucester... is more conscious of its heritage than it has ever been'. The publication of this very readable book, with its wide general appeal, will help to foster this growing concern for historic Gloucester.

J.P. Hoyle

GLoucester IN OLD PHOTOGRAPHS, FROM THE COUNTY LIBRARY COLLECTION

by Jill Voyce

Gloucester. Alan Sutton, 1985. £5.95

Saves for a very short introduction this book, true to its title, simply comprises some 191 black-and-white photographs of Gloucester subjects. The photographs are arranged quite successfully into groups by theme: buildings, employment, transport, etc, but without any attempt to order the photographs within these groups chronologically. In fact, of those photographs which are clearly dated, about seventy percent are from the period 1900-1930, with 1900-1910 being the best represented decade, partly due to the inclusion of fourteen photographs relating to King Edward VII's visit to Gloucester in 1909. Of the remainder, about eighteen percent of the photographs are nineteenth century, the others from the 1930's.

The captions to the photographs are readable and authoritative, but are perhaps unnecessarily concise. There are numerous instances of blank half-pages over which the captions could profitably have expanded.

Considering the variable quality of the originals the reproduction of the photographs is good throughout, though several suffer from over-compression dictated by the 216 by 154 mm format chosen for the publication.

As a work of reference the book has several shortcomings. There is no index, no cross-referencing (e.g. between pages 13 and 42 which show the same view at different dates), the photographs themselves are not numbered, and the street plan on page ten is woefully inadequate: it fails to show many of the streets and areas named in the captions. Since, as the subtitle proudly proclaims, the photographs all come from the County Library collection, it would have aided future research if the catalogue number of each photograph had been included, but such criticism is perhaps unfair for an avowedly popular work.

In short, this book is a good-to-average example of the now common genre of the nostalgic photograph book, which amply fulfills its stated intention of creating a pleasurable evocation of the county town. If it also encourages its readers to explore the resources of Gloucester Library at first hand, so much the better.

Alan Saville

A BRISTOL MISCELLANY

edited by Patrick McGrath

218pp. Bristol Record Society Publications Vol. XXXVIII 1985. £9.00

One is a little sceptical about the appeal of 'miscellany' volumes: all too often they tend to be left on the shelf, at least by the casual browser, in favour of those whose contents one can tell at a glance. It would be a pity if that were to be the fate of 'A Bristol Miscellany'. There is much here to appeal, and to be of value, to local historian at all levels.

The Miscellany is made up of three major contributions, and two short notes supplied by Joseph Bettey. The range is indeed varied and interesting, as the General Editor's introduction claims, and the contributors are to be congratulated on stepping into the breach at what was clearly short notice.

The first of the principal sources is Bishop Secker's Diocese Book, edited by Elizabeth Ralph. The book was begun by Bishop Thomas Secker in the years 1735-37, and additions were made up to 1822. The bulk of the original book covers parishes in the Archdeaconry of Dorset, and is not reproduced here (although it is the subject of a brief account by Dr. Bettey). The parishes of the city and deanery of Bristol are covered, and for each parish we are given estimates of the number of resident families and of 'dissenters' of various persuasions. In Mangotsfield in 1766, for instance, were '300 hundred families. Many Dissenters, Quakers, Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Methodists. No Papists'. By 1784 there were '200 hundred families. Methodists great many assemble in private houses or on the common. Numbers increasing.'

Bishop Secker's book will obviously be of value to students of ecclesiastical history, especially perhaps of early Non-conformity. Demographers will also be interested in the information about population size, and increasing numbers of houses and families in the Bristol parishes. Any parish historian, in fact, should not overlook this now much more accessible source.

Secondly we have the Miles/Tharp correspondence, a series of letters from William Miles, a Bristol merchant to John Tharp, a planter in Jamaica, written between 1770 and 1789 and now calendared by Kenneth Morgan. Dr. Morgan provides an authoritative introduction, and the letters themselves throw fascinating sidelights on Bristol's part in the 'triangular trade' of the eighteenth century. In any calendar of this type, the balance between summary and direct quotation is problematic, and largely a matter of personal taste: I should have liked more of the latter, but constraints of space obviously come into play.

The final substantial contribution is the records of the Bristol Board of Health,

1851-72, edited by David Large. This represents a Herculean task of compression, offering 'the meat of the Local Board's activities' from a very full and apparently often tedious set of proceedings of the town council and minutes of the Local Board Committee. The Board attempted to improve sewage disposal methods, the quality of water supply, drainage, street lighting, and much else. They reported outbreaks of 'fever' and cholera (the latter especially in 1854), but in 1865 were able to congratulate themselves that 'Bristol is at the present time the healthiest city in England'. This may have been optimistic, and to modern eyes is in any case not much of a recommendation, but the Board's conscientious battle to improve environmental conditions makes interesting reading.

Finally, two brief records edited by Joseph Bettley. 'Two Tudor Visits to Bristol' details the royal visits of Henry VII and Elizabeth, the latter with an account of costs incurred by the city. 'A Bristol Glassworks c.1730' presents an inventory of the property of Humphrey Perrott, a glass and bottle manufacturer. It is to be hoped that these two items are not 'lost' among the more extensive pieces.

It would be churlish to complain of diversity in a miscellany volume, and especially one nobly put together at short notice, but it would be an eclectic taste that found a use for every item here. On the other hand, however, it would be sad never to see reproduced sources insufficiently substantial for a whole volume. There is material here for the national as well as the local historian, and one hopes that attention will be sufficiently directed towards it.

Gwyneth M. Nair

A HISTORY OF METHODISM IN KEYNSHAM

by M. Whitehead et al.

70pp. 1986. £2.50.

One would probably assume that, with major connections so close, John Wesley must have visited or passed through Keynsham at some point.

He did, of course, on a number of occasions between 1771 and his last visit, when at the age of eighty-four, he preached at noon sometime in 1787.

It seems that the first visible seeds of Methodism in Keynsham came in the form of schools and that the "fruits of our labours" that Wesley himself noted in the town in 1776, flowered into the community's first chapel which was opened in 1807. Some of the names involved in these beginnings are still Keynsham names today but the original chapel and two others subsequently built no longer exist. The legacy of these early workers, dissatisfied with the impotence of the established Church, consists of a major building and a youth and community centre in the High Street and another in the midst of the 1950's and 1960's housing estate.

The story behind the development of the Methodists in Keynsham is more than adequately traced in this booklet, lovingly put together by members of the current Methodist congregation and the town's minister. One problem however is that the tone is very much behind the scenes - much of the historical text consists of developments as traced by minutes of meetings over the last two

hundred years. The names, costs and the technical details are of course fascinating but I rather think for the general reader more details of the social context and indeed the national Methodist history that led to the Zion Primitive Methodists and the Bethesda United Free Methodists would make for a more satisfying read. Also what happened to the interesting story of the haunting of the Bethesda Chapel, which as a DIY store was excoriated in the 1960's - I can certainly remember the supernatural school-dinners I was forced to eat there in the late 1950's. It's not that sort of book and probably all the better for it.

The most recent concrete event of the Methodist Church in Keynsham was the opening of the 'Key' youth centre in 1971 - a fitting conclusion, to date, of a story that began with concern for the education of children. The final chapter of the booklet looks forward to the future wary of the problems facing the survival of all denominations. I wish the book had projected more of the contribution of the Methodists to the community over the last two hundred years - we should hope that, in whatever form, these people will be doing the same for the next two hundred years.

R. Davison

WILLIAM CANYNGES 1402-1474

by James Sberborne.

30pp; 4 photographs. Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1985.
£1.00.

This pamphlet forms another in the excellent local history series published by the Bristol Branch of the Historical Association. An unbiased study of one of the most important figures in Bristol's history has long been overdue, and the appearance of this pamphlet, at such a reasonable price, is surely to be welcomed.

The author begins by echoing the feelings of those who deplored the fabrications which had built up around the life of William Canynges, particularly in the writings of Thomas Chatterton. He then briefly discusses Canynges' immediate predecessors and outlines the development of Bristol's cloth industry in the fourteenth century, which provided the bulk of the wealth of Canynges' grandfather, William Canynges I.

Much of the pamphlet is taken up by a description of the rise of William Canynges, his fortunes in trade and a description of the public offices he held. Finally, Canynges' sudden entry into the priesthood in 1467 is discussed and his progress to the position of Dean of Westbury College described.

Inevitably in a work of this length many topics are all too briefly discussed, and, as the author himself admits, he would love to know more if it were possible to meet and question William Canynges himself face to face. Yet he manages to give us a fascinating glimpse of fifteenth century life in an important medieval city and clearly attempts to get behind the bald historical record into the mind of the man himself.

In some areas the author is perhaps a little too brief: we would like to know why Canynge entered the priesthood with such haste, breaking with a previously highly successful secular life. Rumours concerning a rift between Canynge and Edward IV, and the suggestion of Canynge being forced to remarry after the death of his wife are dismissed as improbable, but no other reason is suggested. The motives were probably many. One possible reason is hinted at elsewhere when it is mentioned that Canynge endowed chantries in St. Mary Redcliffe church "at a time when he was... concerned for the fate of his soul after death". This was a common sentiment in the medieval period for men who had made their fortunes in secular life and who wished to ensure the well-being of their soul after death. It might explain some of the charitable endowments which Canynge made to the Church of St. Mary Redcliffe in later life.

The author is clearly convinced of Canynge's propriety, and this essay is essentially a eulogy of the man. He may well be correct in his assessment, but one wonders whether this sometimes leads to an uncritical acceptance of anything favourable to Canynge, and dismissal of any slight upon his character.

In the footnotes there is clearly a wealth of information which will be of immense value to the student wishing to research further into the details of William Canynge. It was frustrating, however, to find no footnote to the important reference about the granting of properties, including Canynge's House, to John Twynhow in September 1483.

Generally, however, the author has succeeded in putting the record straight. His description of town government in fifteenth century Bristol is particularly interesting, and the text flows easily and is never obscure. Many questions about William Canynge remain unanswered, and, hopefully, this pamphlet will spur others (including this reviewer) to carry out further research into the life of this important and fascinating man.

R.H. Jones

COUNTRY CARRIERS IN THE BRISTOL REGION IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by Kenneth Morgan.

15pp, illus. Bristol: Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1986.
ISBN 0-901388-47-5. £1.00.

Few areas of Britain can be so well served by local history publishing as is Avon by the pamphlets of the Bristol Branch of the Historical Association. These attractive miniature monographs are more accessible and surely reach a wider audience than similar essays included in scholarly journals elsewhere. The sixty-fourth in the series is a worthy example: beautifully printed, with no spelling or typographic errors that I could see, three good quality photographs and a map, it is excellent value for £1.

Kenneth Morgan has combed local trade directories and made much use of personal reminiscences to give a brief account of a huge subject: in 1897, he tells

us, some ninety-three carriers were operating 344 services to 132 places around Bristol, making 1076 calls or scheduled stops each week. He mentions the exchange of news at coaching inns, and I suspect that this vast network represented a bush telegraph in which the carriage of information was almost as important as the carriage of goods. He portrays the country carriers as being in competition with village shops, declining in the twentieth century due to their growth and the rising cost of petrol, yet he tells us about five who were themselves village shopkeepers running their own supply lines to the city. I should have thought that the decline of the rural hauliers was due to the growth of national distribution networks, just as country shops have given way to the national retail chains.

The author quotes ten personal informants, and I should like to know how he traced them and how representative their memories are. Indeed, my only qualm about this booklet is that its brevity may do justice neither to the author's research nor to the subject. I hope that Mr. Morgan's interesting survey does not mean that the topic is now 'done', but acts as a catalyst for further work.

Peter King

MANGOTSFIELD PICTURE PAST 2.

106pp. Downend Local History Society, 1987.
No price.

In his foreword, David Smith, County Archivist of Gloucestershire, remarks on the growth of interest in local history, ascribing it in part to the fact that people now move home so frequently. Newcomers want to find out more about their adopted home, whilst older residents and those who have left feel the need to keep in touch with their roots.

This book, the second in the series, will be of most interest to the latter group. Published privately by the Downend Local History Society (and somewhat lacking bibliographically - no International Standard Book Number, for example), it concentrates on people. Of 102 photographs of Downend, Mangotsfield and Staple Hill dated between 1877 and 1979 (but mostly from the early years of the twentieth century), more than half include named individuals. The participants in many otherwise unremarkable group photographs are carefully identified: 'Curly Britton on the staff of Downend Co-op, Doris Roberts of the Mangotsfield Methodists, Walter Whittern the milkman of Staple Hill... these localities may no longer be separate villages, but the community spirit is alive and fostered by shared memories such as these.

As an outsider I felt a little out of it. I would have appreciated more context, a map perhaps, an explanation of how the photographs were selected, and the significance of the order in which they are presented. It is startling, for example, to turn a page showing the roof structure of a medieval barn and be confronted with a picture of coalminers and a pony in a gloomy pit tunnel.

But this book was not produced for the likes of me. Mangotsfield people will love it, and the publishers are to be congratulated on their enterprise.

Peter King

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

ASTON, M. & ILES, R., eds. *The Archaeology of Avon: a review from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages* (Avon County Council, 1987, £5.95).

ASTON, M., ed. *Aspects of the medieval landscape of Somerset* (Somerset County Council, 1988, £5.95).

BADDELEY, A., comp. *Parish Survey of Tytherington* (BAARG, Rev.ed. 1987, £2.50).

CLINCH, R. *Curious Bristol* (Bossiny Books, 1987, £2.95).

COBB, P.G. *The Oxford Movement in nineteenth century Bristol* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1988, £1.00).

COTTLE, B. *Joseph Cottle of Bristol* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1987, £1.00).

HARRIS, P. *Bristol's 'railway mania' 1862-1864* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1987, £1.00).

JANES, R. *Publow field names* (Bocket Centre, 1988, £3.00).

NABB, H. *The Bristol gas industry 1815-1949* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1987, £1.00).

REID, H. *Bristol & Co.* (Rodeliffe Press, 1987, £4.95).

SUMMERS, P. & TITTERTON, J.E., eds. *Hatchments in Britain 7: Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Somerset* (Phillimore, 1988, £11.95).

TURNER, M. *A History of the Workers' Educational Association - Bath Branch 1912-87* (WEA Bath Branch, 1987, £2.30).

VANES, J. *Bristol at the time of the Spanish Armada* (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1988, £1.00).

WALKER, R.S. *The Book of Almondsbury* (Barracuda Books, 1987, £12.95).

ADMISSION FREE

Mon-Sat 10 am-5 pm



SOME OF OUR EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS FOR 1989

25 Mar - 8 Apr **William Fishley Holland** - 50 years of Clevedon Pottery.

10 Jun - 29 Aug **All About Milk** - The dairy industry past and present.

27 May **All the fun of the fair** - an extra special Museums Day with a street fair.

April - Sept **Woodspring Guided Walks.**
Please contact the Museum for details.



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