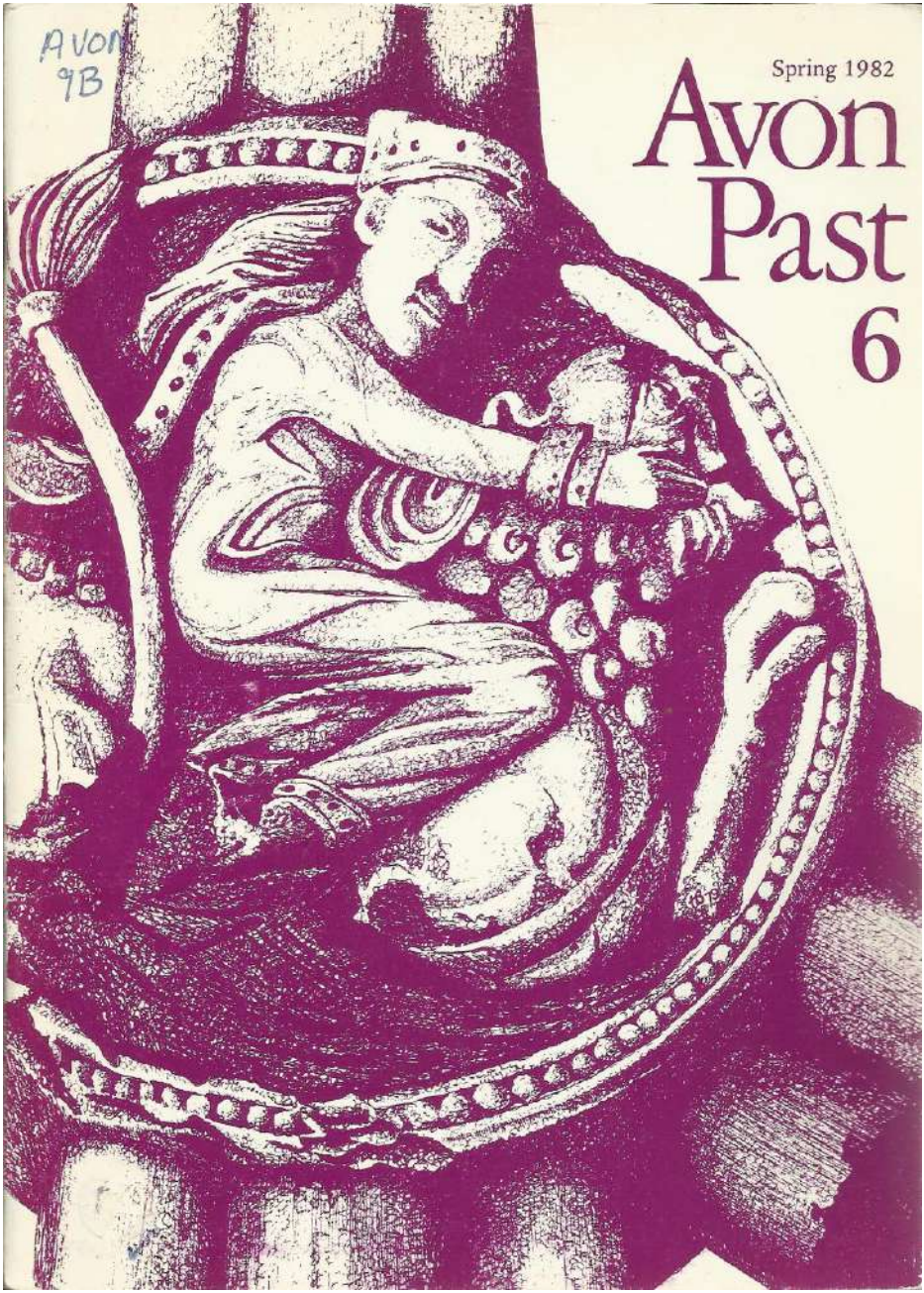
Spring 1982

Avon Past 6



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Line drawing of roof-boss excavated from Keynsham Abbey showing Samson and the Lion.

Avon Past

the joint journal of
AVON ARCHAEOLOGICAL COUNCIL
and AVON LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

There could be a disturbing development resulting from the cuts in hours and the introduction of charges in some county record offices. Not only may a a large number of users turn even more to the local studies library, with its free access, and almost certainly longer opening hours, but, as at least one family history society has recently suggested, transcriptions of parish and other records should now be placed for preference in *libraries* rather than record offices, so that as many people as possible can see them.

There is of course every advantage to be gained from such action, but the record offices must still be offered all such transcripts and indexes because they will relieve the demand on the original copies. The logical conclusion to this development might be that potential donors will think twice before presenting any material to an archives office where it may no longer be readily available to interested enquirers. This would be a very unfortunate situation, and could cause unnecessary pressure on libraries which might be less well equipped to deal with manuscript collections. Such potential donors might in fact be more likely to decide to sell their collections.

One answer must be to make available, widely and cheaply, microform versions of as large a section of our manuscript heritage as possible. These microforms would at least not pose so many storage problems for libraries. Seats in record offices (which usually have much fewer than libraries) would also be released for those users needing to work with the originals.

This boom in local history, and, more recently, in family history, must eventually be reflected in local authority provision for what is, after all, an increasing leisure activity. Why have county archives collections not always had the same support that the county library service has received in the past? Certainly they no longer serve a select group with a 'minority interest'.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Mrs. JANE COATES graduated in history in the 1940's from the University of New Zealand. A keen gardener, she has lived in Bath since 1957. Her article is based on a talk she gave first to the Bath Association of Graduate Women and repeated in 1979 for the Bath Historical Association.

HAROLD BROWN graduated from the University of Bristol in 1925, and was history master at Cotham Grammar School from 1940-46. After two years lecturing at Wimpole Training College, Cambridge, he became an H.M.I. for schools in Worcester until 1960. He is the author of *Bristol – England* published by the Burleigh Press. He has previously contributed an article to *Avon Past* on street activities.

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IVOR MORGAN was born in Bath. He was taught history in Bath Technical College by R.S. Neale. In 1968 he obtained a B.A. in Political Studies and Sociology from Hull University; and in 1969 his M.Sc. from the London School of Economics. Since then he has been a lecturer at Lincoln College of Technology.

CANON ELLACOMBE AND HIS GARDEN

by

Jane Coates

Historical detective work is the amateur's version of truly original scholarly research. It cannot claim to add to the sum of human knowledge but it has its personal rewards – delightful acquaintances are made, the imagination is stimulated and there is all the fun of the chase. What follows is an account of such a piece of private diversion offered in the hope that it will entertain and perhaps suggest to more serious students of local history further fields of enquiry.

I expect plenty of people hereabouts have heard of Canon H.N. Ellacombe, the vicar of Bitton, scholar and enthusiastic gardener, and there must be some still alive who knew him personally, for he died in 1916, but he was quite unknown to me when I came upon his garden by chance.

I used, when my children were young and very active, to take them on summer holiday expeditions to nearby villages from our home on the western edge of Bath. Bitton was a favourite. There I could indulge my interest in churches and churchyards and they could satisfy their curiosity about smaller things amongst the paths and old walls without disturbing the dead or the living. We soon became aware of the Ellacombes, the Canon and his father, dominating the church and churchyard as they do. At the same time, as a keen gardener, I naturally admired the fine tall trees – the wych elm, the gingko, the cut-leafed beech, the rather incongruous Chusan palm and, on autumn visits, the spreading *Parrotia persica* – which grew above the mature shrubs in the garden on the north side of the churchyard. There the matter rested until some years later I happened to acquire two books which made the connection A.W. Hill's *Memoir* (1919) of H.N. Ellacombe and *In a Gloucestershire Garden* (1895) by Ellacombe himself. From these it was clear that the Ellacombes were attractive and interesting personalities, each with a place in clerical and gardening history, who had left their mark on Bath and Bristol as well as on the national scene.

As opportunity offered I pursued them, concentrating mainly on the son. Here Bath Reference Library, with its large local historical collection, and the Bath Guildhall Archives were most useful. The picture was filled out, too, by numerous references to Canon Ellacombe in books by or about his gardening friends which I began to collect at this time. Eventually I came across a plan of his garden reproduced in an article by Betty Massingham (1961, but see also 1979). The culmination came when the present owners of the garden, on a brilliant summer's day, were kind enough to allow me, armed with the plan, to explore at leisure. The main bones of the garden can still be traced and a great many of the fine and rare trees and shrubs are still there as marked on the plan. The presence of Ellacombe and his gardener, Richard Ashmore, is still very much to be felt.

The Ellacombes were a Devon family. The Canon's father, Henry Thomas (1790-1885) was first curate and then vicar of Bitton from 1817 until 1850, and rector of Clyst St. George till he died. Before he entered the church he was an engineer at Chatham Dockyard under Marc Brunel but returned to Oxford to study for ordination. An authority on bellringing and a great improver of churches, he was responsible for the neo-Norman chancel arch at Bitton, for new and altered chapels at Oldland, Warmley and Hanham and for building

the schoolhouse at Bitton. He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and an active member of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, his best known publication being his *History of the Parish of Bitton in the County of Gloucester* published in 1881. By his marriage to Miss Nicholson there were five daughters and the Canon. A small plain man, Henry Thomas was vigorous and energetic and something of an autocrat. In his time he was a well known gardener responsible for large and distinguished plantings both at Bitton and Clyst St. George. A list, dated 1830, of more than 200 trees and shrubs he planted at Bitton is given in full in A.W. Hill's memoir. Like his son after him, he corresponded with the great botanical gardens in Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg and Philadelphia, as well as Kew, and obtained parcels of plants from many of them. H.T. Ellacombe is buried at Bitton with a memorial inside the church.

The subject of this article, Henry Nicholson Ellacombe, was born at Bitton Vicarage in 1822. At Bath Grammar School (later King Edward's School) he was taught by Dr. Pears. He went on to Oriel College, Oxford and was ordained in 1847. First a curate at Sudbury in Derbyshire, then curate to his father, he became vicar in 1850 where he remained till his death. In 1874 he became Rural Dean of Bitton and, in 1881, Honorary Canon of Bristol. In 1852 he married Emily Aprilla Wemyss. They had ten children of whom two sons and seven daughters survived him. His wife died in 1897. He had a fall in 1913, became deaf and progressively more frail until he slipped away in 1916, aged 94.

A tall handsome man, vitality was the first impression. Intensely hospitable, he enjoyed the company of the pretty and the witty. He was known to keep a good table. Good claret and Stilton could be counted on. Meals were light and varied; dressed crab was a favourite. His generosity was legendary particularly when offering plants. "I hope you have found something to take away with you", he would say, or "I hope you have taken plenty of cuttings". He rode and fished as a young man and always walked about the parish. With definite likes and dislikes he was something of a despot. As a chairman he was notoriously brisk. A fine classical scholar, he read and wrote Latin and Greek to the end of his days. From the evidence of the *Memoir* (Hill, 1919) he was greatly loved by his family, servants and friends.

It is amusing to speculate about daily life at Bitton Vicarage. What part did Mrs. Ellacombe play amidst so much activity? Who were her friends? The ladies of the numerous large houses in the parish? How much did she turn to Bath for society, and shopping? Or did she prefer Bristol? Bitton Station conveniently served both. We hear of Ellacombe sending a 'victoria with a good pair of horses' to meet guests at Bath station. Like so many Victorian clergy he had private means. Ellacombe was a trustee and shareholder of the New River Company and went regularly to meetings at Myddleton House at Waltham Cross, Essex, the home of H.C.B. Bowles. His son, E.A. Bowles (1865-1954), another distinguished plantsman became Ellacombe's devoted disciple and friend.

Bitton at that time was a very large parish including Hanham, Kingswood, Warmley and Oldland. Ellacombe always had the assistance of curates, two of whom married his daughters. No doubt the parish records, which I have not consulted, would throw much light on his handling of day to day affairs. It is interesting to note that he encompasses Parson Kilvert's life (1840-79). One could, to some extent, read across. Ellacombe was at Oxford in the 1840's during the height of the Oxford movement. He remained a High Churchman of the old school. His sermons were lengthy, as expected, but have a simplicity and

humanity not generally associated with the Victorians. He read the lesson till the end of his life and always prepared candidates for confirmation himself. Like his father, he was a great believer in education. He opened and kept up the church school, energetically extracting subscriptions from the local landowners. Again like his father he made notable alterations to the church. The fine pencil cedar roof was made from a shipload which Ellacombe bought off a wreck in the Bristol Channel. He is remembered to this day as the father of his parish setting the young on the right path with firm clear advice and himself a symbol of stability and continuity.

Canon Ellacombe's connection with Bath was evidently lifelong but he seems to have been most active in the period from the 1860's to the 1890's. He belonged to the Bath Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club from its foundation in 1861 until 1899, being its president from 1894-97, and to the Bath Literary Club from 1875-92, serving as president in 1882. Both met at the Literary and Scientific Institution in Parade Gardens. He delivered numerous papers to these societies. Their highly evocative titles give an idea of the range and character of his interests –'Field Names', (1936); 'House Mottoes', (1905); 'The Daisy, its History, Poetry and Botany', (1884); 'Vineyards of Somerset and Gloucestershire', (1830a); 'The Great Frost of February, 1895' (1897a); 'The Great Drought of 1896', (1897b); 'Placenames derived from Plants in the Neighbourhood of Bath', (1889). Many well-known Bath worthies of the period were old friends, colleagues in these societies, visitors to his garden and participants with Ellacombe in the foundation of the Botanical Gardens. Jerom (sic) Murch, seven times mayor of Bath, lived at Cranhill, now a nursing home, and overlooking the Park. He was influential in the Royal Victoria Park Committee and active in the Bath Literary Society.

The Rev. John Earle (1824-1903), Profession of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford and rector of Swainswick (from 1857) was interested in the early history of Bath. The Rev. Leonard Jenyns, FLS, FGS, FZS, (1800-1893) who later changed his name to Blomefield, was curate of Woolley and an accomplished conchologist and botanist.

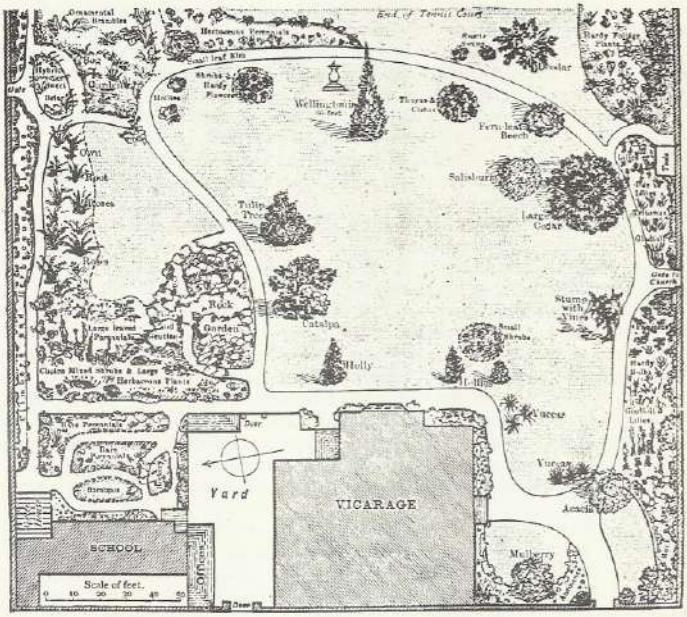
The Rev. H.H. Winwood (1830-1920), a very close friend, was a geologist and an expert on flints. J.W. Morris, FLS, and F.R. Hist. S. was a schoolmaster and botanist. Finally C.E. Broome, FLS (1812-1186) was an expert on fungi with a fine garden at Elmhurst at Batheaston.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science met at Bath in 1864 and 1888 (and latterly in 1978). It is interesting to note that several of these men, in company with Charles Darwin and other great national figures, delivered papers but not Ellacombe. It demonstrates his character as a true Victorian amateur, a cleric as so many were, carrying on the tradition of the cultivated polymath of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Broome by contrast was a solitary who shut himself off from his family to work with his microscope. He belongs more truly to the twentieth century. However, Darwin, on the occasion of the 1864 meeting, visited Ellacombe at Bitton and discussed the movement of climbing plants.

Ellacombe's main legacy to Bath was his part in the foundation of the Botanical Gardens. The Royal Victoria Park, established in 1830, was run by an independent committee and financed by subscribers with a contribution from the City Council. It gradually developed into an arboretum on the model of the Derby Arboretum laid out by J.C. Loudon. Several attempts were made to include a botanic garden but the final impetus did not come until the death of

Plate 1. Canon Henry Ellacombe *(courtesy of Mrs. B. Massingham and Faber and Faber).*

Fig 1. Plan of Canon Ellacombe's garden at Bitton *(courtesy of Mrs. B. Massingham and Faber and Faber. Originally published* in *The English Flower Garden* by Wm. Robinson).



C.E. Broome when his widow offered his collection of rare plants to the Committee. The Committee then applied to the City Council for a contribution towards the cost of removal and maintenance of the collection. To support their case they declared that in the selection of the site they had "the approval of the Revd. Ellacombe of Bitton one of the first living authorities on such subjects and who has kindly promised his planting and arranging the plants should such be accepted." (Bath City Council Minute Book 19, 1875-7). The City did make a contribution but in the event J.W. Morris was made responsible for the planting. Donations of plants from Ellacombe are mentioned but more frequently from Morris. However I conclude he was a regular visitor, and probably adviser, because he was a close friend of John Milburn, the Superintendent brought from Kew at the time. Milburn, we know, went on at least two botanising expeditions to Switzerland and Italy with Ellacombe.

Canon Ellacombe's links with Bristol would probably respond to further research although A.W. Hill's memoir contains some lively and affectionate contributions from his Bristol friends. Prominent among these were Hiatt Baker and G.H. Wollaston, both distinguished gardeners who are still remembered. It might also be interesting to follow up his connection with the Kingswood Reformatory on whose managing committee he served for many years and twelve of whose boys attended his funeral.

The Canon was an enthusiastic traveller. From 1870 until 1907 he regularly took holidays abroad studying church architecture and collecting plants. En route he visited famous gardens and nurserymen often with a list of what he called 'desiderata'. He kept detailed diaries of these journeys. A.W. Hill's extracts show them to be, like his letters, vivid, succinct, sometimes caustic but full of humour and enjoyment.

Ellacombe published four books. They are *Plant Lore of Shakespeare and Garden Craft (1878)*, *Shakespeare as an Angler (1883)*, *In a Gloucestershire Garden (1895)*, *In my Vicarage Garden and Elsewhere (1902)*. Most of these appeared first as papers in *The Guardian* (a weekly church newspaper) or journals such as *The Garden*, edited by William Robinson or the *Gardener's Chronicle*, established by Paxton in 1840. His writing is characterised by close observation, erudition and always pleasure in the changing seasons. The books about his own garden are reminiscent of V. Sackville West's style – perfect bedside reading, especially in winter,for any dedicated gardener with the difference, perhaps, that he was first and foremost a plantsman whereas she was also interested in garden design.

Which brings us to Ellacombe the gardener. Gardening historians will recognise him as an exponent of the 'natural' garden. With William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll he reacted against the formal bedding-out style of Paxton. But he had little interest in the total landscape of a garden, nor its artistic relationship to the house. His garden was 'a place of hospitality for plants'. True gardeners will also respond to the following: 'the more a man loves his garden, the more he delights in constantly changing its arrangements ... not a single path is the same as thirty or even twenty years ago'. Many of his ideas still have common currency in gardening articles today – sunbaking bulbs, growing roses on their own roots, or the idea that with care plants may be moved at any time of the year. He may not have been their originator but they were fairly new at the time. Ellacombe was a loyal supporter of the Royal Horticultural Society but he was not a committee man nor an exhibitor. In 1897, though, to mark the Diamond Jubilee, he was one of the sixty distinguished gardeners to be honoured

by the RHS with the newly struck Victoria Medal of Honour. Like his father he kept up a regular correspondence with Kew and a regular exchange of visits. In 1871 we hear of him sending them a parcel of 70-80 plants. Almost every great contemporary gardener seems to have visited Bitton, some as old friends, or by introduction for a single visit. The numerous gardening clergy came including the Rev. S.R. Hole, (1819-1904, Dean of Rochester), and the Rev. Charles Wolley Dod (1826-1904). As well as Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) other notable women such as Ellen Willmott (1858-1934) and Marianne North (1830-1890) called. They were given the usual guided tour and never went away empty handed. They came to see the extent and variety of his collection and for his great knowledge of plants but it must also have been for the warmth of the welcome. Friends were encouraged to bring their friends so that his plants 'might receive the admiration they deserved'.

The garden comprised one and a half acres of limey alluvial soil. Bitton enjoys a mild climate and is well sheltered so that he was able to grow, out of doors, plants that had hitherto been thought too delicate. A few of these still remain in the most sheltered corner at the back of the school. The line of the paths is still discernible although some are now impassible where trees in the sixty years since Ellacombe's death must have doubled in extent. The remains of his rock garden – they were then just coming into fashion – and the bog garden can still be made out. And so can the rose garden with a few ancient survivors. The vast lawn now dominated by the gingko, the beech and the tulip tree still leads the eye away to Kelston Hill. The drifts of *Anemone blanda* and cylcamen still come up every year. Ellacombe was particularly interested in yuccas and hollies and many of them are still there. Several varieties of magnolia are now huge trees with survivors of the many sorts of 'vine', meaning a creeper, growing amongst them. Again there are several varieties of *Crataegus*, reminiscent of the collection distributed about the Royal Victoria Park. He was particularly proud of his Chusan palm near the house. 'It now towers above the roof and can be seen from the churchyard. At the front door the Californian laurel has become very large. Known variously as *Umbellularia* and *Oreodaphne* it was one of the few specimens in this country to bear fruit. Opposite the front door was a huge fastigiate wych elm, known as an Exeter elm. In 1914, W.J. Bean, Assistant Curator at Kew, says its girth was twelve feet. The skeleton left by Dutch elm disease remains.

Gardens, as the National Trust and others who try to preserve them now, cannot be halted in time. Ellacombe's garden has had several owners since his death and the vicar now lives in a modern building elsewhere in the village. It is naturally much altered but the garden and its makers are well recorded in the books I have mentioned, in photographs and plans, and the part of Bitton which is the garden's frame is very little changed.

Getting to know Ellacombe and his garden has been a very pleasant amusement over the years. And so it continues intermittently as I find new references or meet people who knew him or who have plants from his garden. I am sure he will go on turning up.

Footnote

With the recent upsurge of interest in garden history, Ellacombe is becoming well-known to gardeners all over the world. As a result the present owners, who bought the place in ignorance of its history, have been a little tried with curious visitors, some of them unannounced or even unashamedly trespassing. I would not like to think this article significantly increases their numbers.

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Acknowledgement

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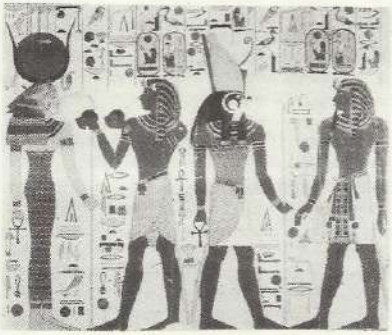

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AROUND AND ABOUT IN 1910

by

Harold Brown

The Spring 1981 issue of *Avon Past* contained my article on "Beating the Streets", dealing with the ways in which children amused themselves locally in the first decades of this century. Perhaps readers may be interested in the opportunities available, during the same period, for travel beyond the immediate neighbourhood.

The Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company were the most important providers of public transport in this area. The first trams were horse-drawn, but as I was born in 1900 I was just too late to experience them, although the stabling for horses still existed off Colston Street. The electrification of the system was undertaken on a grand scale, and soon the city was covered with a network of tramways, branching out from the Tramways Centre to Hotwells, Westbury, Filton, Staple Hill, Kingswood, Hanham, Brislington, Knowle, Bedminster Down and Ashton Gate in the suburbs. The wide gauge of 4'8½" adopted was unusual, but was probably the reason why, as far as I know, no cars ever overturned. Derailments were fairly frequent, especially at junctions, and delays could be quite lengthy before the heavy vehicles could be towed back on the track by other trams. No double-deckers were ever used, probably because of low railway bridges on some routes. On the Fishponds line there was such an obstruction where one Midland Railway branch line from Fishponds to Redland crossed the road near the junction of Muller Road and Fishponds Road. To cope with this difficulty the tram track was excavated deeply at this point, but even so, when the cars passed under the bridge, the trolley arm was in an almost horizontal position, and passengers on the upper deck were warned to remain seated. It seems unlikely that such a risk would be tolerated in these days.

Open to the weather, the outside wooden seats needed some sort of protection if passengers were to be shielded from sitting in puddles of rain-water, so there was an ingenious arrangement of flaps on the seats, hinged and weighted so that the wet surfaces would be inverted as the passenger sat down. Inside the cars the earlier seats, ranged facing the centre gangway, were of wooden slats, very uncomfortable on more lengthy journeys. These hard seats were retained for a long time for 'workmen's trams', which ran at especially low fares before 8 a.m.; but well-upholstered cushioned seats gradually superseded them. The tram drivers needed to be a hardy breed, for they stood at their controls with no protection from the weather except waterproof overalls. In freezing weather it was a common sight for a driver to have to leave his platform and stamp his feet and flail his hands about his body in order to restore some feeling to his frozen extremities. Bristol was one of the last towns in the country to provide reasonable protection for its tram drivers.

Some of the tracks were uneven, and with a reckless driver passengers could often experience a pretty rough ride. For example, in Cumberland Street (which ran between Stokes Croft and Brunswick Square) there was a double track, which, in an already narrow throughfare, reached within inches of the pavements. Occupants of the houses bordering the street must have lived in an atmosphere of juddering pandemonium as the juggernauts crashed on their way within feet of their windows.

By modern standards, tram travel was extremely cheap. From Warwick Road to the Tramways Centre cost a mere three-halfpence, while one could board a tram at Eastville, travel to Hotwells, take a ride up the Rocks Railway, and return to Eastville from Clifton Downs, and still have spent no more than a shilling. No wonder trams were popular among courting couples, and gave rise to the music-hall song:

"Go, go, go for a ride on a car, car, car –
You know what places the tops of the tram cars are.
The seats are so small and there's not much to pay,
You sit close together and spoon all the way –
There's many a Miss will be Mrs. some day,
Through riding on top of a car."

The Rocks Railway provided a link up to the face of the Avon Gorge from Hotwells at river level to the Clifton Downs above, near the Suspension Bridge. Two cars, each fitted with water tanks to carry the ballast, balanced each other at the ends of a strong cable, and ran on a very steep incline within a tunnel cut in the face of the rock. While Hotwells remained a popular resort, traffic was probably brisk, but as Hotwells decayed so did the railway, which finally closed in 1934.

Horse-drawn transport lingered on until 1910. Prior to that date, cabs, carriages and hansoms (two-wheeled vehicles carrying two persons seated side by side, with the driver perched up behind above the level of the cab roof) were

Plate 2. Bristol Tramway centre, looking towards St. Augustine's Bridge, 1910. A variety of motor cars, horse drawn carts and a tram can be seen *(courtesy Bristol City Museum)*.

available for hire in various parts of the city. The total volume of horse-drawn traffic on the streets made a clatter of hooves and wheels which could be quite irritating, especially to invalids. On occasions, when an invalid was seriously ill, the road surface for some distance each way outside the house, was covered, inches deep, with tannery bark. This stifled the noise to a death-like whisper, all too often to be followed by the actual death of the invalid concerned. The last time I remember such precautions being carried out was round about 1909 or 1910.

Until the advent of the internal combustion engine the conveyance of large parties of passengers by road was restricted almost entirely to 'brakes'. These were built much on the pattern of country hay-wagons, though with much lighter wheels as they operated only on metalled roads. Long bench seats occupied each side of the vehicle, the passengers facing each other with about ten to fifteen persons a side. Access was by means of steps at the rear, and such protection from bad weather as was possible was provided by canvas screens drawn over a super structure of iron rods. These cumbersome vehicles were drawn by two, three or four horses, and could be hired for a reasonable sum from the proprietors of such stables as those of Mr. Oaten, of Lower Ashley Road. Progress was naturally slow, as passengers had to dismount at all but the slightest inclines, either up or down. A whole day's outing would not get farther than say Pilning or Clevedon.

The railways were a much better proposition for those wanting to go further afield. Excursions were available, often at a very low cost, to Midland towns or seaside resorts. I remember a Sunday return trip to Plymouth as late as the 1920's costing only seven shillings and six pence, and as a child I accompanied my father on a day trip to Birmingham for a total cost of five shillings. Very large parties could arrange for special trains to be run to such places as Weston-super-Mare. My own Sunday School often took well over a thousand passengers to Weston on three special trains from Stapleton Road station. These 'specials' avoided Temple Meads station by using a loop line from Lawrence Hill, and often got hung up for long periods of waiting among the evil-smelling fumes of the glue works bordering the line. A fairly frequent service of local trains operated on the Avonmouth line, which also boasted a small station at Hotwells. The Portishead trains were naturally less frequent in operation.

There was soon to be a revolution in road transport. 'Blue Taxis' had practically superseded cabs and hansoms by 1910, and the brake had been ousted by the charabanc. The earliest charabancs were built with transverse rows of seats, rising in tiers from front to back so that the rear passengers could see over the heads of those in front. Collapsible hoods gave some protection against inclement weather, but comfort was not a striking feature of this form of transport. The earlier solid rubber tyres afforded but a bumpy ride, and before the introduction of road tar spraying about 1907, trips in the country were inclined to be made in a cloud of white dust. Pneumatic tyres were a great improvement, and covered coaches soon superseded the charabancs. Soon the trams were threatened with tremendous opposition from the more adaptable motor buses, and new routes were opened up in all directions. A traffic war between the Tramways Company and Greyhound Motors led to a cut-throat competition over fares, which only came to an end when bankruptcy threatened both companies.

Concurrently with these developments, bicycles became very popular for individual transport. My father rode a 'penny-farthing', but the last of these

cumbersome machines had become museum pieces by the time I rode my first bicycle in 1908. By then pneumatic tyres and rim brakes were universal, and three-speed hubs were common and cheap. A second-hand bicycle could be bought for a little over a pound, while a new one of good quality could be obtained for a 'fiver'. Riding after dark was somewhat hazardous, as the early oil lamps provided but a warning of approach, until acetyline gas lamps gave some real illumination. These were inconvenient, however, and consequently short-lived, giving way to electric illumination operated from battery or dynamo.

But the chief method of locomotion in these first decades of the century remained 'shanks' pony'. People of that time seemed to be able to tackle long walks with an equanimity unknown today. As a child of seven in 1907 I thought it unremarkable to take an afternoon jaunt along the valley of the Frome, through 'The Valley' in Eastville Park, (a site now occupied by a lake built to relieve unemployment), over the Black Rocks to Wickham Bridge, onwards by the river side to Snuff Mills, where a waterwheel, though rusting into decay, was still in position among the Mill ruins. The return walk might be either via Fishponds or along the opposite bank of the Frome, gathering perhaps a few tiddlers from the river or a few newts from ponds along the way. Interest en route was provided by the activities in the pennant stone quarries still operating in the area. Adults happily undertook rambles on a Saturday afternoon from Portishead to Clevedon or from Clifton Downs to Sea Mills. I think we had a much more intimate knowledge of the countryside in those days than our successors who speed along the roads at speeds which never fall below thirty miles an hour.

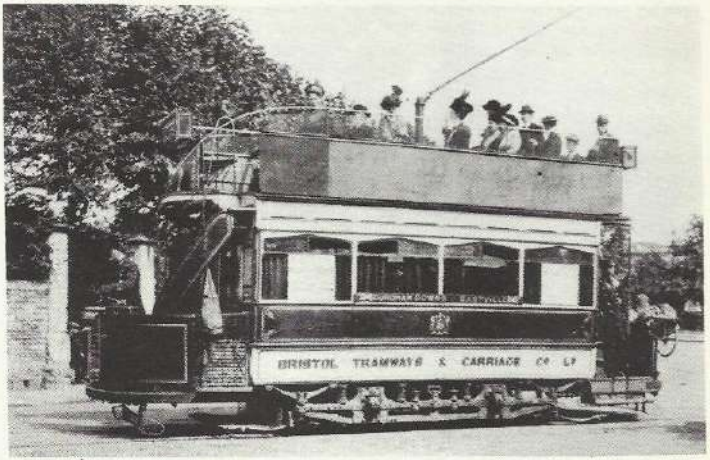


Plate 3. Bristol tram at the corner of Lower Maudlin Street and St. James' Churchyard. Taken during the first world war, the poster in the window reads 'For King and Country: wanted another 100,000 men, Lord Kitchener's Army, Colston Hall, Bristol', *(courtesy Bristol City Museum).*

Finally, mention should be made of travel by water. As a very small child I was taken by my parents on the 'penny steamer' which then operated a service from St. Augustine's Bridge to Hotwells — an exciting trip among the sea-going vessels which then filled the harbour. During the summer months a similar small steamer made regular journeys from Bristol Bridge to the tea garden at Conham on the Avon. On the return trip in the evening scruffy children, often barefoot, kept pace with the boat, scrambling eagerly for coppers thrown on to the tow-path by the passengers. But for real steamship travel there were always available the Campbell's Paddle Steamers, which made frequent trips during the summer from Hotwells or Avonmouth, to Cardiff, Penarth and Minehead. When the tide suitably served, evening trips were arranged from the landing stage at the Hotwells terminus of the tramway. It was unfortunate that often raw sewage accompanied the steamer on the ebb tide down the river, but once past Avonmouth the salty tang of the Severn Estuary was most invigorating, and should the weather deteriorate, as it often did with alarming rapidity, the need for a good pair of sea legs might become apparent before the end of the voyage.

So, one way and another, getting around in the early part of the century could be quite exciting to Bristolians. We did not attain the speeds of the 1980's, but we had plenty of thrills.

SOME MEMORIES OF AN AIR-RAID WARDEN

1939 - 1940

by

Jessie Sheppard

There have been many books written about the blitz and the horrors of this time and this represents some of the memories of a warden on the outskirts of the City, in Southmead. We escaped the full horrors of the town but we had our own incidents, they may not have been so terrifying as the others but to us they were more than enough. These are just a few of the many memories that have stayed in my mind, mainly dating from 1940.

In September 1939 unable to join the fighting services, I decided to join the A.R.P. (Air Raid Precautions). I was accepted and took a condensed course. My first duty was on September 17th and I reported to my post, Post J.2. Clifton. The advantage of being an air raid warden was that you usually worked near your own home and, therefore, were familiar with the locality and the people. My post was in the school at Doncaster Road, about four minutes from my home in Danbury Crescent and I was assigned to F Sector, which included my own house.

My early duties consisted of going out on patrol at nights with another warden to watch out for any lights showing. As may be imagined and remembered by older people, this often led to arguments and 'put that light out' was a well known cry. In fact when we were in uniform children used to shout it out to us.

Gas masks were issued early in the war but in October we had our first serious job, issuing baby helmets and making sure that the parents knew how to use them, as they were awkward and unless you held both the baby and the helmet correctly, impossible to use. Of course not everybody co-operated but most realized that it could save their child's life. Luckily they were never needed. While doing this we gathered as much information as we could, how many people were in a house, whether they were all fit or if they might be in need of help if there was a raid. We gradually built up a record of the territory we covered and from this could tell where special attention was needed. Later on this information was invaluable, especially where pregnant women were concerned, as babies always seem to come at the most inconvenient time.

After the baby helmets we had to go round the houses to find out who had shelters and if so what type, also the occupant's next of kin. On this survey we found many of the Anderson (partly underground) shelters were flooded when we had a period of rain and later many had the Morrison (table) type instead.

Our post was chosen for a siren and we had the first test in January 1940, this caused great excitement especially with the school children. The next few months were spent in exercises and learning as much as possible. Two of us had stirrup pumps and we took them to the post to use in practise. We had First Aid Lectures and a lot of fun bandaging each other up, gas drills which nobody liked and were shown how to fill in incident forms. As well as this, we had outdoor exercises with the services, learning by our mistakes. By this time we felt we were ready for anything, although the feeling was beginning to creep in that we might be lucky and not need it.

At this time we had three full time and seven part time wardens, the Post Warden – Mr. Cocksedge – being permanently on nights. During February the

post was closed for four days owing to one of the wardens being affected by measles. This caused a lot of amusement.

In June I was asked by the Group Warden to become a full time warden and this I did.

At 0017 hours the 24th June, my first day as a full-time warden, we had our first alert. I dressed in the clothes I had ready for a raid, jumper, slacks, overalls and picking up the odds and ends I needed. Dad saw me off, reassuring me, he would be there looking after the house and everything. Having got out, it looked like a nightmare, there were planes flying so low you could almost see the pilots. I don't really know which I felt most, fear or anger at the feeling that if I only had a gun I could have shot them. They seemed to be right down on the roofs of the houses, and the noise of the planes was terrific.

Perhaps it should be said here that we received Air Raid Message Red before sounding the siren. At that time we did not sound it unless we had the message. The siren would be sounded by the warden on duty, usually the Post Warden. The 'Raiders Passed' was sounded after Air Raid Message Green was received, this then was also sounded for two minutes. If gunfire was heard but no message received, the wardens would go round their sectors blowing their whistles, or for the 'All Clear' they would have to ring hand-bells. The people came to know us by our different whistles and hand-bells.

Also attached to our Post in 1940 were two messenger boys, Max Raffell and Charlie Berry. A lot has been said of the different parts of the air raid services but the messengers seemed to have been left out and some of the work they did was as brave as any of the others. These young lads were always on the spot and when needed were always there, willing to help in any way; when they had to leave us later we really felt the loss. Though always having their legs pulled, they kept us cheerful when we needed it.

Plate 4. Post J.2. Clifton, Doncaster Road School. Jessie Sheppard – née Walsh – is third on the right *(courtesy Mrs. J. Sheppard)*.

Our first official incident was when an unexploded bomb (U.X.B.) was reported. The Post Warden sent off a report to Report Centre, then decided he would go out and have a look. Some people had come round to report it after hearing something heavy falling. Later a police officer came in to report there was no sign of any bomb; the search would be carried on in the morning. No more was ever heard of the bomb, like a few others later on, it had vanished.

Another time a U.X.B. was thought to have fallen into the back of one of the gardens near the field at Cranmore Crescent. Naturally the Post Warden wanted to go and make sure. So off he and the wardens went. I was told not to send in a report until I had his message to do so. They came back half an hour later, it was a very dangerous affair, one bath full of rain water shining in the moonlight. This event, funny at the time, taught us to make sure of our facts before reporting them. I dread to think what our lives would have been like if the other posts had got hold of this tale, however it helped brighten things up a bit.

As might be expected at a time like this, we had people coming in with tales of signal lights across the fields. With great excitement – thinking of spys – several of us went out to investigate but it proved to be people taking a short cut along the field at the back of Ashburton Road using torches, the beams not being kept towards the ground. After a few extra patrols by wardens this was more or less ended.

The summer of 1940 often saw several air raids a day, the early hours of the morning being a favourite time. This might last for several days followed by a few days of relative peace. Between June 24th and July 25th we had 50 alerts.

The local school children would ask us to make sure we sounded the siren at particular times, most of them wanted an alert between a quarter to two, to half past two in the afternoon. On one day, when this seemed particularly important, I had to tell them we couldn't just put the siren on to order. I was just telling 'Fan', one of the wardens, about this, when the phone rang with 'Air Raid Message Red'. When she told me to put on the siren I thought she was having me on, it was 13-45 – a quarter to two – exactly. I could see plenty of problems now. Obviously you only had to ask the wardens to put the siren on and there you were. As we watched the children march to the shelters several called out and thanked us, others winked, I almost felt guilty. For a couple of days Fan and I were very popular.

Around the 27th July we had a hot sultry day, the sort before a heavy thunderstorm and we expected it all day but it was just hot, close and still; at least until about 21.45, then it started, no rain just thunder and lightning. Well, Dad said, as we had a meal, he did not think Hitler would be about with that lightning. How wrong he was. The alert went off at just after 23.00 that night, there was still no rain, only thunder and lightning, it was the worst storm I had known for years. It made our task more difficult as people were frightened. Some felt safer in the house and wouldn't go down in their shelters, many who usually went to the Rocks Railway stayed home. At last having done what we could to help we eventually got round to the post. As soon as I put my nose inside the door I was asked to get a cup of tea. While drinking our tea we did something we did not usually do, we all went into the playground to watch the barrage balloons going up in flames, not by enemy action but by lightning. That night thirty balloons were destroyed. Needless to say the next few days people were worried without them. The 'Raiders Passed' sounded at 01.45, and going home I found that it had started raining; most of us were very glad as we

hoped that this would end the thunder soon. It was fine by 06.00 the next morning with all the freshness that comes after a storm. I think why I remember this month so vividly, is that coming home in the early morning, whether it was dark or light, the smell of carnations or pinks and roses in one garden on my way home was marvellous. I don't think before or since the war I have been affected so much by the scent of flowers although I love them, it was a wonderful experience.

War for us was brought home on Wednesday the 25th of September. As I came out of the house there seemed to be a never-ending lot of planes, I hadn't seen an enemy plane so clearly since that night in June. It seemed like hundreds, though of course there were not quite so many as that – I heard later on it was eighty five – they were in perfect formation. I had been scared that night, but this time, although it seemed worse in daylight, at least you could see plainly. Too plainly as it turned out. People were standing at their gates, watching the planes, and when asked to go to their shelters they replied that it would only take a minute to slip down to them. So I went on to the post. As the first bomb dropped it would have been funny, if it hadn't been so serious, to see people fly into the shelters. Fan was on duty at the post. She had just got as far as the door to the playground when there were several explosions. We stood looking towards the 'Drome'. We both had the same thought, that it was our turn. We had always been afraid if there were raids on the Drome we would get it. We had been shown an aerial photo and the two roads known to us as the 'new roads' stretched from the Drome – or so it seemed – to the farm at the back of the school and the surface shelters looked like outhouses. The children were now singing at the top of their voices and some of the younger ones were running out of the shelters. Allan Sheppard who had stayed on from the previous raid got his accordian and went in with them and soon had them singing with the rest of the children and really kept them occupied.

It was that day I had my first war casualty. While I was phoning the different messages through, a warden came in and told me to go to Ashburton Road as there was a little boy asking for me, he was pretty badly hurt. Luckily for me the Post Warden came in just then and said he would stay at the post. I went over to the boy, he was about ten years old, he was laid on the pavement crying and he had a hole in his back you could put your fist in. There was nothing we could do, we were told not to give a pain killer, just to keep him warm until the ambulance came. When he saw me he asked me to find out about his dog. The tears were running down his face, not in pain, as I was told he could feel nothing in his back. One of our wardens there was waiting for the ambulance, and he said the dog was dead, but no one wanted to tell the boy. So I sat down with him and told him his dog was all right but had been taken over to a vet to make sure he wasn't suffering from shock. At last the ambulance came, while putting him in they told us that there were heavy casualties at Filton, quite a lot fatal. I don't think I shall ever forget the boy, whose one concern was his pet. Later we heard that he had died.

Two days later we heard the sound of what seemed like hundreds of planes, although no siren had sounded nor had a message been received. We all stood in the playground. There was more noise at first than on Wednesday's raid so we expected trouble, I think the planes must have come in by a different route. At last we saw them, they came in from Westbury way, straight across the playground, flying just above the barrage balloon. As they passed over there was another lot of planes coming in out of the sun, we thought it was more enemy

planes but it wasn't. It was our own planes. What a wonderful sight. After a clear run on the Wednesday it must have been a shock for the raiders. We watched, so did the children, they stood in the doorways of the shelters. I don't think the teachers were worried as they only had to push the children back in the shelter and none of them were outside the shelters. They themselves were watching the fights going on. Afterwards the figures were given out, twelve of our fighters against nine of their bombers and a very large force of fighter planes. I believe we shot down five of their planes.

Of the Bristol blitz there is no need for me to say anything, as there are reports by people who were present in the bombardment. As we went round our sectors we could hear 'Purdown Percy' firing, and on the skyline could see the glow of the fires in the town; even at that distance the noise of the planes and gunfire could be heard.

December 2nd was a night off for me and I had gone to the Carlton Cinema to see a film. I can't remember what it was, because during the first film the siren went. Being in Westbury we reported to J.1, our headquarter's group, which had a room in the Methodist Chapel at the bottom of Waters Lane. As we were on the way, incendiary bombs were dropping right up through Westbury Hill dead in the centre of the road. Rushing into the post we found the stirrup pumps were all gone, and everyone was either trying to dig up dirt by the helmetful or using odd sandbags that could be spared. We were then told not to get too near, as a lot of incendiary bombs were now fitted to anti-personnel bombs, which no-one would want to be near. Westbury had its problems that night.

Later we were taught how to treat the anti-personnel bombs. We had heard of them, but not much. We were informed that they were difficult to deal with, the slightest tremor causing them to explode. They were if possible, not to be dealt with by wardens. We were to put a sandbag barrier around them and report back, stating if danger to any of the public was likely, then they would be dealt with as soon as possible. I saw one in a tree looking something like a small vase with four butterfly wings, it glinted in the sun and looked almost beautiful. Needless to say I left it well alone. Soon after this meeting some wardens were trained to deal with them in an emergency, I, thank goodness, was not one of them, although I felt a bit annoyed that none of the women wardens were selected.

One particular incident stands out in my memory but I can't remember the date. We had a raid just as the children were leaving school. No siren, no message and no gunfire. I was walking through the school gates with a teacher, hearing a plane I looked up, the sun was still shining, but I thought I saw a couple of flashes by the aircraft, I couldn't be sure. I took out my whistle and blew it, the children looked at me and I told the teacher to get them into the shelter. I raced back to the post and as I got to the door this plane came down right across the playground machine-gunning. The pilot probably thought it was the B.A.C. workers coming out of work. As our wardens reported in we found there had been some narrow escapes. There was only one serious casualty. The daughter of one of the wardens had lost an eye. This seemed awful for a child of four. She had been playing in the road, and not knowing the danger a plane didn't worry her. Only the siren, which hadn't sounded, would have made her run home. By the time it did, the plane was machine-gunning; and several other children in the road were also (fortunately minor) casualties.

Space prevents me from writing about many other details of our lives as air raid wardens, these are just a few events I particularly remember.

BATH AND BEYOND: the contribution of R.S. Neale

by I. Morgan

One hundred and forty years ago the *Bath Chronicle* was driven to declare: " 'Hotbed of all that is wild, reckless and revolutionary in politics' is the phrase which is abundantly used in speaking and writing of Bath." In the early nineteenth century the city was gripped by radical agitation. Howard Hunt in 1817 described the petition from Bath demanding the vote, ballot, and annual parliaments as "the most momentous petition that was ever presented to the House of Commons ...". In 1830 the struggle for the Reform Bill – "The Bill, the Whole Bill and Nothing but the Bill" as some local supporters referred to it – saw a crowd of 22,000 march across Pulteney Bridge, the fifty-six year old monument to that other Bath: the Bath which from the mid-1720s on had provided Rest and Recreation (gambling, pornography and prostitution as well as Pump Room teas) for the ruling circles of the day. The passing of the Reform Act in 1832 was celebrated by a crowd of 55,000 whose banners were for "Liberty or Death". J.A. Roebuck, the Philosophic Radical elected to Parliament in that year, was in the words of a popular jingle "a friend to the people, so long trodden down." In 1839, in readiness for a Chartist demonstration, the state apparatus assembled six troops of the North Somerset Yeomanry, two troops of Hussars, 130 armed police, 600 special constables, and 200 Chelsea Pensioners. Only in 1850 could the editor of the Tory *Bath Chronicle* feel confident that the city's radical tradition had been laid to rest and that Bath was now "at peace within itself."

This neglected slice of provincial history is taken from R.S. Neale's *Bath 1680 - 1850: A Social History or, A Valley of Pleasure, yet a Sink of Iniquity* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981). The book prises open the politics of urban ecology, and reveals how the distribution of political power in Bath found its visible expression in the division of city space. Gentlemen and Professional Persons (whose average age of death was 55 in 1841) resided in different parts of the city from the mass of Mechanics and Labourers (average age of death 25), not to mention Shoemakers (average age of death 14). Neither political radicalism nor cholera and smallpox epidemics made great inroads into the Crescents and Squares of the upper town (and in 1837 Bath's 151 deaths from smallpox placed it second only to Liverpool per 1000 of population). The city's physical compactness must have lent a sharper profile to the gulf separating its two nations, and in 1832 the stirrings in the artisan parish of St. James, the industrial parish of Lyncombe and Widcombe, and the central parish of St. Peter and Paul quickly led the local establishment to conjure up images (as an election poster put it) of "churches turned into barracks."

One of Neale's earliest publications of his research on Bath was *Class and Ideology in a Provincial City* published in 1966 in the *Our History* pamphlet series. Its central focus was on the Chartist movement in Bath. Radicals had gained control of the City Council in 1835, and the People's Charter was presented to the citizens in 1837. In 1839 Chartists in neighbouring Trowbridge stood ready with their pikes, an armed group thwarted the re-capture of women who had escaped from Avoncliffe workhouse, militant parades were taking place in Bath. Why then did the Chartist bubble burst? According to Neale the underlying base of radicalism, the small tradesmen and artisans – the "dynamic petit bourgeois" – was being eroded. By the late 1830s there appeared a factory proletariat "whose problems were not those of independent artisans and pro-

ducers struggling for recognition." The socio-economic ramparts of the Chartist fortress were crumbling away just when its political trumpet was sounding full blast.

The *Communist Manifesto* saw capitalist society as polarized "into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other." Since 1848 this primary contradiction has been obscured by a vast secondary undergrowth of status, ethnic, sexual, age and regional divisions: the moment of going beyond the fragments has been an elusive one. Neale's *Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972) sought to tackle some of these complexities by putting forward a "five-class model" of Victorian society. Below the exclusive aristocratic upper class stood both a middle class (deferential and solidly respectable) and a middling class (less privileged, potentially radical). The working class was also sliced in two, between a "working class A" (proletarian and collectivist) and a "working class B" (deferential and dependent). In a review of Neale's book in *New Society* (2. November 1972) Brian Harrison argued that Hobsbawm's "labour aristocracy" theory was "a far more useful way of pinpointing divisions within the working class..." Nonetheless both approaches see the revolutionary collision anticipated by Marx as having been diverted (at least temporarily) into the sidings of a fragmented class structure.

Neale's view that the politically radical force of the early nineteenth century was the middling class led him to carry out a re-assessment of the role played by the bourgeoisie in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. His studies of Bath's urban development revealed that crucial investment was carried out by landlords and the aristocracy – in fact these groups appeared to lead and pioneer capitalist transformation throughout England. Rather than a dynamic, progressive, revolutionary bourgeoisie overthrowing the backward constraints imposed by a feudalistic aristocracy, the former class played only a minor role in constructing the new order – the bourgeoisie was 'the creature of the aristocracy – a sort of Balfour's Poodle in reverse!' Nonetheless, as Neale's contributions to *Feudalism, Capitalism, and Beyond* (Edward Arnold, 1975) make clear, this analysis is not "in substantial conflict with the Marx of *Capital* and the *Grundrisse*": it is mickey-mouse marxism which takes most of the flak.

According to some of its practitioners history provides a fairly rigorous academic exercise yard, or a fertile source of entertainment, but it is devoid of any practical relevance for current issues and conflicts. In *Class in English History 1680-1850* (Basil Blackwell, 1981) Neale stakes his claim that the study of the past – provided it is informed by a theoretical awareness of its own assumptions and methodology – can be of active assistance in making sense of the "current situation" and in opening up the possibilities of the present.

This article was published in a shortened form in the Morning Star *3rd September 1981.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editresses, *Avon Past.*

I can, I think, throw some light on what lies behind two of the place names which Dr. Cottle mentions in his excellent article on the cult of various saints in Pre-Reformation Bristol. In both cases the explanations seem to lie in the outlying properties of two of Bristol's small religious houses.

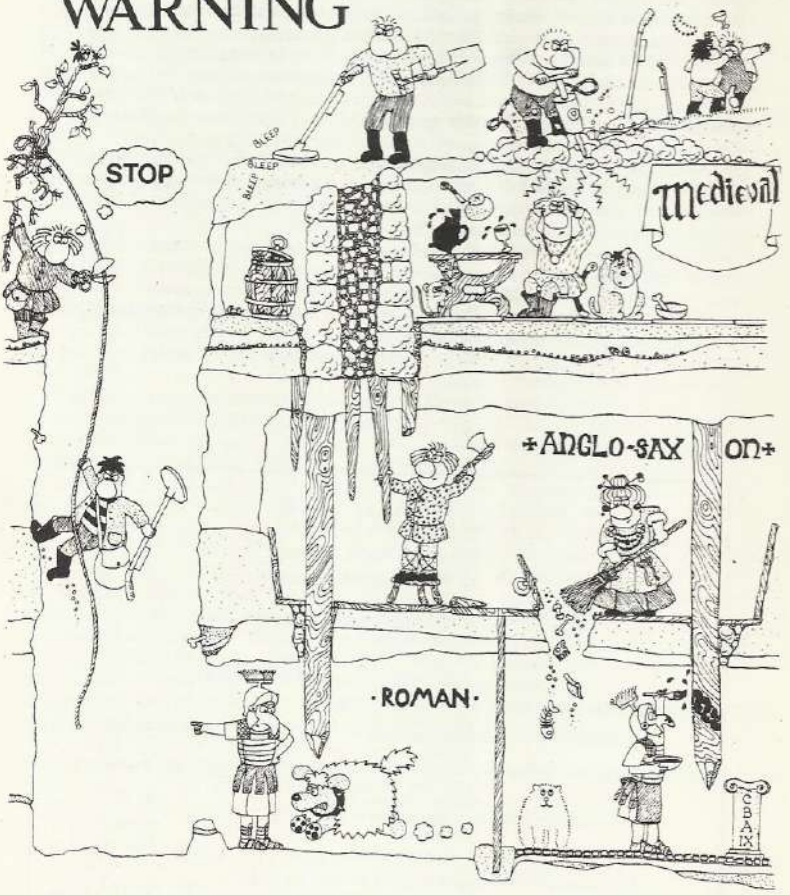
Catherine Farm, Henbury seems certain to have belonged to the Hospital of St. Catherine, Brightbow, Bedminster, which is known to have had property in Henbury parish. The Hospital, close to the bridge, with a "bowed" arch over the Malago, stood on part of the site now occupied by the Victorian Wills factory.. The name is also perpetuated, and now much extended geographically, by the St. Catherine's Freezer Centre whose first establishment was in Bedminster. A close parallel, in Henbury terms, exists in Lawrence Weston where property was held by the leper Hospital of St. Lawrence, out to the east of the town, whose name survives in Lawrence Hill.

Magdalen Wood at Westbury on Trym could have got its name by being an out of town property of the small Augustinian nunnery of St. Mary Magdalene, near the bottom of St. Michael's Hill, whose name survives, nearer to its claustral site, in Maudlin Street. The properties, even of small religious houses, were not confined to their immediate purlieus.

Yours faithfully,

Bryan Little
March 12th, 1982.

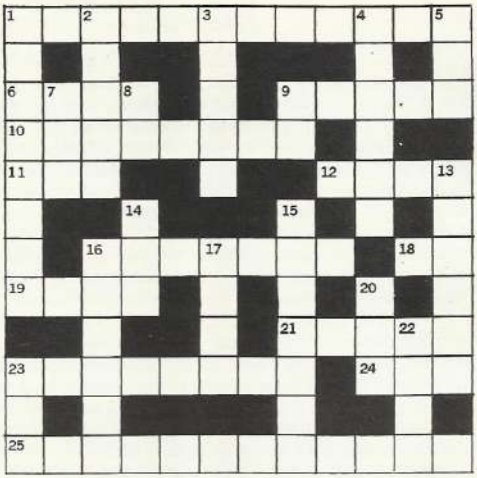
A HERITAGE HEALTH WARNING



Metal detectors seriously damage your past

(Courtesy of C.B.A. Group IX).

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. *Name formerly given to pottery with grooves spread between Orkney and East Anglia (6.6)*
6. *Spanish 21 across (4)*
9. *(See 19)*
10. *Dig up and out (8)*
11. *See Sargasso (3)*
12. *Housing Act? (4)*
16. *Materials (7)*
18. *You can tell Amarna is without it (2)*
19 & 15. *Torpid transport revolution for the potter (4.5)*
21. *(See 25)*
23. *Quadruped Carthaginian tank? (8)*
24. *Leo without fifty (3)*
25 & 21. *Dark age henge monument in Cumbria or Winchester (7.5.5)*

DOWN

1. *Nineteenth Dynasty monarch (8)*
2. *Peruvian people (5)*
3. *Italian iron age settlement (5)*
4. *He bets in Greece or Egypt (6)*
5. *A tel by any other name (3)*
7. *S.W. legionary fortress sited by this (3)*
8. *A kind of lava less fifty-five (2)*
9. *The royal one — or two? (2)*
13. *Old men become grave (6)*
14. *Hywel Dda and Hammurabi have at least one of these in common (3)*
15. *Plough and broadcast (flints?) (7)*
16. *Mining in the Dean lacking trees (6)*
17. *Wife of Chronos (4)*
20. *Japanese ladies sash (3)*
22. *Interesting to userers (4)*
23. *Are backwards an age? (3)*

AVON PAST
— Issue 5
Crossword Puzzle

NOTEBOOK

SOMERSET BATCHES .....

There are many "batches" in Somerset (and South Avon) but the word is rarely found on maps of other counties, with the single exception of Worcestershire. Sometimes it occurs as the name of a short stretch of a road, as in Chelvey Batch, Cambridge Batch, Nurse Batch and a road leading from Priddy towards Cheddar; but it is also applied to a variety of other minor geographical features such as a farm near Lympsham, a small hill in the middle of the flat land to the north of Worle and a patch of rough woodland at the top of Brockley Combe, which is shown on the map as Willis' Batch.

The highest point of Black Down in the Mendips is called Beacon Batch and Mount Close Batch, with nearby Mill Batch are to be found as field names near Chedzoy on the moors.

These various sites appear at first to have little in common, and it is difficult to reconcile any of them with the origins of the word "batch" as suggested in a number of books on place names. Some of the authors consider that it comes from the Old English "baecc", a valley or clearing near a stream and is related to "beck", but this explanation cannot possibly apply to the "batches" on flat moorland fields, or to Beacon Batch.

The *English Dialect Dictionary*, edited by Joseph Wright, however, gives several other possible origins, among which is one which, although at first may appear remote, does give a clue to the use of the word in Somerset and Worcestershire. This is "Emmet batch" – an ant-hill.

In every case where the name is applied to a road or field in Somerset there is a low hill or steep slope. "Up the Batch" is a common local phrase. There is a row of cottages near Nurse Batch in Nailsea West End called "Batch Bottom", and above them is a field called, simply, "The Batch".

This explanation of the use of the word in Somerset is amply confirmed by the occurence of a considerable number of "Mill Batches", all of which indicate sites of former windmills (confirmed by Mr. A.G. Shove who has made a study of Somerset windmills). There are for example, "mill batches" at Puriton, Huntspill, Meare, Othery and Pawlett where in most cases low mounds on which the mills stood can still be seen.

"Castle Batch" near Worle is a distinctive low hill, all that remains of the motte of a minor Norman castle. "Batch Farm", however lies on flat land near the mouth of the River Axe and has no such features above ground; but a sluice in the river nearby has the name "Batch Clyse" which indicates the position of a former "slime batch" in the river bed.

Michael Williams, in *The Draining of the Somerset Levels* (O.U.P. 1970) explains that "The slime-batches were platforms built in the river by the dumping of brick rubbish. The deposit of mud or slime left on them after the ebb tides was used for the manufacture of 'bath', or polishing, knife cleaning and scouring bricks. The batches were situated mainly in the stretch of the river where tidal flow was arrested by river flow, and deposition at its greatest."; and so here again we find a "batch" is a low mound or hill, even though it is out of sight in the bed of the river.

J. M. Pullan.

(Our thanks to the Clevedon and District Archaeological Society who supplied this note from their Dec. 1981 Newsletter. *Eds.).*

CONSTITUENT SOCIETIES:

BANWELL SOCIETY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Five people met at a house in East Street, Banwell on 20th June, 1958, and signed their names in a thick, ruled exercise book with hard covers. On the first page of the book, a decorated border was drawn surrounding the segmented figure of a 'Dubonni' horse, taken from the design of a local Celtic coin. This was to be the emblem of the Society which was formed that evening. Rather sadly, the emblem has fallen by the wayside and members no longer wear badges, but from that first meeting, called by Jim Hunt (who was to become the first Secretary), blossomed the Banwell Society of Archaeology (originally 'The Banwell Society of Celtic Archaeology incorporating the Banwell Institute of Historical Research' – an impressive title to be shared between the five founder members, and one which was mercifully shortened after only one year's use).

There was a refreshing enthusiasm about the early discussions recorded in that first Minute Book. When Officers were elected, there were so few members that each held at least one post. Subscriptions were fixed at 1/6d per month (they now stand at £2.50 per annum, so inflation has not quite caught up), and plans were made for an immediate season of excavation at Banwell Camp under the supervision of no less than Philip Rahtz. Looking back over the years, the methods used appear somewhat unorthodox ("a large sifting machine ... was under construction"), and Banwell Camp seems to have kept most of its secrets, although possible evidence of Iron Age smelting was discovered, with flints, quern stones and pottery, etc., now on display in the village.

The enigmatic Winthill Roman site was next to be tackled, and for a short time work on both sites ran concurrently – however did they manage it? But soon all efforts were concentrated on Winthill, and this was to be the heyday of the Society's fieldwork, excavation continuing from 1959 until 1967 when digging ended and the site was afterwards scheduled. Immediately members were involved in assisting David Tomalin, then Assistant Curator of Weston (now Woodspring) Museum, with an excavation of another Roman site at Riverside, Banwell, where the finding of a mosaic floor caused some excitement. Full reports of both these 'digs' are still in their final stages and excalating costs of publishing such detailed analyses do not help matters. The M5 motorway construction vehicles were also followed by Society members, resulting in the totally unexpected rescue excavation of an Iron Age burial ground at Christon, the initial discovery being made by Marie Clarke, an indefatigable field walker.

Since those early days when members held meetings in each other's houses the Society has grown steadily. As numbers regularly attending meetings went into double figures, then crept towards the twenties early in 1967, the Methodist Hall, Banwell, became the first public venue for meetings until in turn this became too small. 1971 started with about 40 members meeting, for the first time, in the smart new Village Hall, and meetings have been held there ever since. For the last five years, membership has hovered around the 100 mark.

Members, drawn in roughly equal proportions from Banwell, Winscombe, and the rest of the area, are extremely loyal to the Society, and it is not uncommon for visiting speakers to be rather taken aback by the sea of faces – often more than 70 and seldom less than 60 – waiting to be entertained and

informed, and this in a village which some speakers did not know existed until receiving their invitations. It is perhaps unusual for an archaeological society to hold monthly meetings throughout the year (August excepted) but this seems to increase the enthusiasm of members who energetically support other activities, outings, and fund raising efforts. Even those who move away from the area often continue their membership, sometimes travelling back to attend meetings. The record for travelling to a meeting must however go to the American member who came to Banwell from California to meet his fellow members! Having to find speakers for most of the eleven meetings in each year is a challenge undertaken by Phyllis Cram, who is also well known in W.I. circles.

The Society is fortunate in still having three of the original founders as members. Ian Tabrett is President, and Mrs. Cousins still lends stalwart support to Society activities. Derek Crocker, Secretary for many years, is now the Chairman. It is he who creates roars of laughter at party nights, and dare it be said that when conducting the business sessions he and the Secretary, Stan Rendell have been likened to a quite different partnership — Morecambe and Wise. Another personality is Auditor Stanley Pike, famous for his hilarious poetical sagas on the Society, some of which have been published in an entertaining little book. All of which is getting away from archaeology, and it is true to say that the Society has not organised an excavation for some years, although individual members have kept the archaeological flag flying. Harold Coward, a retired schoolmaster, has spent the last few years keeping a watch on the building of a large housing estate at Oldmixon, and has been rewarded by the eventual discovery of a Roman settlement. Stan and Joan Rendell have been directing archaeological work on the island of Steep Holm since 1978, and on both these projects helpers have been drawn from several local societies.

Projects recently organised by the Banwell Society have included the study of a large collection of papers relating to local history, and collecting items of historical interest in the area. A photographic record of the village has been made and the resulting slides and photographs have been used in exhibitions and entertainments for the benefit of the public. The Parish Survey is also being completed.

The Society has a good tradition for publishing accounts of its archaeological work and research, the 17th annual journal having been published last year, while No. 18 is soon to make its appearance. Ian Tabrett was the Society's first Editor, and he produced several editions of *Search*. Other editors published the intermediate issues, and Joan Rendell is the present Editor.

The Society also produces a monthly *Newsletter* containing articles of archaeological and similar interest, which is distributed free to members and associated bodies.

Roy Rice is a cheery and energetic Librarian, and for some years he has handled the several hundred books belonging to the Society, making them readily available to members by bringing a selection along to each meeting. There have been only three Secretaries in the history of the Society, and Stan Rendell has been the driving force since 1976.

One of the Society's main achievements of recent years has been the realising of a long-cherished dream. For many years a collection of archaeological and documentary material has been building up, with byegones of village life, sometimes rescued from bonfires or rubbish tips, sometimes purchased, or given to the Society. All this had to be stored in the homes of members and only occa-

sionally brought out and dusted for exhibitions, Then the Banwell branch of the County Library moved into larger premises, and the tiny cottage which it had occupied became vacant at a reasonable rent. At last Banwell could have a Museum! Frantic preparations led to the opening day on 31st May, 1980 and a successful pilot season led to another even better summer last year, when the attendance figures were well over 1,000 even though the museum was open for Easter, then for only three afternoons a week for little more than three months. The Museum is funded and run entirely by the Society members; Betty Tabrett, Angela Bromwich and Roy Rice being mainly responsible for the exhibits and day-to-day running, aided by Audrey Cole and Helen Warren, who looks after the Custodians' key. The Museum is about to open for its third season, with members acting as voluntary custodians.

There is a great deal of nostalgia for the 'old days' among the older members, but the Society, which is now a Registered Charity, is not just looking back – it is going forward towards even greater achievements than have been enjoyed in the past, and surely this is the secret of a thriving society, linking the past, present and future with enjoyment.

N.B. The Museum at 3 Church Street, Banwell, re-opens 10th and 12th April, then on each Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoon from 2 – 5pm. until mid-September. All visitors welcome!

S. Rendell.

(EDITORS NOTE: We have since heard the sad news that Mr. Stanley Pike, the Society's auditor, has died. Mrs. Rendell, who wrote to tell us, says that "it is a sad loss for our members, and we have lost a personal friend").

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

BEDMINSTER BETWEEN THE WARS

by L. Vears. 47pp; 28 photographs. Bristol & West Building Society and the Redcliffe Press, 1981, £1.50

GROWING UP IN TOTTERDOWN 1922-1936

by E. Lawrence. 30pp. The Redcliffe Press, 1979, £0.75p.

Both these booklets deal with the period between World War I and World War II and the personal lives of people in adjacent districts of South Bristol. The more lavish is *Bedminster between the Wars,* a well produced work, illustrated with carefully chosen photographs which evoke the period and add a strong visual element to the text. The book draws heavily on the recollections of the people of the area and deals with the subjects of housing, earning a living, health and welfare, sport, entertainment, education and local "characters".

Whilst not dealing with larger economic and political issues, the author with judicious comments has succeeded in giving a balanced view of personal histories. In addition, there are also several evocative descriptive passages in which the author shows a much appreciated sense of humour.

Growing up in Totterdown is based on the author's own childhood recollections and covers similar ground to the Bedminster booklet, dealing with shopping, education, reading, pocket money, street trading, street games, Christmas, community activities, religion and change. Many readers will find points to identify with in these recollections; chimney sweeps' visits and cash canisters zinging across shops have left indelible impressions even on someone whose childhood period was the early 1950s. It is to be hoped that these recollections are not an epitaph for a community severely injured by post-war planning.

Both books provide a great deal of information, both for the local and social historian, and dealing with a period within memory will provide nostalgic reading for the general public. However, in caution, two things must be kept in mind, one is the reliability of personal memories and the other is the mind's welcome ability to obliterate memories which are painful to it.

John W. Griffin

BRISTOL: MARITIME CITY

by Frank Shipsides and Robert Wall.
144pp; 72 illus. Redcliffe Press, 1981. £10.00

Perhaps, as a Bristol Channel pilot and an amateur historian with a direct interest in Bristol's maritime past and present, I am looking for too much from a new book on the subject? Whether criticism or praise should come first I am not sure, but I certainly found plenty to criticize in the written work of this book, and a little detail lacking in some of the artwork.

Having been a mariner for over thirty years, and loving ships and the sea, I naturally spot errors more readily than the landlubber. Nevertheless the book is written in a serious vein and claims to be an historic record, therefore it should be in all senses technically correct. It only takes one obvious mistake in a piece of writing – for instance, on page 17, the pilot launch "George Ray" is said to be flying the International Code Flag H (meaning "I am employing a pilot"), when the author should have said "the distinctive Pilot Flag" (i.e. "I *am* a pilot")– one obvious mistake, for the reader to doubt the authenticity of the rest, and the book left me wondering about the accuracy of several facts and figures.

Easy to read, and copiously illustrated, the book itself is worth taking the trouble to look at; whether £10.00 is too high a figure or not must remain the decision of the prospective purchaser. For my money I feel it to be on the high side.

The author seems to follow the pattern of all Bristolian maritime recorders and cannot resist the usual knock at the fearless men of Pill and their delightful habitat. Had it not been for these undaunted seamen and their long tradition of independence, Bristol would have had no maritime history to talk about – a fact little appreciated inside the City's boundaries.

I am extremely surprised to see only one Bristol Channel sailing cutter pictured in the work and ashamed to say the artist chose a Cardiff cutter at that. What that has to do with Bristol's maritime past is known only to him ... and he has the flag here flying from the wrong point. However, the particular cutter illustrated was built at Pill so perhaps one should not be too disappointed.

All in all I found the book interesting and the illustrations delightful.

Not a book for the serious student, but easily the most comprehensive work on the major events of Bristol's maritime story.

John Rich.

CLIFTON AND WESTBURY PROBATE INVENTORIES, 1609 – 1761.

Edited by John S. Moore. xlx, 247pp.

Avon Local History Association and University of Bristol, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, 1981. £6.50 (£5 to A.L.H.A. Members).

This is Volume I in a new series, 'Avon Historical Sources', produced by the A.L.H.A. in conjunction with the Extra-Mural Dept. of Bristol University. It is priced at £6.50 which seems reasonable for a well-presented and most useful book. Mr. Moore has already made his mark in the field of inventories with *Goods and Chattels of our Forefathers*, (Phillimore, 1976), the introduction to which touched on many aspects of the use of inventories, the problems, and what is to be gained from them. In his introduction to those of Clifton and Westbury he traces the history of the two rural villages from 1609, to the eighteenth century development of the Hotwells Spa and the upper-class suburb it became later in that century. By contrast Lower Clifton was set upon its industrial course about 1625, when 30 acres of Clifton Wood were leased in small parcels to lime-burners, ship-wrights, mariners, and the founders of the glass industry, leading to a 10-fold population increase between 1650 and 1770. The commercial expansion of Bristol, too, called for greater agricultural efficiency in the countryside to supply food and raw materials, and Mr. Moore describes the transition from the few remaining acres of open field husbandry to enclosure and convertible husbandry.

More than half the population of Clifton and Westbury had their livelihood from the land – farmers, landowners, and dependent craftsmen such as blacksmiths, but there was limited demand in the villages north and west of Bristol for retailers of food or clothing; no mercers, sadlers or grocers, though butchers, tailors and shoemakers made a living. It is clear that Bristol, and the market town of Thornbury, so well supplied with shops of all kinds, served the gentlemen, yeomen, innholders and others. The inventory of John Willis, pilot, of Shirehampton, of 1717, indicates the dependence of the village on the town. From this we see that the 'Accomptant' or Administrator sold the testator's 'Tow Boate and Yoal' (or yawl) and his goods for £72.11s.7d, which included his pewter and brass, to Mrs. Preece, pewterer of Bristol, and his silver to a goldsmith there. A second list amounting to £73.4s.11d showed his expenses for the administration of the will, the making of the accounts (and two fair copies), the lawyers' and 'Registers' fees, carriage of goods and the driving of Willis's livestock to be sold in Bristol market, all necessitating numerous journeys to town.

The inventories are arranged by paragraphs under room headings, where these are given, a procedure which will, no doubt, be more frequently used in the interests of economy, but which some may find more cumbersome than the columns of the original documents. Brief notes follow most inventories, but it is to be regretted that a short synopsis of the more interesting wills could not have been included, for information on property owned, to complement the leases recorded; on family relationships, and other matters.

There are 5 tables concerning occupations, house sizes, local population and land use, and an excellent glossary, which not only elucidates objects common to the whole country, but throws much light on regional words. A 'whitch', for instance, is an 'ark' or a 'bing' in the North; a 'sydbord' in the South-west is a 'cup-bord', which can only be distinguished from one with doors by noting which room it is in, and if pewter or earthenware follows.

And what sounds more restful than a 'milpuffe bed'! The indices are more than usually helpful.

This is an important book to all those who work, or have interest, in social and economic history, furniture history, genealogy, dialect, housing etc. in the West country and the midlands, and to others in more distant regions.

Rosemary Milward.

THE ROYAL CRESCENT IN BATH : A FRAGMENT OF ENGLISH LIFE

by William Lowndes.
96pp; 9 photographs, 8 plates.
Redcliffe Press, 1981. £5.95

The Royal Crescent is the best known and most spectacular of Bath's Georgian buildings. It is also the earliest of British crescents. Commanding what was once an uninterrupted prospect down to the river Avon, both the building and its setting have miraculously changed little since the year 1775 when the Crescent was completed to the design of John Wood, the Younger, one of the foremost provincial architects of his day. The building of the Royal Crescent was a speculative development, the scheme employed being similar to that used elsewhere in Bath by the Wood family; the land being acquired, in this case at a rental of £200 per annum by John Wood, and leased out to individual builders who then erected houses to the basic plan, adhering strictly to the design of the facade. Interior details and any modification allowed under the contract were then negotiated between the builder and purchaser. The designs and development of the Royal Crescent, of which excellent accounts exist in Walton Ison's masterly *Georgian buildings of Bath* (Kingsmead Press, 1980) and Charles Robertson's *Bath: an architectural guide* (Faber, 1975) are, however, only part of the story. Of equal interest are the lives of the fascinating people who resided there, many of whom were leading figures in their day and played a prominent part in the affairs of the City. Notable among the residents of the Crescent were Christopher Anstey, best known as the author of *The New Bath Guide* (1766), the talented musician Thomas Linley, the Vicomte du Barre, who was one of the Crescent's earliest tenants, and the mercurial Philip Thicknesse, who did much to encourage Gainsborough in the early stages of his career.

William Lowndes' book aptly, sub-titled 'A Fragment of English Life', provides an informative and highly readable account of the Royal Crescent and the lives of its principal residents, set in the context of the social history of the City as a whole. He is to be commended for including chapters on the nineteenth and twentieth century, two periods which have received little attention in other publications on Bath, and for the chapter on the Crescent in fiction which includes, of course, Winkle's embarrasing confrontation with Mrs. Dowler from Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*. There are also three appendices, including a useful chronology of the Royal Crescent and an account of the life of John Wood, the Younger. The illustrations are well selected and include eight in colour which, for a book priced at £5.95, represents excellent value for money.

Sam Hunt.

ANTIQUARIES OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND BRISTOL.

by Irvine Gray.
210pp; 53 illus. Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 1981. £7.95.

An historical approach is indicative of a discipline's maturity and the story of the development of archaeology, from antiquarianism, has now passed from an anecdotal to an analytical stage. One aspect of this, and a part of nineteenth century social life, was the emergence of the regional and county archaeological societies. Numbers of them have celebrated their centenaries and their proceedings, or especial volumes, have contained histories and, now and again, accounts of the progress of archaeological endeavour within their particular areas. The author of this book, Irvine Gray, is, perhaps, unduly modest regarding his work, for he has undoubtedly propounded a functional formula which could, and should, be emulated by all regions and counties. The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society must be congratulated for encouraging and publishing it.

The book lists and gives details of fifty-two antiquaries and pioneer archaeologists whose work has illumined that tract of England (before county reorganisation) indicated in its title. Biographical sources and published works are enumerated while, instead of the conventional likenesses, engravings and photographs that might have been expected, there are illustrations of handwritings which, it is thought, may help the identification of those stray antiquarian documents that sometimes emerge in divers places and even record offices. This departure is undoubtedly sound and sensible but it does make the production visually monotonous. This reviewer has a personal preference for pictures and likes to see his subjects as persons. A brief but succinct **Introduction** puts the chosen characters into perspective by relating them one-to-another and to the territory involved. A measure of the book's efficacy is that all but about half-a-dozen of the writer's good men are almost unknown to the wider national scene yet they all, in their various ways, made signal contributions to knowledge as it was in their lifetimes.

As befitting Irvine Gray's East Anglian schooldays, he begins his bill of fare with Bristol-born William Worcestre, secretary to Sir John Fastolf, a veteran of Agincourt, who featured in the Paston letters and lived at Caistor Castle, near Great Yarmouth. Worcestre's *Itineraries* display an omniverous appetite for ancient and contemporary alike. His antiquarian journey across England to St. Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, whence he may have contemplated a visit to the Isles of Scilly, for he records details and distances, was a model of its kind. Two antiquaries who stand out from the fascinating and talented rank and file are the remarkable brothers Daniel and Samuel Lysons who collaborated and began the *Magna Britannia* which as is said, would have been, but for Samuel's death in 1819, a latter-day Camden's *Britannia*. Samuel's *Account of the ... Roman Villa at Bignor, Sussex* (1815) was a landmark in emergent Roman studies. The fine tessellated pavements were there preserved within flint-built replicas of Sussex country cottages. His *Reliquiae Britannico-Romanae* (1801-1817), stately folios of tessellated pavements and other antiquities, were considered by Francis Haverfield to have been perhaps the most magnificent volumes of their kind ever published. Appropriately the muster concludes with Roland Austin, sometime city librarian of Gloucester and organiser of the shire's Record Office. O.G.S. Crawford got to know him while working upon his *Long Barrows of the Cotswolds* (1925) and when he began the journal *Antiquity*, in 1927,

John Bellows (who had published his long barrow book) became the printer and Roland Austin the assistant editor until 1948 when ill-health forced him to retire. *Antiquity* is still the recognised forum for ideas and discoveries on a world-wide basis. Despite Crawford's unerring and unswerving sense in such matters, it may be that its initial distinctive flavour owed much to Austin's rapport with Bellows.

As has been said above, Irvine Gray has, in this book, propounded a formula which could and should be emulated. If this is to be done there are one or two aspects of the work which should be borne in mind. First of all, despite the fact that only fifty-two scholars are listed, there could be a form of classification. Up to the end of the seventeenth century this is scarcely possible but, thereafter, there were those who pursued prehistory or Roman studies or, later on still, ecclesiology or topography or who, like Thomas Fosbroke, enthused about ancient manners, customs and Anglo-Saxons. A daunting task but not impossible. Another aspect that needs attention is the personal bibliographies as, for example, the section on Samuel Lysons alludes to his papers in *Archaeologia;* we are given subjects but neither titles nor references. The inclusion of the **Illustrations of Handwriting** was a remarkable idea but one feels that the loss of pictures of persons is too great a sacrifice. These considerations may well have been in the author's mind and, undoubtedly, there were questions of format and the like to face. Failing all else, the reviewer would like to have seen a reproduction of the sensitive portrait of Samuel Lysons by Sir Thomas Lawrence or, perhaps, the equally revealing portrait of Roland Austin from the *Centenary* essays.

Another aspect of Irvine Gray's formula is that it is one that could be effected by a group of people, for example a county university extra-mural class, who, once the basic selection had been made, could each undertake work upon a particular antiquary or archaeologist. It would be a sincere form of flattery. This attractive and well-balanced book must be read by all who seek to see something of the origins and growth of a wide spectrum of archaeological endeavour.

Paul Ashbee.

BRISTOL AND AVON ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP REVIEW

Contents of Issue No. 1 (1980) **Price: £1.00**

The Development of Roof Types in North Avon and South Gloucestershire Linda Hall
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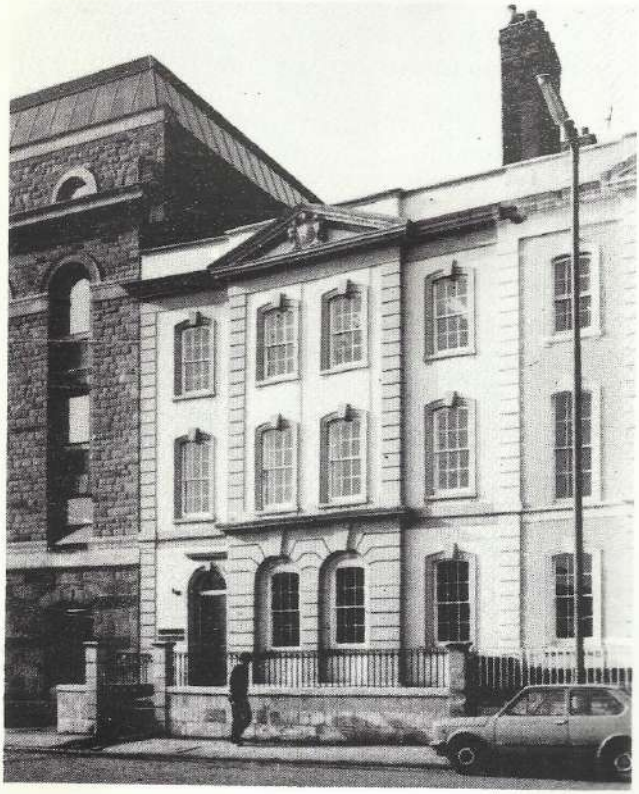

The Restoration of 70 Prince Street

A Grade II* listed Georgian house built in 1726 to a design by John Strahan has been completely renovated for new offices for the property division of the J T Group.

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