

BRISTOL AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE NOTES AND QUERIES

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16

A bibliographical note on Thomas Bonnor, engraver

Thomas Bonnor's contribution to the county's publications towards the end of the eighteenth century has gone unnoticed; there are but two passing references in the Society's *Transactions*. In *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, Bonnor was noticed just once – as one of those with county associations included in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, his entry is slight.

Bonnor was born in Bristol, the son of Charles Bonnor a distiller, and was baptised in St. Thomas's Church there on 28 February 1743.¹ He was apprenticed in 1758 to Henry Roberts, a master engraver and publisher in Holborn, London, for a premium of 20 guineas. As far as is known, Bonnor's first published work associated with the county was *Pathological inquiries and observations in surgery, from the dissections of morbid bodies* by Richard Browne Cheston M.D., F.R.S., Surgeon to the Gloucester [thus] Infirmary. This quarto volume, printed in 1766 by Robert Raikes in Gloucester for the London market, included five plates drawn and engraved by Bonnor. In 1767 Samuel Rudder, the Cirencester printer, issued two notices of his intention to produce a volume to follow Sir Robert Atkynns's *The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire*, published in 1712. The cost of producing illustrations would be prohibitive, it was said, and so Rudder invited those who wished to have views of their seats included to do so at their own expense. That several 'noblemen and gentlemen' had already promised plates was highlighted. These notices attracted the attention of William Herbert (1718–1795), a wealthy London bibliographer, publisher and bibliophile, who had bought the remaining stock and plates of Atkyns' monumental work in 1765. Hearing of the pending publication of Rudder's *A New History of Gloucestershire* he proposed collaboration with Rudder in April 1767, but was turned down and so he went ahead with the second edition of Atkyns. One result was an acrimonious correspondence between Herbert and Rudder in September–November 1768 in the columns of the *Gloucester Journal*. Bonnor was certainly in the county at this time for he married Mary Fley in Gloucester on Boxing Day that year. Mary was the daughter of John Fley, a Cathedral verger of Upper College Green. Bonnor had already obtained some commissions for plates for Rudder's proposed history since he was advertising in the *Gloucester Journal* of 3 July 1769 for further commissions.

Bonnor drew and engraved nine of the seventeen plates which were eventually published to accompany Rudder's *A New History*. The earliest of his plates dated 1770 was of Sandywell in the parish of Dowdeswell and in the following year another was published, that of Bibury Manor. The sequence in which plates were issued for Rudder's work is obscure, the Bibury plate carried the note that it had been published by Bonnor himself on 1 July 1780, but *A New History* had eventually appeared a year earlier. This plate also carried the information that seven of his engravings, eventually included in Rudder's work, were for sale as a set at 17s. 6d. or 3s. each; they were available from his office in Covent Garden, London, or from his father-in-law at College Green, Gloucester. These are large engravings, about 37 × 28 cms., which may be described as Bonnor's 'country house style'.

About this time, Bonnor was also commissioned by Ralph Bigland to produce illustrations for Bigland's projected work *Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections, relative to the County*

1. Details of Bonnor's life are to be found in an undated note by Jack Bonnor – *Ancestry of Thomas Bonnor – Engraver, 1743–1826*, to be found with the Bruton copy of Bigland's *Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections, relative to the County of Gloucester* in Gloucestershire Archives.

of Gloucester.² The earliest plate known to have been drawn and engraved by Bonnor for the *Collections* was that of King Edward the Second's Monument in Gloucester Cathedral published on 1 August 1780. He had been a frequent visitor to Gloucester. His eldest son Thomas had been born in London, but was brought down to Gloucester to be baptised in the cathedral in April 1770. The next child, Mariana, was baptised in the cathedral on 25 July 1771. Thomas Ravenhill, probably also a Gloucestershire man, was apprenticed engraver to Bonnor for a premium of £65 at St. Andrew's, Holborn, London, on 9 November 1771. In December 1777, Bonnor joined with Cheston and John Fley, his father-in-law, to assume the lease of seven houses 'near the west end of the parish of St. Mary de Lode' in Gloucester. Cheston and Fley were neighbours in College Green, Gloucester; Cheston's mother was Mary Bonnor and he and Bonnor shared a great-grandfather, another Thomas Bonnor from Weston-under-Penyard in Herefordshire.

Although Bonnor continued to undertake commissions for Ralph Bigland, he may have spent time early in 1782 in the King's Bench Prison as an insolvent debtor, possibly occasioned by difficulties in repaying a mortgage of £1,000 on properties which he had inherited in Weston-under-Penyard and Newland. Perhaps not unconnected with this unfortunate circumstance, Bonnor moved to Bath where he lived at 6 Duke Street from 1782 to 1784. During this period most, if not all, of the 13 plates described as The Bath and Wells Set were produced for Ralph Bigland and his son Richard, although to what purpose is unclear. After Ralph Bigland's death in 1784 Richard initiated publication of the *Collections*, the first Number of which was published in December 1786, and provided Bonnor with more commissions. As the focus of Bigland's publication was monumental inscriptions, so the focus of the illustrations came to be the churches where they were to be found. This provided a shift in Bonnor's work from the large 'country house style' engravings, three of which were published by Bigland, to smaller and more detailed engravings. It appears that Ravenhill was charged with travelling around the county drawing and engraving views of churches identified by Bigland and Bonnor; frequently his efforts were either rejected or significantly modified, probably by Bonnor. Bonnor sold his engravings to Bigland for between three and five guineas.

In 1791 Bonnor was living in Gloucester where his wife died on 10 October. In addition to his work with Richard Bigland he had been commissioned to draw some and engrave all the plates for *The history and antiquities of the county of Somerset*, by the Revd. John Collinson which was published in Bath in three volumes in 1791. He was also engaged in producing the 24 plates for the Revd. Richard Polwhele's *The History of Devonshire* published in Exeter in three volumes between 1793 and 1806.

By early 1796, Bonnor finished work on these two projects and was able to turn his full attention to a publication on his own account, a series of engravings of Gloucester Cathedral. On 13 May 1796 he published ten views of the interior of the cathedral and on 24 August advertised publication of the first Number of his *Illustration of the Engraved Subjects which compose the First Number of the Copper-Plate Perspective Itinerary; or Pocket Port-Folio. Consisting of Ten Views of the Interior of Gloucester Cathedral* at 5s. Within a simple folded sheet of cardboard he enclosed a booklet of twenty pages, with a printed green wrapper, in which he described in detail each of the ten plates which were themselves found loose inside. Ironically, Bonnor noted that he was unable to detail the sepulchral monuments in the cathedral, but 'They are all faithfully recorded in BIGLAND'S GLOUCESTERSHIRE'; details of the monuments, and engravings of several of them, were not to appear in print until 1819 when the Revd. T.D. Fosbrooke's *An original History of the City of Gloucester* appeared. Bonnor however, paid tribute to Bigland; in the first engraving of

2. For details of Bonnor's work for Ralph and Richard Bigland see Jones, Huw M., *The Illustrations for Garter Bigland's Historical Collections of Gloucestershire*, Bisley, 2011, *passim*.

the Cathedral – ‘Inside from the West’ (No. I, Pl. I) – Bigland’s memorial is the only one visible through the columns on the left. The plates, however, varied both in size and in the type of paper used for printing and because they were published loose are today scarcely found. At this time Bonnor’s plan was to publish a second Number with ten views of Goodrich Castle and a third Number comprising ‘Ten Views in the Vicinity of Cheltenham’.

For whatever reason, this plan was never fully carried out and the second Number with views and detailed descriptions of Goodrich Castle in a pink wrapper was not published until late 1798 at 7s. 6d. Bonnor now changed his plan completely; the price to subscribers for subsequent Numbers was to be 7s. 6d. paid on delivery once a quarter ‘when the work is brought into regular course’. A few proof impressions were to be taken before the writing was engraved on the plates which (as was apparently usual) would be double the price; impressions on India Proof Paper would be a guinea and a half. Bonnor also announced at this time that his south-west view of Gloucester Cathedral was now available at half a guinea. So were his engravings of Gloucester County Gaol, inscribed to Samuel Edwards, High Sheriff of Gloucester, and the Penitentiary or South Quadrangle of the gaol, inscribed to Sir George Onesiphorous Paul, for 5s. the pair. The first two Numbers were printed by W. Bulmer & Co., Shakspear [thus] Press, that of the eminent typographer and printer William Bulmer.

It may well be that Bonnor’s initial Number had not been well received, despite the quality of the engravings. With the second Number, Bonnor noted that he had had to raise the price because ‘it is not possible to proceed with this work in a style suitable to the Patronage with which it is honoured, at a less Price than Seven Shillings and Six Pence for each Number.’ There had also been objections to the plates being loose and of various sizes. This was remedied in the plates of Goodrich Castle which are uniformly 11.5×7.2 cms. and were contained with the letterpress in a green paper case. Bonnor even offered subscribers the opportunity to have their copies of the first Number fitted in the manner of the second when sent to him in John Street, Pentonville, where print, plates and appendix would be stitched without charge. This appendix, Plate XI, to the original set had just been issued and comprised six details of the exterior of Gloucester Cathedral and a small map showing the bearing of selected sites to the north from the cathedral tower. From ESTC entry T232291 of the announcement of its publication, Plate XI seems to have been issued in December 1799 or early 1800. A green paper case, in place of the original card cover, but dated 1796, was now provided for this Number, a reprint by Bulmer. This was presumably the Number which, so Bonnor announced, had been approved by Queen Charlotte who became a subscriber through Mary, Dowager Countess Poulett.

In 1806, Bonnor made another attempt at publishing his Perspective Views, with the tourist trade even more in mind. He split his Gloucester Cathedral Views into two Numbers each, but published them together, and did likewise with those of Goodrich Castle. These Numbers were ‘companions for the pocket’ and each contained a descriptive piece in French for ‘the accommodation of foreign Antiquaries’. None of the Numbers is dated, but they appeared either in late 1806 or early 1807. These editions were printed by Joyce Gold of Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, but they were not put together very carefully. On a copy in the Gloucestershire Archives, Bonnor had to note in his own hand that ‘The seeming omissions ... are errors occasioned in forming the two original Numbers into four ... Care has been taken to inspect these four Numbers and see they are correct. T.B., Pentonville, 5 Octob^r 1807’. This was apparently Bonnor’s last contribution to the topography of the county.

Bonnor moved to the recently-developed Clayton Street in Kennington and was publishing on his own account, for example a hand-coloured print titled ‘The Wye from Llanelweth [Llanelwedd] Rocks near Builth’, drawn and engraved by James Wathen. It was published on 1 June 1809, by ‘T.Bonnor of Clayton Street Cottage, Kennington, and T. Allen of Hereford’. He

engraved several of the views published in *Cambria Depicta* in 1814. Upcott records a reissue of the ten views of Gloucester Cathedral published by Bonnor from his Kennington address in 1815, but this is unverified.

Thomas Bonnor died in Chelsea, London, in February 1826. He and his wife had five children – Thomas (1770–1858) who became paymaster to the 15th Regiment of Foot (the East Yorkshire Regiment); Mariana (1771–1863) who was unmarried and in 1802 erected a memorial in Gloucester Cathedral to her grandparents and mother who were buried together in the College Yard; Elizabeth (1773–1800) also unmarried who lived with her father and died in Holborn; Charlotte Hester (?–1811) who married William Gillies and died in Lisbon; and John (1777–1848).

HUW JONES (1932–2012)

17

The evil Sir Anthony Kingston

Sir Anthony Kingston (for whom see *ODNB*) was the son of Sir William Kingston of Painswick. In *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries* i 27, (1881) there is an abbreviated version of a paragraph in Abel Wantner's manuscript 'History of the City and County of Gloucester' which illustrates the evil reputation that he earned as provost marshal of Cornwall:

In the reign of King Edward VI there was a great rebellion in the western part of the kingdom, which being suppressed, the king made Sir Anthony Kingston (who was then lord of Painswick) Knight Marshal of England, who upon his returning home to Painswick caused a gallows to be erected in Sheepscombe green (a tithing of Painswick) with power (within themselves) to draw, hang and quarter any that should rise in rebellion, and made a prison in Painswick for keeping and securing such offenders. And withal obliged three estates of his own in the said lordship for the upholding and maintaining of the said gallows for ever. One of the estates was always to make good the gallows and if at any time it fell down or otherwise happened to be destroyed, if he that held that estate let it so remain for four and twenty hours he should forfeit his estate, and the other two was, that one of them should perpetually have two ladders in readiness, and the other always to have halters in readiness, and upon default or want of either of these upon any time of execution they were likewise to lose their estates (called Gallows land) which they then held and do still hold by virtue of keeping up the gallows aforesaid. And that nothing should be found wanting when occasion did offer the tithing man of Sheepscombe (to the world's end) should be hangman, and for his service there is an acre of land bequeathed to him, which is at this day known and called the hangman's acre.

Two more examples of Kingston's cruelty are found in Wantner's working papers which accompany his draft history:

Whilst Sir Anthony Kingston was marshal of England he would go and punish the millard for some misdemeanour that he had committed, but the millard hearing some light of it before, he ordered his servant if any one should come to inquire for the millard to tell him he was the millard. Upon this his master goeth forth from home, and in the meantime Sir Anthony cometh and asketh for the millard. I am the millard replieth the servant. Then take him, saith Sir Anthony to his servant, and hang him at the next tree you come to, but as they led him along the poor fellow cries out that he was not the millard but the millard's man. Well, saith Sir Anthony, if thou are but the millard's man however thou canst never do thy master better service but to hang for him, and so tied him up to the tree where he hanged until he was dead.

Sir Anthony Kingston riding one day upon the road saw in a churchyard a great many people, who inquiring of them what they stood there for an answer was made that they brought a corpse there to be interred but the minister would not do his office before he had the funeral dues paid to him. Upon this Sir Anthony sendeth for the parson and after a little discourse he caused the minister to be thrown into the grave and there buried him alive.

Wantner refers to these as but two examples of many. The first edition of the *Dictionary of National Biography* supplies another instance of Kingston's literally gallows humour. He was said to have entertained the mayor of Bodmin at a banquet and after the feast to have hanged him on the gallows which the mayor himself had been ordered to make ready.

JOHN FENDLEY

18

The water supply to St Augustine's Abbey and Bristol Cathedral

Recent archaeological investigation during improvements to Lower College Square and the cloister of Bristol cathedral revealed the foundations of the medieval conduit house.³ This was situated in the centre of the cloister and received water from the spring on Brandon Hill, supplying the monastic community and later, after the creation of the diocese and cathedral in 1542, providing water for the cathedral and episcopal households. Because of the crucial importance of an adequate water supply to these communities there are numerous documentary references to the spring, pipes and conduit house.

Rights to the water from Brandon Hill must have been an essential part of Robert Fitzharding's foundation of the Augustinian abbey on his land at Billeswick in 1140. The spring was contained within a conduit house which is first mentioned in an early 13th century charter, by which Roger, Lord of Clifton, granted to the Augustinians canons additional springs and water-courses on Brandon Hill near the canons' existing conduit at Woodwell.⁴ Few documents survive from the abbey, but the hill-top conduit is again mentioned in Edward III's charter of 1373, whereby Bristol was created a county and its boundaries were carefully defined. The conduit was named as one of the boundary markers.⁵ The pipe bringing water to the abbey is referred to in the late-medieval account roll for 1511–12 when 3s. 3d. was spent on repairs.⁶ A nearby spring on Brandon Hill was granted to St Mark's Hospital and later to the Carmelite friary in Bristol. The friary was founded in the 13th century on the site now occupied by the Colston Hall. This water supply continues to flow within lead pipes contained in a beautifully-constructed culvert beneath Park Street and

3. Details of the archaeological work are contained in a report by the cathedral archaeologist, Kevin Blockley, *Bristol Cathedral Cloister Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief*, (2010).

4. David Walker, ed., *The Cartulary of St Augustine's Abbey, Bristol*, Gloucestershire Record Series, 10, (1998), 599. Woodwell was on the southern slope of Brandon Hill; the name survives in Woodwell Crescent.

5. N. Dermott Harding, ed., *Bristol Charters 1155–1373*, Bristol Record Society, 1, (1930).

6. G. Beachcroft & A. Sabin, eds., *Two Computus Rolls of St Augustine's Abbey, Bristol*, BRS IX, (1938), 61.

along Pipe Lane. It extends beneath the river Frome and still supplies the outlet by the church of St John the Baptist.⁷

Following the dissolution of the Augustinian abbey in 1539 and the establishment of the cathedral in 1542 the references to the water supply and to the conduit house in the cloister become much more numerous.⁸ Entries in the chapter minutes provide examples of the appointment of plumbers to maintain the pipes and ensure a regular supply of water to the cathedral. For example, a minute of 19 March 1604 records that Thomas Turner was allowed 20s per annum 'to the Intent that he shall diligently look into the Pipes and Conduits and other waterworks belonging to this house'.⁹ Sufficient water was required to supply the cathedral, the canons' houses clustered around Lower College Green and the bishop's palace which occupied the former abbot's lodging. In addition, the requirement was considerably increased from the 1580s when houses were built on the site of the nave which had been demolished during the mid-16th century.

The best description of the conduit house in the cloister is contained in a description of Bristol made by three soldiers from Norwich who toured the west country in 1634. They described the cathedral in detail and wrote that:

In the Cloysters is a fayre Conduit of Freestone, and leads with many Spouts, which continually runs, and waters all the Colledge with that sweet Rockwater'.¹⁰

During the Civil War and Commonwealth the cathedral suffered considerable damage. Among other desecrations, the lead was stripped from the cloisters and the conduit house, so that following the restoration of the Dean and Chapter in 1660 considerable expenditure was required to repair the buildings. The annual accounts or *computa* record large payments to builders, plumbers, carpenters, glaziers and others, but do not often specify which parts of the building were being repaired.¹¹ In 1667 however, there is reference to £227 3s. spent on building work and a further £40 paid 'for rebuilding the Water Conduit in the centre of the Cloisters'.¹² From 1709 regular leases of the cathedral land on Brandon Hill survive and provide details of the plumbers who undertook the maintenance of the spring, pipes and conduit, and of the repairs which they agreed to carry out.¹³

Not all of those responsible for ensuring a regular supply of water were entirely trustworthy as is evident from a complaint made by Bishop Thomas Newton in 1778. He was bishop of Bristol 1761–1782, an unusually long time for a bishop to remain at this poorly paid see. Newton had tried constantly but unsuccessfully to secure a more lucrative bishopric, but he was also Dean of St Paul's cathedral which was well rewarded. The querulous and self-righteous form of his complaint mirrors the tone of the enormous autobiography which he spent his final years in writing. He was particularly critical of the Dean and Canons of Bristol for their non-residence and what he considered as the neglect of their duties, although he himself was a non-resident dean. The Bishop complained that the water supply was inadequately maintained and that the cistern was not kept full of water. Moreover, he alleged that the houses of the non-resident canons and the houses built on the site of the former nave were sub-divided and let to poor people, several of whom were

7. J. Bettey, *The Medieval Friaries, Hospitals and Chapelries of Bristol*, ALHA Books 1, (2009), 11–14.

8. Most of these references are included in J. Bettey, *Records of Bristol Cathedral*, Bristol Record Society, 59, (2007).

9. Bristol Record Office (BRO) DC/A/8/1 fol. 9.

10. L.G. Wickham Legg, ed., *A Relation of a Short Survey of 26 Counties*, Camden Miscellany, XVI, (1931).

11. BRO DC/A/9/1/7; *Computa* 1660–1683.

12. BRO DC/A/6/6.

13. BRO DC/E/11/1 Leases 1709–1860.

washerwomen, who used vast quantities of water. The result was that the bishop's palace:

'...has been for several days together without a drop of water in it, so that his servants are obliged to go out and beg some water wherever they can get it, to boil the tea kettle for breakfast and the pot for dinner: and no water has come into his stable for three weeks or a month together, and it is with the utmost difficulty that any can be procured to water his horses or to wash his Coach'.

The bishop also complained about the conduit building in the centre of the cloisters. Evidently there was a small room below the cistern into which the water flowed above. The bishop alleged that the room had been 'one of the most notorious brothels in the city, thereby verifying the proverb "the nearer the church the farther from God"'. He also complained that the conduit was ugly and filthy. He ended his letter

'What will be the reflections of the world, if the Dean and Chapter should interdict their Bishop from the common use and benefit of water; and drive away the only member of the Church who inhabits his own house and is the most resident of all.....'.¹⁴

The bishop's allegation about the use of the conduit for immoral purposes was later confirmed by Dean Henry Beeke. In notes on the cathedral which he compiled in 1829 Dean Beeke wrote that the building had 'become very notoriously a Receptacle for Prostitutes'.¹⁵

Plans accompanying 18th century leases of properties within the cathedral precinct show the conduit house as a large square building in the centre of the cloisters. It is also shown clearly on the large-scale map of Bristol produced by George C. Ashmead in 1828.¹⁶ The building was finally demolished in 1853. The chapter minutes for 24 December 1853 record a lease of the waterworks to George Rogers upon various conditions for renewing the system. One condition was that he should '... take down and remove the present Reservoir and the Water House in the Cloister and to level and Gravel the site thereof'.¹⁷

JOSEPH BETTEY

19

Oxen in Gloucestershire

Norman Jewson set out on a sketching holiday in the Cotswolds in August 1907. Arriving at Cirencester by train he succeeded in hiring a donkey and trap into which he loaded his camping equipment and sallied forth. On the second day as he was setting up camp in North Cerney he saw on the skyline a man ploughing with two yoke of oxen. This was sufficiently unusual for Jewson to record it¹⁸, but he later found out that Lord Bathurst was still ploughing with oxen on his home farm at Cirencester, a practice which continued until at least 1945. It would be interesting to know more about how the use of horses gradually superseded oxen for farming and haulage in

14. BRO DC/E/40/28/1 The bishop's letter was found as a stray among leases of properties within the cathedral precinct 1641–1869.

15. BRO DC/A/7/9/1 Dean Henry Beeke's Notes 1814–37.

16. BRO DC/E/3/4; DC/E/40/28/1; DC/E/40/68/2.

17. BRO DC/A/8/6 Chapter Minutes 1841–57.

18. N. Jewson, *By Chance I did Rove* (privately reprinted, 1973) 2.

Gloucestershire.

John Billingsley, the agricultural economist writing about Somerset in 1798¹⁹ commented that a team of three horses was more efficient than six oxen. The cost of fodder was less, horses recovered from lameness better than oxen while, if broken to the plough, horses were well adjusted for haulage work and could be sold on profitably.

[In Gloucestershire use of oxen in the Vale of Berkeley had ceased generations before but was gradually increasing on the Cotswolds.²⁰ – Ed.]

It is well known that Gloucester cattle were used as oxen²¹ but there were fewer of them when the more profitable shorthorn cows increasingly formed the dairy herds in the second half of the nineteenth century. Lord Ducie at Tortworth bought quality shorthorns at the dispersal sale of the famous Kirklevington herd in 1850²² and the Fitzhardinge Berkeleys also encouraged shorthorns when the growth of the railway network facilitated the transport of milk to the new urban communities. [In 1912 Mr Peters, agent to Lord Fitzhardinge, was considered the best judge of shorthorns in the world. – Ed.] So in the Berkeley Vale the use of oxen went out earlier than on the high wolds though the first decade of the twentieth century seems a late date for their continuing use.

It was during that holiday that Jewson first met the group of ‘Arts and Crafts’ architects and craftsmen based at Sapperton and in due course became one of its most distinguished members.

GERARD LEIGHTON

20

Dodd’s Mill, Barrington and its brief role in national history

The long history of Dodd’s Mill is told in the *Victoria History of Gloucestershire*.²³ Dating back perhaps to Domesday, it became a possession of Llanthony Priory and after the dissolution changed hands among several lay owners. It figures on the 6” O.S. of 1886. Soon after then it became disused and the adjacent cottages were demolished. A photograph of about that period is published in the *VCH*.²⁴ Remains of the mill race and the foundations are still visible on the site.

All this is unremarkable enough, but briefly at the start of the 17th century Dodd’s Mill played a part on a much wider stage. Thomas Strange, a member of a Cirencester family, converted to the catholic faith and later became a Jesuit priest. Thereby he became exposed to the trials and tribulations of a fugitive criminal. His subsequent career was vivid and characteristic of the times and is fully recorded.²⁵ Here we are concerned with his local activities. As was later to emerge from interrogation, he was involved in the preparation of a seditious work which questioned the validity of King James’s title to the throne. In its planning he was joined by his cousin John Chapperlin,

19. J. Billingsley, *Agriculture of Somerset* (1798).

20. J. Marshall, *The Rural Economy of Gloucestershire*, (1799) i 52, ii 50.

21. Gloucester Cattle Society website.

22. C.M.D. Bates, *Thomas Bates and the Kirklevington Shorthorns* (1897)

23. vi, 23.

24. *ibid.*, opp. p. 17.

25. J. and N. Fendley, *Journal of the South West Catholic History Society*, no 26 (1995) 3–9.

also a catholic,²⁶ Alexander Wye, a member of a Gloucestershire family, and one Joseph Davis. They held their meetings at Dodd's Mill.

It is interesting that they chose the Mill as a safe haven. Hidden away on the banks of the Windrush, in a remote corner of the parish of Great Barrington, it was nonetheless near to Burford with easy access to roads to Cirencester, Oxford and Gloucester, which would facilitate a hasty departure. It was close to the county boundary between Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, a location which would deter pursuers whose powers would most likely be restricted to their home county. We do not know how the four men were accommodated there, but a survey of 1603 discovered one male and one female catholic in the parish of Great Barrington, and a plausible guess is that they would have been helpful to the conspirators, and perhaps even the occupants of the Mill.

JOHN FENDLEY

21

Thefts of monumental brasses

Like many other well-to-do members of the leisured classes in the late eighteenth century, the Honourable John Byng, later 5th Viscount Torrington, travelled around England and was an inveterate visitor of churches. He recorded his impressions in a series of diaries.²⁷ In July 1787 he visited Fairford and noted that

...the church was built by John Tame, Merchant of London in 1493. The tomb of the founder is of grey marble and effigies of himself and his wife are engraved on the top in brass plates...²⁸

Now speaking of brasses, I may remark that the present rage for collection leads to, even, their extinction, for now church brasses are sought for and purchased of the clerks – much to the loss of future county historians ... tho' I say it is the duty of the minister to preserve these monuments, yet I fear I should be sacrilegious enough to make pillage of this kind wherever I was stationed.

Byng admitted taking brasses from Hucknall in Derbyshire and Wrotham in Kent to add to the collection of his cousin, Sir George Osborn. Fortunately he did not get his hands on the brasses at Fairford, though sadly a few years ago the Trinity scene from the brass of Sir Edmund Tame (died 1533)²⁹ was stolen and has never been recovered. A fourteenth century brass likewise disappeared from Swainswick just beyond the Gloucestershire boundary but, conveniently for the thieves, close to the M5. The collection of rubbings at Bristol Museum includes one of the few that survive of the early brass to a priest (c. 1310) stolen from Oulton, Suffolk, in 1857.³⁰

26. *TBGAS* 88, 18–19.

27. C.B. Andrews (ed), *Torrington Diaries*, London (1970) 255.

28. Mill Stephenson, *List of Monumental Brasses* London (1926) 150–151.

29. *ibid.*

30. Herbert Haines, *A Manual of Monumental Brasses* Oxford (1865).

Brasses are far from being the only items stolen from churches. Wells Cathedral lost an alabaster carving and at about the same time Downside Abbey was raided. Two altar candle sticks were taken from Cirencester Church quite recently. Several years ago Bristol Cathedral lost its seventeenth century communion benches in broad daylight, taken by men who claimed to be removing them for conservation, and an eighteenth century table was stolen from Marshfield Church in similar circumstances at around the same time. Sadly church authorities need to be aware of the risks to their portable property as well as to their lead roofs and downpipes. It is no satisfaction to know that such losses have been taking place for several centuries.

GERARD LEIGHTON

QUERIES

22

The playing of fives

Fives was a popular game in the past but is now largely confined to a few major schools though there is a public fives court underneath the arches of the overhead through way adjacent to Paddington station. It has similarities with squash insofar as hitting a ball against the walls of the court, but is played with an open or gloved hand instead of a racquet. The angle between the nave or aisle and the tower of a church formed an ideal court and was frequently used. Such use can often be identified by the remains of pintails for wooden shutters on the outside of a vulnerable window, or small holes for scoring notches in an adjacent wall, and more rarely by rough stepping places cut into the wall to enable players to clamber up to the roof to recover stray balls. A more extreme adjustment however can be seen at Montacute in Somerset where part of a low string course has been shaved away to create a smooth surface.

Playing fives in churchyards was not always popular with the church authorities and churchwardens' accounts may contain evidence of actions to prevent it such as the building of railings or planting shrubs.

In the early 19th century courts were often established at the back of public houses utilising existing walls, or building new ones which were often called 'towers', continuing the old association with churches. Inter-village or town competitions took place, perhaps run on similar lines to the skittles matches currently in vogue.

What evidence exists in Gloucestershire of fives 'courts' in churchyards or inns?

GERARD LEIGHTON

23

A quaint memorial

In the porch of Daglingworth church is a memorial brass:

The dissection and distribution of
Giles Handcox

Who to Earth bequeaths to [? *recte* his] Earth to Heaven his Soule
To Friends his Love to the Poor a five Pound Dole
To remain for ever and be employed
For their best advantage and relief
In Daglingworth
April the 9th, 1638

The introductory words are often quoted but what do they mean? 'Distribution' evidently refers to the benefactions but there seems to be no sense of 'dissection' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* which is appropriate here; this word seems more proper to the fate of the turkey at Christmas lunch than to a pious Christian burial.

JOHN FENDLEY

24

An unusual mason's mark at Gloucester

In his monumental work *Building in England* (1952) pp. 331–2, L.F. Salzman mentions a mason's mark on a Norman pillar of Gloucester Cathedral which takes the form of a lewis. This was a device for raising and lowering large blocks of stone, especially useful for inserting the keystone of an arch. A rectangular hole was cut into the block with two ends bevelled. The lewis consisted of three pieces of iron, two shaped to form a dovetail slanted to correspond to the bevel in the stone. After these had been inserted the arrangement was stabilised by the insertion between them of the third piece.

Salzman refers to lewis holes in stones at Whitby Abbey; are any to be found above the arches at Gloucester?

JOHN FENDLEY