



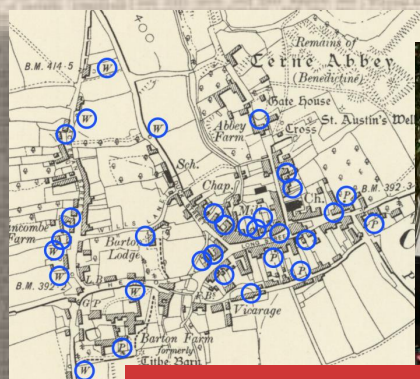
Cerne
Historical
Society

MAGAZINE

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Cerne Historical Society's Magazine.



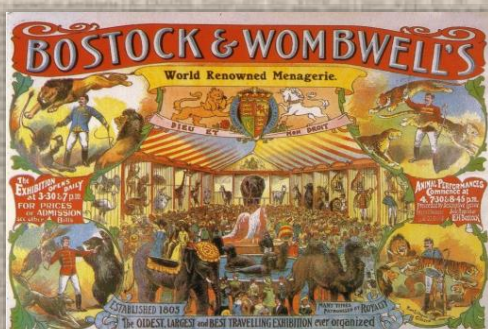
NEWS ...& History



Pumps and Wells



A Date with the Giant



Bostock's Menagerie



Self (Too Young for Active Service)

Reminiscences



NEWS ...& History Kate Adie



Bostock's Menagerie Den Denness



A Date with the Giant Mike Allen



Stories and Reminiscences Bryan Palmer



Pumps and Wells Charman & Mortimer

10
July
2020

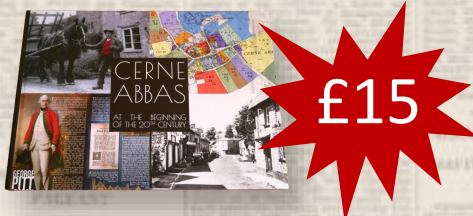


Welcome to the fourth issue of the Cerne Historical Society's Magazine.

A big thank you to all those who have contributed to this issue, in particular **Kate Adie** for her brilliant article on "History", **Dr Mike Allen's** fascinating update on what snail shells are telling us about the date of the Giant, Den Deness' tale of when the famous Bostock Menagerie visited Cerne in 1891, **Bryan Palmer's** account of life here in the 1940s and **George Mortimer** and **John Charman's** article about Pumps and Wells in the village. I am sure you will greatly enjoy all the articles.

The "tentative" findings that the Giant "may not be prehistoric, nor even Roman, but belongs to more historic times" are based on the presence of certain snail shells in the deepest of the chalkings of the Giant. The results of the OSL tests will help to confirm or disprove those findings. Even if they confirm them, as Martin Papworth, the NT Archaeologist, said in his article in our May magazine "it may be that there was an ancient Giant, abandoned and allowed to grass over. Perhaps it was faintly visible at certain times of the year in low sunlight and eventually, a landowner decided to mark him out as an interpretation of something that was once there." If the Giant does prove to be of recent origin it raises the question of when was it built and by whom? Chris Edwards suggests in the latest issue of *Current Archaeology* that the Giant was built in 1691 by the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury. These are all intriguing issues we hope to explore in the next issue of the magazine.

You may have noticed that we are calling this issue the July/August one. That is because we have decided to take a short break before we publish the next issue at the beginning of September. After that we will have to decide whether to continue the publication of the magazine, even if the pandemic has ended, and if so whether to do so on a quarterly rather than a monthly basis. At the moment our plan is to publish one in December and possibly another one in March 2021. We would greatly value your views on those questions.



The first 100 copies of our new book "CERNE ABBAS at the Beginning of the 20th Century" having sold out, a further 100 arrived at the end of June, many of which are still available at the Village Stores or the Old Saddlers. Alternatively you can order a copy from our Treasurer (details below). Those who have read it unanimously agree that it is a beautiful and enthralling book (designed by our graphic artist John Fieldhouse) and is great value at £15.

May I also strongly recommend your looking at the photos taken by Jane Tearle during the Exhibition, many of which she has now downloaded to Flickr. They can be found at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dorsetjane/albums/72157714871170758> **Sale of the Century**

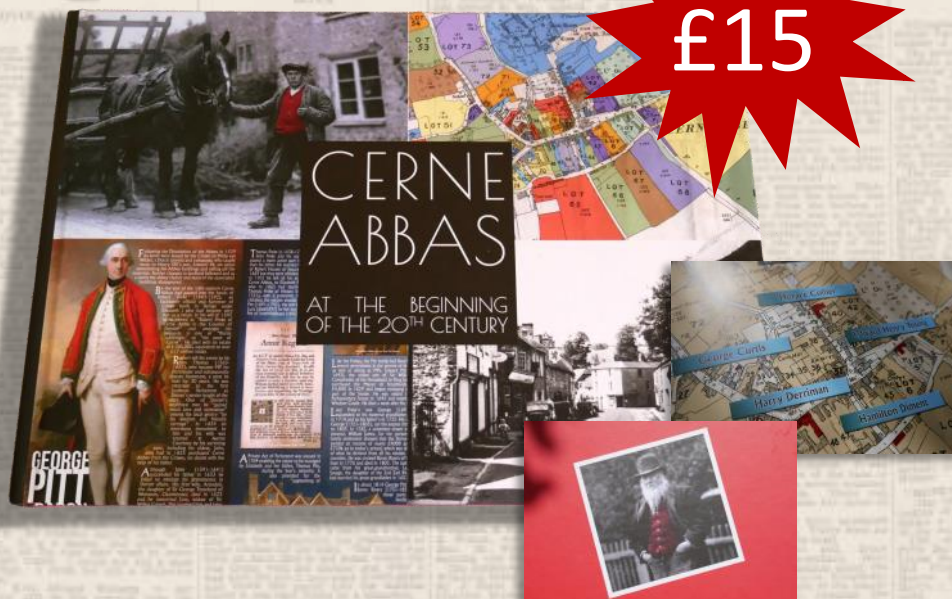
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dorsetjane/albums/72157714864883281> **1919 Cricket Match**

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dorsetjane/albums/72157714905938896> **1919 Village Concert**

They are a lovely record of the events and vividly bring them back to life.

64 pages in Full Colour

People,
Places,
Maps,
Stories,
History



The Book of the Posters in the CHS 1919 Exhibition

Send an email to our Treasurer John Chalker cernehistoricalsociety@gmail.com ordering a copy and giving your address and telephone number, and transfer the sum of £15 (or £18 if you live 2 miles outside the village, to cover P&P) to the Society's bank account.

Name: Cerne Historical Society
Sort Code: 09 07 21
Acct. No: 66248304
Reference: Your surname

Or, if you are unable to pay by bank transfer, send your name, address and telephone number together with a cheque for £15 (or £18 if you live 2 miles or more outside the village) made payable to the Cerne Historical Society to : **The Treasurer, John Chalker, 36 Long Street, Cerne Abbas, DT2 7JG**

CHALK VALLEY HISTORY FESTIVAL

Some of you will know of this annual event which takes place only an hour's drive away in a field of marquees just off the Blandford to Salisbury road in the last week of June. If you are into history it's unmissable. I go every year for two or three days and I could easily go for the whole week. Everybody you have ever heard of in the history world from authors to broadcasters will have appeared there. The programme is a mix of talks, events, displays and demonstrations of living history. Because this year's event couldn't happen, the organisers have produced a 45 minute podcast to show what would have taken place on each of the seven days which will give you a flavour of what it's all about. Go to cvhf.org.uk

Mike Clark

This magazine may be viewed and read online or downloaded from cerneabbashistory.org





Kate Adie



NEWS ...& History

Photo © Ken Lennox

‘That which is new, the unexpected.’ There are myriad definitions of news. When modern journalism is decried for gossip, and sensation, I relish this description, before printed newspapers in England, of sixteenth century pamphlets and broadsides: ‘doings of the court; murders and other crimes; miracles, prodigies and wonders; monstrous births and strange beasts; witchcraft; the plague; acts of God such as flood and fire, and the weather; and sporting events.’ Somehow politics, government and war were relegated to Any Other News.

Beginning work as a journalist, in the days before universities had even thought about degree courses in Media Studies, I realised there were many mysterious fundamental precepts to master – short-hand, compiling a treasure-trove of ‘contacts’, understanding the lay-out technique of newspapers, and having ‘a nose for news’. Over the years, I failed in all these respects. However, somehow I survived.

Missing from these fundamental precepts was what, to me, became an absolute necessity: a grasp of history. I had started out in Local Radio in my native north-east, not as a journalist (women were neither encouraged nor welcomed by the local press), but as a junior technician and then later in Bristol, as a producer. Even so, an almost skeleton staff combined with the high ambitions of novice broadcasters, led to everyone doing every job. My very first outing to describe, live on air, the early morning scene in Durham prior to the annual Miners’ Gala, took place in the shadow of the great cathedral. I stood nervously attached to the new-fangled radio car, and had prepared a short description of this peaceful scene, contrasting with the somewhat noisier celebration later. I finished, lyrically, and was just about to hand back to the studio. A voice hissed in my headphones: ‘Keep going, we’ve lost the next interviewee...’

I then described, at length, the Miners’ service which would be held later that afternoon.

‘Keep going...weather forecast missing....’ Having been to a church school is sometimes useful. I launched into the history of the great cathedral – the Venerable Bede, St Cuthbert’s tomb, the Miners’ Memorial and much, much more.

In contrast, years later working for Television News, brevity lay at the heart of most stories for the national bulletins. Even so, history turned out to be an essential element in understanding how to report events both great and small.

Reporting Northern Ireland demanded a good grasp of the complex versions of history which drove The Troubles. The Battle of the Boyne, King Billy, Home Rule, the Orange Order: all seemed to have had little or no mention during history lessons in England. Any correspondent learned to tread carefully, use words precisely, for the locals were all experts.

When Yugoslavia fell apart in the 1990s, the British press found itself immersed in one of the more complicated historical spiders' webs in Europe. Every town, every valley had its own long memory. Serbs, Croats and Bosnians all had their own view of the past. Grievances had long roots in an area where a succession of foreign powers had stretched imperial tentacles: the Romans, the Venetians, the Ottoman Empire, the Hapsburgs.

Ask in a village 'What happened yesterday?' And the answer might well start: 'In 1389, the Serbs.....'

We journalists tried to grasp the essentials. Every incident seemed to be rooted in something that happened back in the mists of time. It mattered to understand the context – and to understand the depth of feeling which old slights, however inaccurately remembered, stirred up.



Looking at our own landscape in Dorset, we have boundless evidence of a rich and varied history. It seems we are lucky that the great divisions of the past are not the running sores that afflict many countries. Cavalier or Roundhead? Not a cause for violence today. We have many reminders of invaders – but a Roman mosaic or a Viking grave evoke curiosity and fascination rather than memories of foreign overlords. The PoW camp near Dorchester? – a reflection on war – and how we treat the enemy.

Our landscape is shaped and decorated with every kind of memory: iron age forts, mediaeval chapels and castles, the great houses of the rich, the quaintness of ancient streets. We are lucky. Our history invites us to explore, to enquire, to enrich ourselves with knowledge of life lived a little differently.

And we are edged by the reminders of almost another world – when huge and extraordinary creatures lurked, swam, flew in the Jurassic Age. A reminder that life here stretches back an unimaginable distance. What a richness of history we have all around us. A history we can celebrate.

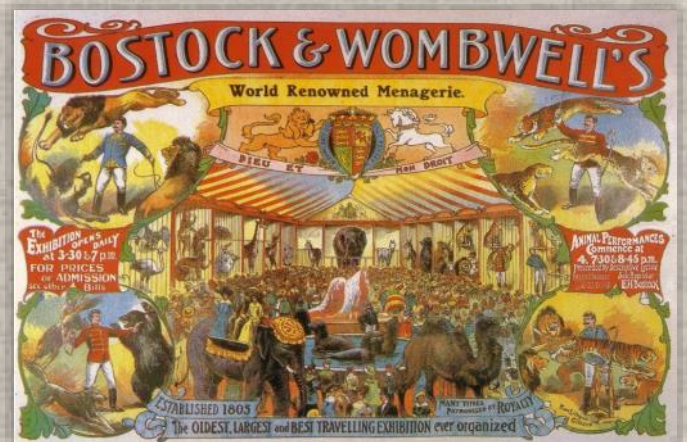




Den Denness

A Visit by Bostock's Travelling Menagerie, August 1891

Travelling menageries, with their collections of exotic beasts and skilled circus performers, were extremely popular throughout Europe and America during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among the most successful of these were those presented by the famous Bostock and Wombwell family who had been organising successful touring shows since at 1805. So, the announcement that, as part of his 1891 summer tour of the West Country, Edward Henry Bostock was to bring his Grand Star Menagerie to Cerne Abbas would have been greeted locally with considerable excitement.



In an advertisement for the Somerset leg of the tour, the *Western Chronicle* alerted potential visitors to the menagerie of some of the treats that lay in store for them. In addition to his collection of over 500 'birds, beasts and reptiles', Bostock promised a performance by 'Cardano' the great American lion tamer with his group of 'fully-grown forest-bred lions'. Also on the bill was the exotically-named 'Madame Telzero' who was to demonstrate her skills in training lions, wolves, tigers and an 'educated elephant'. In later shows Telzero would also appear with 'Fritz the clown bear'. (In the same advertisement the menagerie's butcher offered, grimly, to purchase any 'old and disabled horses as food for the animals' provided they were 'free from disease'). Entry to the show was one shilling for adults, sixpence for children, and, for an extra three pence, visitors were able to watch the animals being fed.

But Bostock's tour that summer did not go well. During the show's journey from Ilchester to Yeovil, two of the menagerie's lions – each valued at £150 - suffocated in their cages through a combination of excessive heat and insufficient ventilation. Later that day, reported the *Western Gazette*, a reindeer also 'succumbed to the intense heat', costing the showman a further £100.

BOSTOCK'S MENAGERIE.—DEATH OF THREE OF THE ANIMALS.—On Friday morning, Bostock's Menagerie (No. 2 collection) arrived in the town for a two-days' exhibition, and was located in the Cattle Market. The heat that morning was exceedingly oppressive, and on the vans being opened it was found two of the animals—a lion and lioness, three years of age, and forest-bred—were dead, having been overcome by the closeness of the atmosphere. They were valued at £150 each, and were a pair with which a female lion tamer travelling with the menagerie performed. Later in the day a reindeer, valued at £100, also succumbed to the intense heat. On Saturday, two more lions were received from Glasgow, where No. 1 collection is exhibiting, to succeed the two which have died. The menagerie was well patronised on both days.

Fortunately for the residents of Cerne Abbas, by the time the menagerie arrived in the village for its one-day show on Saturday 29 August, suitable substitutes had been found for the dead lions. Bostock was running more than one travelling menagerie, and he had arranged for two replacement lions to be brought down – presumably by train - to Dorset from his other show, which at the time was in Glasgow. The show was to go on, as it must!

OPINIONS PRESS THE POOLE MURDER CHARGE DORS. QUARTER VISIONS CHARLTON FLORETHORNE FETE FATALITY AT HINCHSTIDGE GILLINGHAM GRAMMAR SCH

ACCUSED MAN AGAIN REMANDNEY YOUNG WELSH BOULEVARD GAIL FOR T

SAYS "HE COULDN'T MOVE KILL A PRISONER"

A LIONESS AND TIGER FIGHT.

Whilst at Cerne, a small town in Dorset, Bostock's Menagerie was the scene of a fierce and fatal fight between a tiger and a lioness. By some means the tiger obtained access to the lions' cage, and attacked a handsome and valuable lioness. The latter, which was a young animal, proved unequal to the attacks of the fierce tiger, and it was frightfully injured. The fight lasted some time, and caused the greatest excitement among the other beasts of the collection. When the animals were parted, it was found that the lioness had a broken jaw, and had sustained other injuries so serious that the owner ordered her to be shot. The tiger was also badly mauled.

As this newspaper cutting taken from the Southampton-based [Hampshire Advertiser](#) makes clear, Bostock's luck didn't improve. The death of a further lion meant that the total cost of these recent animal fatalities had reached £500 – the equivalent of the combined entry fees paid by 10,000 adult menagerie visitors.



Hampshire Advertiser 2 September 1891 p4

Photograph taken in 1912 by Tom Airton in Gargrave, N. Yorkshire and shows Bostock and Wombwell's Menagerie entering the village. Original photograph by Mrs Dorothy Hudson.

Unabashed, Bostock's travelling menagerie continued its tour, moving on to East Dorset and then into Hampshire. After a few years he stopped travelling, and instead opened his 'Scottish Zoo' – the first permanent zoo in Scotland – in Glasgow in 1897. However, a menagerie bearing his name continued to tour Britain until 1932.

It might be assumed that life in Cerne Abbas quickly returned to normal after its brief encounter with the peculiar exhibits of Bostock's travelling show. But it is reasonable to assume that the experience might have left an impression on the villagers, especially in a period when most people's exposure to exotic animals was limited to still photographs and illustrations in books and magazines. The additional excitement surrounding the fatal feline fracas would surely have added some colour to their recollections of the occasion for some time afterwards.

EDMONDS' (LATE WOMBWELL'S)
 AND
 JAS. W. BOSTOCK'S
MONSTRE UNITED SHOWS,
 Menagerie, Circus, and Museum,
 IN ONE SHOW FOR ONE ADMISSION, WILL EXHIBIT
 At AYLESBURY, SEPTEMBER 2nd,
 THAME, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3rd.

FOUR GREAT TAMERS
 Accompany this Monstre Show.
MADAME SALVA,
 Renowned Coloured Animal Trainer ;
FREDERIGO LORESCO,
 Greatest of all Lion Kings ;
CAPTAIN RICARDO,
 With his Matchless Hyenas and Comic Bear ;
SINGH YU,
 Native Indian Elephant Trainer ;
 Each of whom will display their power over their
 strange pupils in a manner never yet excelled
 in this or any other country.

TWO PERFORMANCES AT TWO AND SEVEN.
ADMISSION—ONE SHILLING

**THE GREAT ORIGINAL AND ONLY
 REAL WOMBWELL'S.**
 ONE CHARGE ADMITS TO ALL SIGHTS.
 Some years since last visit.
 Advance Manager—MR. GEO. MACKENZIE.

Bucks Herald 29 August 1891 p1

This advertisement for menagerie shows held in the week following the visit to Cerne gives a taste of what villagers might have looked forward to.





Mike Allen & Brian Edwards

Published in the last week, to appear in time for the anniversary celebration of 100 years of National Trust ownership, two articles on the Giant of Cerne Abbas feature across ten pages in the August edition of *Current Archaeology* (365). A brief account of the historical research will feature in the next edition of this magazine.

Meanwhile one of the authors, Mike Allen, shares some further thoughts on dating.

A Date with the Giant

Hatching a plan over a fish and chip lunch in a local hostelry, Martin Papworth (National Trust's Wessex senior archaeologist) and Mike Allen (environmental archaeologist and archaeological scientist) decided that dating the Giant in 2020 would be an ideal way to celebrate his 100th year in the ownership of the National Trust. A small, but not inconsiderable, National Trust budget allowed 4 small trenches to be excavated into the soles of each foot and crook of each elbow in March 2020. Samples were taken and a result was anticipated in time for the anniversary celebrations in July, but as readers of this magazine will know, the pandemic saw the plans cancelled and the testing delayed.

Now, at the end of June, the selected sample has started its analysis and a result will be due later in the year.

Meanwhile an answer may be found in microscopic snails! Although land snails in archaeology are primarily used for palaeo-environmental interpretation and landscape reconstruction, a few have some chronological properties. Two species occur for the first time in Britain in the Roman period (thought to have been brought over from France as food); and three other very small species occur for the first time in the medieval period (13-14th century), probably arriving in straw and hay used to pack goods being shipped from France and the Continent. Samples of soil 1-2kg in size were carefully taken from key deposits – hillwash pre- and post-dating the first chalking, primarily to look at the land-use when the Giant was created. The samples were taken back to the lab, carefully sieved and washed in water onto fine 0.5mm sieves.

Although full and detailed analysis has not yet been undertaken, nor funding yet been agreed by the National Trust, even preliminary examination of some of the shells is already starting tentatively to give us some important clues. Ironically, in the current absence of *OSL results, it is the land snails that now give us a strong steering clue to his date. The pre-Giant deposits contain a different group of open country snails from those contemporary with the figure on the hillside. The latter all contain species from two of our medieval incomers, whilst the early pre-monument deposits contain none. From these findings we can tentatively suggest at this stage that the giant may not be prehistoric, nor even Roman, but belongs to more historic times.

Full analysis of the OSL date/s will occur once university laboratories are re-opened, and analysis of the environment land-use and hints of the chronology from the snails and soil will continue if, and when, the National Trust funds that research.

Mike Allen

Allen Environmental Archaeology



*Optical Stimulated Luminescence - a technique used to date the last time quartz sediment was exposed to light.



Bryan Palmer

Introduction to Bryan Palmer's edited stories by Robin Mills

A few years after the publication of a book of photographs I helped put together, which recorded the village and residents of Godmanstone in 2000, Bryan Palmer sent me his written recollections from his boyhood life in the Cerne Valley during WW2. He and his family moved to a cottage in Nether Cerne in 1941 aged 11, after his father began work as a Naval Auxiliary at Minterne House, escaping the air raids at Weymouth where they lived previously. His Grandad ran the Smiths Arms at Godmanstone.

His memories are astonishingly vivid, and his writing eloquent. This article is an extract of a single chapter. Bryan has lived near Nottingham for many years.

MINTERNE MAGNA, NETHER CERNE & CERNE ABBAS

Bryan writes: Clearly anticipating an increase in the number of war-time casualties, the Royal Navy decided to take over Lord Digby's mansion, at Minterne Magna, and to convert it into an auxiliary naval hospital. On the 1st

January, 1941, Dad was drafted there to set up and run the X-ray department. Minterne Magna is about sixteen miles to the north of Weymouth and lies at the head of the valley of the River Cerne. It was not very long before Dad found us a rented cottage, about four miles lower down this same valley, in Nether Cerne, and we moved away from the bombing, right into the heart of the Dorset countryside. Nether Cerne was a tiny hamlet, consisting of a dozen or so cottages, clustered around an old monastic building (which was now the farmhouse) with a small church nearby. Nestling at the foot of the downs, amid water-meadows fed by the River Cerne, the whole place was a picture of timeless peace and tranquility; a world away from the horrors of the war. Having said that, a large white scar on a



hillside, not too far away, was a tangible reminder that even this peaceful backwater had not entirely escaped the attentions of the Luftwaffe. Subsequent excavation of this bomb crater failed to produce any shrapnel but I did later add an almost entire incendiary bomb to my collection, found on the same hill-top.

Our new home was the first one of a pair of semi-detached cottages at the foot of a steep lane that branched off the main Cerne Abbas to Dorchester Road (the A352). Just below these cottages, the lane turned sharply to the right and ran alongside the River Cerne, towards the main part of the village. Our cottage was built of chalk, face with knapped flints and brick trimming and had a slate roof. With no damp course, however, a tide-mark was plainly visible at a height of about three feet up the inside walls.



Photo Robin Mills

The front door, fitted with a massive lock that required a key weighing the best part of half a pound, opened directly from the lane into the living room. A cast-iron kitchen range filled the fire-place and beside this was a huge brick



Photo Robin Mills

copper. Behind the living-room, there was a scullery with a large porcelain sink supported on brick pillars beneath which stood a bucket. Unlike the living-room, the ceiling in this extension was un-plastered and the joists supporting the floor of the room above were exposed to full view. The tiny sitting-room, which adjoined the living-room, was also equipped with a kitchen range and, in the far corner, was an exceedingly narrow, winding staircase. This presented us with an immediate problem for Grandad's bedroom suite was far too large to get up the stairs. Fortunately, our new next-door neighbour happened to be a joiner and cabinet-maker and he readily volunteered to cut a temporary hole in the ceiling of the scullery and, by this means, Grandad's furniture was duly installed.

With no mains water supply or drainage, no electricity and no gas supplies, we were suddenly translated into an eighteenth century life-

style, but at least we felt that we were well away from the nightly air-raids. The sanitary arrangements, in particular, were horrendously primitive. In order to satisfy a call of nature, it was necessary to go out through the front door, along the front of the cottage, down the side and along the back to a cobweb festooned, lean-to shed in which stood a plank of wood, with a hole in it, placed over a galvanized bucket. In wet, or very cold weather, especially at night, this was a great disincentive and our solitary, old-style, china chamber pot was in great demand. It quickly became part of Grandad's early morning routine to empty the contents of the bucket into the chalk-stream which flowed alongside the road. After that, he would clear out the grate and light the fire. Our drinking water supply was a board-covered, natural spring which was located about two hundred yards down-stream and adjacent to the same river that we were using as our sewer.

A searchlight battery and ack-ack guns, perched in their sand-bagged emplacements on top of the hill, reminded us from time to time that there was still a war on. We knew that Weymouth and Portland were still under attack as we could sometimes see the glow of fires that lit up the night clouds in the southern sky and our relief was tinged with not a little guilt that we had ignominiously fled from the front-line.

For me, the new experience of living so close to nature was enchanting. I soon got to know the names and nesting habits of the hedgerow and waterside birds. In those days, the roadsides were kept in order by gangs of roadmen, each responsible for their particular stretch of highway. Wielding bill-hooks and scythes, they kept the hedges and grass banks trimmed and this encouraged the proliferation of wild flowers.



Grandad (Too Old for Active Service)

The whole three miles of road between Nether Cerne and Cerne Abbas, where I went daily to school, were bordered by a mass of violets and primroses in the spring and a harvest of berries and hazelnuts in the autumn. When the weather was fine, I often walked to school and enjoyed the delights of the hedgerows but when the weather was too bad, the school 'bus had to be resorted to and this, in itself, was something of a novelty.

Local 'bus services, at that time, were run by "transters" who not only transported passengers but also ran errands and did the shopping for you – for a small fee. Most of these met up in the yard beside the fire station in Dorchester and a whole motley of vintage vehicles would gather from the surrounding villages. All bore a distinct resemblance to a greenhouse on wheels and some even boasted curtains. On a market day, they would be loaded down with packages and parcels, sacks and baskets of chickens perched on the roof and between the mudguards and the bonnet. On our school 'bus, which was owned and driven by Mr. Thorne, a number of tea-chests was placed in the central aisle for the convenience of otherwise standing passengers. There was never any misbehaviour on Mr. Thorne's 'bus because Mrs. Thorne, a very powerful-looking woman with a stentorian voice and an Eton crop, took command of the proceedings and collected the fares.



SCHOOL UNIFORM



Self (Too Young for Active Service)

I was taken to Minterne House on a number of occasions; once to a memorable Children's Christmas Party laid on by the naval staff and once to an ENSA Concert. These events were held in the magnificent panelled ballroom which had a balcony from which it was claimed that our great war-leader, Winston Churchill, once delivered a speech to Lord Digby's assembled weekend guests. The walls, and even the door, of one large room were hung with a huge tapestry depicting Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar. In the grounds of the house, a chain of narrow lakes and water-falls, at the head of the River Cerne, were bordered on either side by a long semi-wild garden of trees and shrubs interspersed with a mix of wild and cultivated flowers. Dad pointed out the stacks of fuel in the yard outside the Petty Officers' Mess and told me how Lord Digby had, somewhat naively, instructed his Butler to whitewash his personal heap of coal to distinguish it from that which

belonged to the Navy. This was a challenge which no self-respecting serviceman could resist. A bucket of dilute Plaster of Paris was soon made up and, thereafter, his Lordship's coal pile began to diminish without apparently showing any signs of having been disturbed.





CERNE ABBAS WATER AND ITS FASCINATING LEGACY

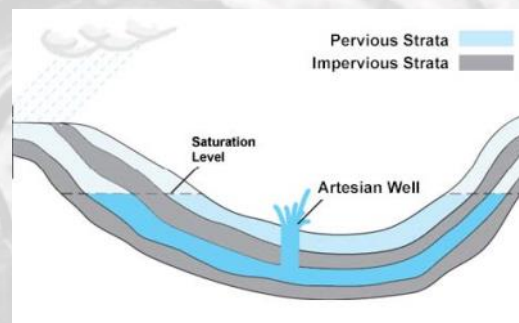
Bishop Pococke 1754

Piped mains water came to Cerne not all that long ago (1952/3) and up until then domestic water was drawn from the underground water table and springs. Cerne is particularly fortunate in its topographical and geological setting. It is located in a marked valley surrounded by hills and the source of the water is at an accessible depth and flows through the Upper Greensand aquifer which has a natural filtering effect.

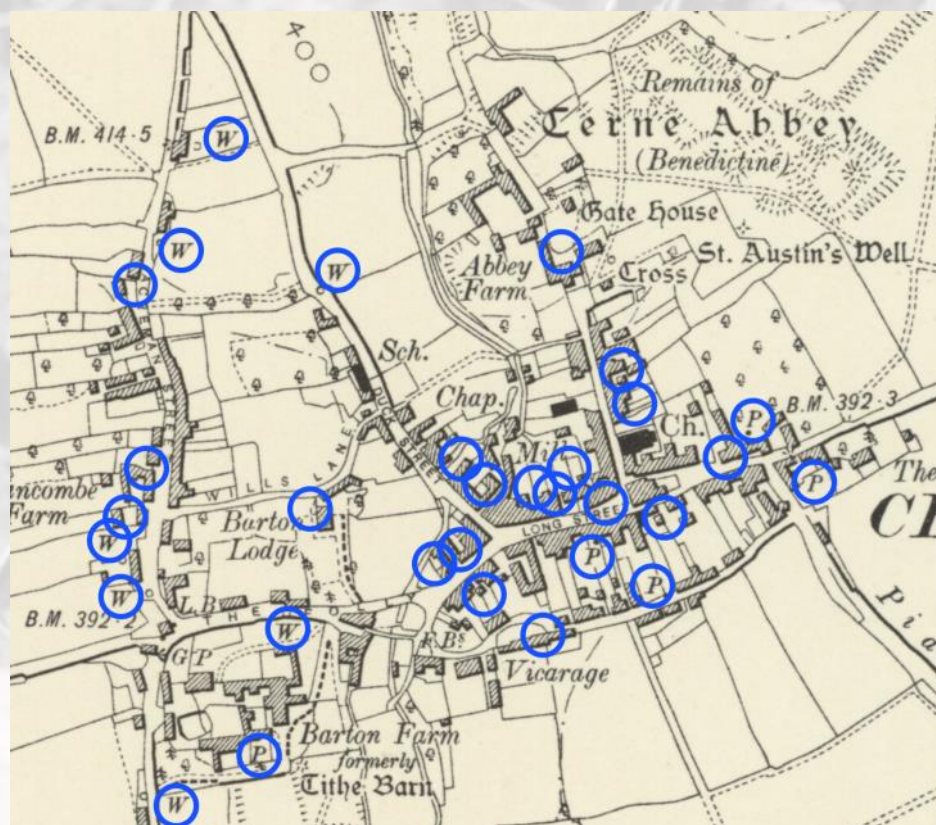
This geological map shows the area around Glenelg, South Australia. The map includes various geological units labeled with codes such as ZCk, SCK, LeCk, NPCk, and CanS. Topographic features like hills and valleys are indicated by contour lines and labels such as 'Glenelg Hill', 'Black Hill', and 'Bickley Hill'. The map also shows the coastline and the location of the 'Glenelg River'.

in the groundwater table is exemplified today in the spring at St Augustine's Well. At the end of a dry summer the well is dry, but it begins to flow again during the winter, reaching its peak flow during late winter and early spring.

To access the groundwater, wells were either dug directly into the greensand or had only to negotiate a relatively low thickness of chalk before encountering the greensand below. During the drier parts of the year the water had either to be lifted to the surface by bucket (wells) or pumped to the surface (pumps). The wells were generally located in people's back gardens, some with pumps. These wells could be public or private.



The wells and pumps were shown (as 'W' or 'P' respectively) on the 25" to 1 mile First Edition of the Ordnance Survey map of the village (1888) and also on the Revised Edition (1902). Both maps need to be referenced because each map only records what was evident at the time of survey. Between editions, therefore, some features fell out of use while others were added.



The map to the left amalgamates both of the above maps and shows the locations of the wells (W) and the pumps (P) shown on the 1888 and 1902 editions. For the purposes of this article this map is inevitably small. However, if your interest is kindled by seeing one that may be located in your garden, please get in touch with the authors who can show you the larger original maps from the archives.

Sadly, many pumps and wells have now disappeared, but the Cerne Historical Society suspects that some are still lurking in gardens. Those that have survived sometimes come with decorative well heads which can tell us either who commissioned or made them, and a date. These attractive well heads can provide another revealing

insight into the social history of the village. Don't be put off if the maps do not show your surviving well or pump. The following examples are dated well before the publication of the Ordnance Survey maps and not all were depicted on these maps.

The earliest well head of which we are aware is one now in the Dorset County Museum. In 1676, a Thomas Washington married Maria Randall in St Mary's. They lived in the Pitchmarket and had four daughters and a son. The well head from that house bears the initials 'TMW' and is dated 1697, presumably when the pump was commissioned. The circumstances in which it ended up in the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester are not known. What Thomas did in life has not been established, but his Will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) in August 1724. Wills were the responsibility of the ecclesiastical courts before 1858, of which the PCC was the highest court.



His Will shows that he left considerable wealth and his 'Chattlehold Estates' at 'Great Toller' (Toller Porcorum) and Long Bredy. It is known that Cerne Abbey held land in this part of Dorset. Was Thomas a beneficiary of the Dissolution after 1539? His burial in Cerne Abbas on 30 June 1724 records that he was a 'Gent', with an affidavit that he had been 'Buried in Wool'. An Act of 1666 required the dead be buried in '*pure English woollen shrouds to the exclusion of any foreign textiles*'. It was only repealed in 1863. If Thomas had a grave memorial, it has not survived.



Another well head, in a house near the church, is dated 1731 with the initials 'TCK'. We cannot be sure who these initials refer to, possibly a Thomas King, an early victualler, but the date tells us something about the history of the house. The well head is at the back of an old extension to the house. When this extension was recently being modernised, an earlier well was found below its old brick floor. We can therefore safely date the extension to 1731, when it became necessary to excavate the replacement well we see today. That the water drawn from it can still produce good beer can be personally verified!



At the other end of Long Street is a well head in a garden with the initials 'SE' and dated 1791. These are the initials of **Sarah Eveleigh**. She was born Sarah Farr and baptised in St Mary's on 22 April 1732/3. Her father was William Farr, who was wealthy from the brewing trade. She married first, Robert Foord in St Mary's on 30



March 1756, but he died 11 August 1771. There is a memorial plaque in the church on the north wall to Robert and others of the Foord family, a sure sign of their comparative wealth and status. Sarah subsequently married again, to a Buncombe Eveleigh of Beaminster, in St Mary's 23 March 1773. There do not appear to have been any children of either marriage. She died 21 September 1797 aged 64 and lies in the burial ground in a grave that still exists, just to the left of the gate into Beauvoir. Her will stipulated, amongst other bequests, that at her funeral '*six poor men do carry me to my grave and that they be paid for their trouble a crown*'! The date of 1791 is probably when the pump was made and possibly when the Georgian front of the house was added. The Pitt-Rivers estate records confirm that the house was held by Sarah Farr from 1754 until her death. The records show that Sarah also leased properties in Back Lane and Mill Lane, properties that survive to this day.



Another well head, somewhere else in Long street, has the initials 'TMP' and is dated 1793. The initials may be those of Thomas and Mary Peaty, but we cannot be certain. A Thomas Peaty married Mary Howe in Cerne Abbas on 7 April 1781. He died aged 50 and was buried in Cerne Abbas on 3 June 1807. Mary was born about 1748, but we have found two possible candidates. The first Mary Peaty was buried on 16 June 1825, aged 78, of 2 Acreman Street. The second Mary



Peaty died at the age of 91 in the Cerne Abbas Union Workhouse, in which case she may well have had the dubious distinction of being in the first intake to the workhouse when it opened its doors in 1837. This Mary was buried in Cerne Abbas on 9 August 1839. We have a copy of Thomas's will, but this does not help us in identifying his Mary. However, the 1798 Admeasurement Survey suggests it may be the latter, unfortunate Mary. Quite why this well head was commissioned, if by Thomas and Mary, and why this date is not known, and there is no evidence that it is related to the house where it now resides. However, it has survived to add a little mystery to our local story.





Letters

Jenny Beecham writes,

Thank you so much for the prompt delivery of my Cerne Abbas book and congratulations to the Historical Society for a superb record of life during the past 100 years. When my late husband and I first moved to Cerne in 1987, we lived in The Old Malthouse (formerly the Union Arms). A lovely lady called Olive Dunn, who lived in Back Lane, came to visit us one day. She was a relative of the Fox family and remembered as a child visiting the Ale House (as she referred to it). She told us that the farm workers and labourers would knock on the door with their jugs to collect ale for the day, and she showed us where the barrels had been stored. We always felt that the house had a happy atmosphere and that we were privileged to live there and be a very small part of its history.

Happy Days!

Acreman Street, Cerne Abbas

Elizabeth Russell-Gaunt writes,

I have just finished reading all the copies of the Historical Society magazine on line with great pleasure and interest. Congratulations! A tremendous amount of research and hard work must be going into it. I particularly enjoyed reading Joan Keeble's reminiscences, and am fascinated by the research looking into the origin of the Giant.

The possible site of the Abbey Church next to St Mary's is a new one!

I am about to send off the 'Cerne Abbas at the Beginning of the 20th Century' book which I'm sure I'll enjoy as well.

I hope you are keeping well through these difficult times.

Kind regards

Elizabeth

Cambridge

Elizabeth is the daughter of George Squibb who died in 1994. George Squibb was a distinguished lawyer, herald and antiquary. He lived in Cerne Abbas in the Pitchmarket in Abbey St. for many years. His lasting legacy to Cerne Abbas is the Squibb Garden which he gave to St Mary's church in 1991.



Letters

Dee and Martin Reed write:

Received the magazine electronically. Please pass on our congratulation to all concerned for a fabulous presentation.

Well done to you all

Duck Street, Cerne Abbas



Do you have a well head or pump in your garden which may have a story to tell? If so, please let the Cerne Historical Society know and we will see what we can find out about it. As you may have noticed, total anonymity is assured.



If you have any photos or documents which might be of interest to readers, please let us know and we may be able to turn them into an article for others to enjoy.

If you just have a question, we will try to provide an answer.

In fact, we will be pleased to hear from you on any subject that will increase a mutual understanding of our shared history.



Your magazine would love to hear from you, including any suggestions for future issues at the email address shown below, but please put a note through my door at 3 Abbey Court, if you prefer.

The Letters Page is YOUR page so let the Letter Page editor hear from you.

gcmortimer@btinternet.com

We reserve the right to publish if no objection is expressed in your email or letter.

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