



Cerne
Historical
Society

MAGAZINE

Happy 100th Birthday to Patricia!



Summer
2023



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Historical
Society

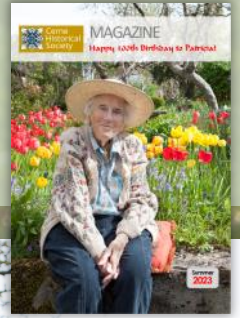


Photo Credit: Robin Mills

This, the fourteenth issue of the magazine, is being published on the 28th June 2023, to celebrate the 100th birthday of Patricia Vale. Patricia, who is now our President, founded, with others, the Cerne Historical Society in 1988. The Society wishes you a Very Happy Birthday and takes this opportunity of thanking you for all your work in creating the Society which continues to flourish ever stronger, and for all you have contributed to it and continue to contribute.

Gordon Bishop - Chair



Robin Mills

Robin meets Patricia Vale, one of the founders of Cerne Historical Society, who celebrates her 100th Birthday on 28th June 2023.

This is her remarkable story.

My mother came from a large Victorian family and was “farmed out” to be brought up by a maiden aunt.

Quite usual for those days, and later when my mother’s marriage broke

down we returned from Canada where I was born to live with the maiden aunt (a brilliant woman but unlovable) in Ashted, Surrey. I’ve got an elder brother who is 3 years older than me, and I had a younger sister who is dead now.

We grew up in the grounds of a school which had been started by my great aunt. I was 16 when war broke out, still in school. Then there was Dunkirk, when everything that was left of the army was hauled back. There was chaos everywhere, but people were doing whatever they could to help; the teachers at the end of the school day were scrubbing the floor of the local hospital. At the end of one term, one of the teachers asked me to take over her job, which was working at a dispensary putting pills in bottles. So, at a young age I already had a job, but then I was asked by the local Lady Almoner, nowadays called a medical social worker, to be her secretary. I was hopeless at shorthand, and a slow typist, but because I was literate I was all right.



Aged about 17



*RAF Technician
Aged about 20, 1943*

I had always wanted to join the Air Force, but they didn’t want you until you were 17 and a half, and I wasn’t quite old enough. As soon as I was, I joined up. If I hadn’t done so then, because I worked in the hospital I would have been in a reserved occupation and unable to join. My brother was a Desert Rat, in the Sahara; his advice was if you’re going to join the Air Force ask to be a plotter. I didn’t know what a plotter was, but when I joined up that was what I asked. However, I was sent to Westbury, Wiltshire, to be trained in radar. There were dozens of different radar types. I started with defence radar, but after only a few months was moved to RAF Barkway in Hertfordshire, a recently opened communications station. We were told that our radar training would now be used for attack purposes, and if any of us had reservations about that we were to re-join our units. I don’t think anybody did. We had all signed the Official Secrets Act anyway. We were trained to operate a triangulation system which enabled bombers, flying in any weather, to calculate their exact position

so that they reached the right target. It wasn’t a bit exciting for us; we sat in front of a screen watching pulses which we had to keep exactly in alignment. But we were all very well aware of the importance of our work and were strictly not allowed to talk about it.

I don't like to think what would have happened to me if it wasn't for the war; I'd probably have been something boring like a secretary.

At the end of the war the services wanted to get rid of women – but in radar we were all women, so we then had to train the men. That was quite fun because the men thought we were a bunch of delicate little things. They soon learnt otherwise.

I celebrated the end of the war on Plymouth Hoe. I can't remember much about it but there were some sailors involved who found us a place to stay in the early hours, then we hitch hiked back to camp the next morning. We were much more carefree in those days. If you went off camp for 48 hours you just put a toothbrush in your pocket and went. We hitched everywhere.

A grateful government then said if you've been in the services and you can get a place at university, you'll get a grant. I found out that Durham would take people without Latin qualifications, but I needed to choose 4 subjects to study. English I had, History I was interested in, my French was quite good – I had been training French servicemen in radar, which was quite fun - but I needed a fourth subject and was absolutely stuck. My interviewer suggested music, and perhaps I could sing? Well, I'd sung in the back of a truck, but that wasn't what they were after. So, I read music for a year, often not knowing what it was all about but helped by my sister who was at the Royal Academy of Music. I was quite good at improvising.

My degree was very general, but from a teaching point of view it was ideal. Eventually what I really liked was teaching what I called "the bottom lot", the children who had sunk, who nobody else wanted to teach. I got on with these children because I'd been around a bit, and they got on with me. Some kids have a rotten lot, and they're just expected to conform. My favourite was little Marie, whose teeth were so awful she couldn't eat solids; her mother ran the brothel for the local sailors in the docks area of Southampton.

I met my husband Vivian when we were both at Durham University. We started a light opera group: he sang, I made the costumes. He was lecturing at Cambridge University, when he asked me to spend a weekend there. Somehow I came back from that weekend engaged to be married. He then went to America on a fellowship for a year, and we got married 10 days after he came back. We returned to Durham where he taught history. He was really a musician, that was what he wanted. But his father, who was vicar of Bethnal Green, said "how are you going to make a living at that, my boy?" so that was the end of that.



Patricia and Vivian on a picnic



The old Court House, Long St

The children arrived, firstly Sue in 1954, then later Hilary, and Jessica, whose sudden death from a brain haemorrhage in 2013 has left a large hole in my life. When the children were young we were living in a tied house belonging to Southampton University where we were working. A tied house didn't seem a good plan long-term, so we started looking to buy something. Eventually we came to Cerne to look at the Court House which was on the market. A man who repaired Victorian button backed chairs lived there. I couldn't think how we could commute to work from Cerne, but the children said, "we want that one". So, we bought it, £5000. That was the late sixties. And then this house, Middle House, came up, and when we came to look at it, we came through the front door, and I knew it was mine. It was a wreck. My husband said I was mad,

but we bought it anyway. It leaked from top to bottom, the kitchen was just a lean-to, the dining room floor was beaten earth, centuries old. That was rather beautiful, but we had to dig it up to put in drains. We had to reroof and refloor it, and we couldn't have done it had we not still had the tied house. For 2 years we would come down at weekends, sleep in the car or in a tent, and work on the house until it was habitable. Old Mr Thorne lived here, once upon a time the village carrier.

At the village shop there used to be a glass jar on the counter into which people were invited to put ideas on pieces of paper. It had recently been discovered that the Abbey dated to 987AD, and it was hoped that from the "ideas jar" a "plan" could be formed to celebrate what was soon to be the millennium of that year. Meetings were held in peoples' houses, there were discussions, more ideas developed, but nothing actually happened. I had just retired and needed a role, so I offered to become a sort of secretary and try to coordinate a millennium plan. It's a long time ago, so I can now admit to what I did. I wrote down what was said at the meetings, and but I also wrote what I felt they should have said if it was to have been useful. It seemed the only way to get decisions made, and a programme of events drawn up.

Katherine Barker, a tutor teaching early medieval history of this area at Bristol University extra mural department, asked if she could help, and organised a series of lectures by distinguished scholars on the history of the Benedictine Abbey at Cerne, from its 10thC origins to the Dissolution in 1539.

Additionally, Jenny Turner, the Marsh family, and Jenny Beacham, all helped to put together the series of events we called the Millennium Celebrations.

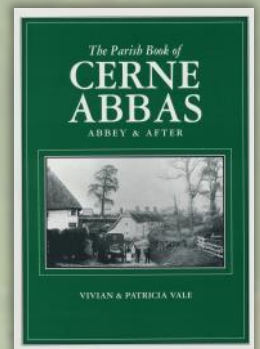


A Tale of Cerne, 1987. The Final Curtain Call!

We held concerts, there was a play called “The Boy with a Cart” performed at the Tithe Barn, and a light-hearted show called “A Tale of Cerne” performed at Stable Court by a cast of a large number of villagers, many of whom are still living locally; there were special services at the Church, walks in the surrounding countryside, a street fair, and even the Wessex Conker Championships featuring the 1986 World Champion. At all these events, between mid-March and mid-December 1987, the village celebrated the Millennium of the Abbey, and by the time we’d finished, people knew a lot more about its history. From that series of events, which were well attended and well received,

historical interest in the community grew, inspiring Katherine Barker and I to found the present-day Cerne Historical Society.

If the Millennium Celebrations was about the history of the Abbey until its Dissolution, it seemed the obvious thing to do to publish a book which told the story of the village after the Abbey. As a historian my husband Vivian had written some academic works (which tended to be only read by other academics). He needed some persuasion, but eventually we began to bring together research and articles some of which had been written by others; for instance, Jenny Turner wrote about the workhouse, the Bartletts wrote about the railway that didn’t arrive, and I wrote about the school, all of which was added to and edited by Vivian. He was very



pleased with the result, despite his initial reluctance, which was titled The Parish Book of Cerne Abbas, and it sold out just like that.

My garden is very important to me. Old Mr Thorne had grown vegetables in it, and his wife grew flowers for the church. If you look at it now, it’s still lovely, and I like to think it will stay that way. It slopes gently upwards, so we levelled a patch to sit out on, and it’s delightfully sheltered. My daughter Sue is a great gardener and grows lots of vegetables at the top.

I have a place at a table at the Coronation Street Party which I’m looking forward to. At the last one, I sat on the pavement in Regent Street at 4.00am to make sure of a place. I think my family will be arranging something for my birthday. But as far as I’m concerned the less said about that the better! There’s not that much to be said for being 100.



Photo Jane Tearle





The article in the last Magazine about Churchwardens and their legacy included a reference to a Thomas Dussell whose name appears over the south porch and is dated 1696. It was suggested that Thomas must have been a man of some note as having a village highway named after him. The highway in question was the street north of Springfield to where the Giant Viewpoint is today, as shown in the map accompanying the 1798 Admeasurement Survey of Cerne Abbas [Fig 1].



Fig 1

This map was originally drawn in 1768 by

Benjamin Pryce for Lord Rivers and was re-used for the 1798 Survey, but with new numbers. Details of the Admeasurement Survey will be found on the Cerne Historical Society's website.

Fig 3

However, closer inspection of the map shows that it was actually named as Dussels Lane, ie just the one 'l'. Was the article misguided in suggesting that this street was named after him? Maybe not! Research into contemporary records show that the name was variously spelt 'Dursel, Dussel, or Dussell. Given the limited literacy at the time, it will be of little surprise that the spelling of names might have to be as interpreted by the writer; in this case, Benjamin Pryce. A similar example of this will be seen later in this article when we discuss 'Keetle Lane' - or is it 'Kettle Lane'?

Of our Thomas Dussell we only know that, in his Will dated 1715, he describes himself as a 'Yeoman' and was either widowed or unmarried as no wife is mentioned. We do not know for certain, therefore, if this street was named after him, but it could be that he or his family leased land or a farm in that part of the village from Lord Rivers in the 17th century. The name in all its variations does not appear in the Admeasurement Survey in 1798, leaving only the street name as its legacy. Thomas was buried in the Burial Ground in May 1716 and his gravestone survives.



Fig 2

The 1798 map reveals other street names now gone, changed or streets absorbed into another with the passage of time.

For example, the route of the 1824 Turnpike came into Cerne Abbas from Dorchester via Pudding Knapp [Fig 2], (the section of the A352 adjacent to Barton Farm, then right into Blackwater Lane [Fig 3] (now the Folley or Folly), pausing at the New Inn, before turning north to Sherborne via Duck Street.

The original turnpike milestone, recently restored by the Historical Society, [Fig 4] is still to be seen on what was Dussels Lane. But why 'Pudding Knapp'? On good authority from a Dorset man, 'Knapp' or 'Knap' may be a past local word for a small hill or rise in the



Fig 4

ground. 'Pudding' may have been descriptive of its shape before Dorset Highways got to work on the A352 in 1964. All conjecture perhaps, but plausible enough perhaps to be true. But why the change in the 19th century from Blackwater Lane (which may have been descriptive of regular flooding in past times) to the 'Folly'? Would anyone like to hazard a guess?

Fig 5 is a photograph of the Folly or 'Folley' in c1905.



Fig 5

The 1798 map also shows that Acreman Street ran from the turning for the Turnpike into Blackwater Lane to a point adjacent to where The Maltings are today. Fig 6 is a photograph of Acreman Street taken around 1892. The name 'acreman' is of pre-7th century Old English origin.



Fig 6

On many medieval manors there were separate tenements held by 'acreman' in return for ploughing services for the manor. It is therefore possible that there existed a tenement on Acreman Street, lived in by an 'acreman', ploughing fields for the Abbey who owned the surrounding lands until the Dissolution. If a tenement for an 'acreman' existed in Acreman Street, there is one possible candidate: the

building numbered 20 on the map and described as a 'House and Garden' in the 1798 Admeasurement Survey. It was later to become the 'Union Arms' in the mid-19th century. A survey of this house, carried out for the Cerne Historical Society in 2004, suggested a much older building than the 18th century cottages in Acreman Street. Despite many changes over the centuries, it may originally have been a smallholding for an 'acreman'. We will never be certain of the house's origins, but Acreman Street ending near to it in the 1798 map may be indicative. Beyond Acreman Street the lane leading north continued as **Rouncibal Lane** as far as the present Giant's View. The house at the northern end of this lane is still called Rouncibal Cottage. There is correspondence in the Letters section of this issue of the Magazine on the possible origins of this name, to which the reader is referred.



Until 1964, Acreman Street was a relatively quiet side road to the village. After 1964, however, Acreman Street became the route of the main road along the Cerne Valley between Dorchester and Sherborne: the A352. A number of the 18th century cottages were demolished at the same time. Acreman Street's loss of relative solitude became the village's gain, as road traffic now only enters the village by choice, rather than following the old 1824 turnpike route.

Nearly opposite the old 'Union Arms' was 'Water Lane' which ran between Acreman Street and Duck Street. **[Fig 7]** It is now a footpath into Springfield. 'Water Lane' was probably very descriptive of its normal condition, with floodwater coming off the western slopes into Duck Street via Acreman Street. Added to the excess water flowing from the River Cerne, it is little surprise that the southern end of Duck Street was regularly flooded **[Fig 8]** until the reservoir opposite the Village Hall was built in 1988.

Fig 9



Fig 7



Fig 8

Wills's Lane' **[Fig 9]** was there in 1798 and unchanged from today, but who was 'Wills'? A common enough name and probably another farm or land tenant, but we may never know.

What we now know as 'Sydling Road' was 'Knowles's Lane', **[Fig 10]** perhaps with similar origins.



Fig 10



The street leading to the Village Hall and Northmead was Keetle's Lane, **[Fig 11]** which has now become 'Kettle Bridge Lane'. It is unlikely that Benjamin Pryce got the name wrong in 1768. Was there a 'Keetle' in the distant past who initially gave his name to this lane, or was it as stated in a delightful Village Guide produced by the children of Cerne Abbas First School in 1987: *'Kettle Bridge might have got its name because cattle could have gone over it to get to the dairy and it might have been called Cattle Bridge and over the years it could have been changed to Kettle Bridge'*. This delightful guide, as a slight digression, also tells us that *'The Wishing Well or St Augustine's Well, this site was the only Holywell in Dorset to have a shrine...Local belief is if young women drank the water they would become pregnant'*.

There were brief attempts to rename some streets in the 19th century. In the 1881 Census, the Enumerator was persuaded to change Duck Street to 'Bridge Street', for what reason is not fully understood. **[Fig 12]** Was it something to do with the bridge at the southern end of the street under which the River Cerne now flows? Whatever, for the 1891 Census it reverted to its original name. Similar attempts have been made to change Back Lane for Vicarage Street or Lane. Would being described as living in 'Vicarage Lane' sound more 'refined' to the residents? However, Back Lane it remains.



Other variations in names included the road behind the Royal Oak being briefly 'Silver Street', a reference perhaps to the presence of a clock maker in the Market House. At other times it was 'guts and blood lane', a possible reminder of the presence of a butcher living or trading there in the distant past. It became East Street in the late 19th century until the dull uniformity of the Post Office incorporated it into Long Street in the 1970s.

In Abbey Street, the path through to the river in 1798 was called Locks Lane.

[Fig 13] It is now Andrews Lane. Someone called 'Andrew' is mentioned in the 1798 Admeasurement Survey as having tenanted what is now 17 Abbey Street, the house adjacent to the lane. 'Lock' may have been an earlier tenant, but the map had not been updated. We are fortunate in having a rare portrait, a silhouette, of a Mrs Mary Andrews (1767-1832) who is said to have lived in No 17 Abbey Street, then called Andrews House. **[Fig 14]** This is taken from the 1962 book on Cerne Abbas by A.O. Gibbons.

The 1798 map also shows the lane leading east out of the village as 'Puddle Lane'; we now know it as Piddle Lane. Its route in 1798 was slightly to the north of the present road towards the top of the hill and passed by 'Catherine Chapel' and the site of the 'Bull Baiting Pit', **(Fig 15)** the latter a reminder of grimmer times for animal welfare.

Fig 13



Fig 14



Mrs. Mary Andrews (1767-1832), who lived in Andrews House, at the corner of Andrews Lane and Abbey Street.

Fig 15



Times and circumstances initiate change, but in losing some of these street names we also lose a connection with our village history and heritage. Thank goodness, perhaps, that what names we have now are unlikely to offend the present trend in more 'progressive' circles to research street origins for any connection to perceived 'crimes' of the past!





Gordon Bishop writes: Following the very successful Ground Penetrating Radar survey carried out by Dr Willmott and his team of archaeologists from Sheffield last June, he has produced the following Project Design for excavations in Beauvoir Field to be carried out this summer between the 21st July and the 13th August. Dr Willmott is hoping to involve as many members of the CHS and other residents of the village as possible.



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

A Project Design for 2023 by Dr Willmott,
Senior Lecturer in Archaeology
at Sheffield University

Previous work

Cerne Abbey was founded in AD 987 and continued to receive considerable endowments after the Norman Conquest; by the late 13th century its income was £177 8s, making it one of the wealthiest houses in Southwest England (Page, W 1908). Following its suppression in 1539, much of the abbey precinct underwent rapid demolition, with only the guesthouse and a portion of the Abbott's Porch surviving as upstanding remains today. The extent and layout of the abbey remained unclear until very recently but was presumed to have been located to the east of Abbey Street, in the area of the current graveyard, an open field known locally as 'Beauvoir Field' and the area of extant scheduled earthworks (**Figure 1**).

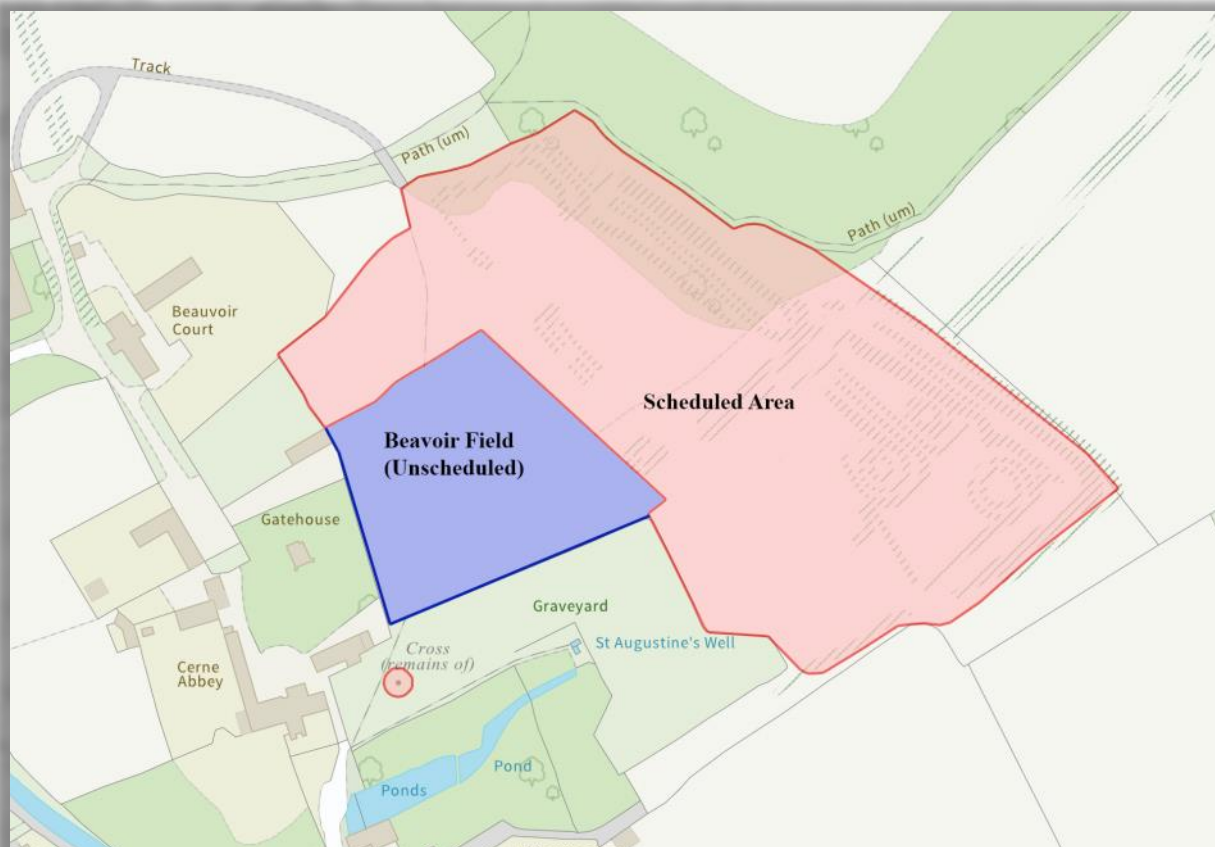


Fig 1 Map of Cerne Abbey with the Scheduled Area outlined in red, & the unscheduled Beauvoir Field in blue.

To date, there have not been any substantive excavations on the site, although there are antiquarian reports of floor tiles and sculpture being found during grave digging. Three programmes of geophysical survey have previously been undertaken. The first, by Bournemouth University in 2011, focused on Beauvoir Field and a small area of the adjoining scheduled area to the northeast (Bournemouth University 2014). Both electrical earth resistance and gradiometer survey were employed (**Figure 2**), and whilst both techniques provided some evidence for the presence of buried structures, particularly in the central and southern portion of Beauvoir Field, these were unclear and probably obscured by substantial deposits of demolition and levelling. More recently, Leigh-Smith (2018) has undertaken a magnetometry survey in Beauvoir Field, largely replicating the earlier results obtained by Bournemouth University (**Figure 3**). This latter survey also included a substantial area of the scheduled earthworks to the west. However, again the method employed provided results that are difficult to interpret meaningfully but demonstrated the potential for further non-intrusive investigation.

In 2022 the University of Sheffield undertook a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey, covering almost all the unscheduled area of Beauvoir Field (**Figure 1**). The results of this work were considerably more conclusive than the earlier surveys, primarily due to the greater suitability of the technique and, for the first time, substantial portions of the later medieval monastery could be located and identified (**Figure 4**). The GPR survey clearly shows the location of the monastic cloister, measuring c. 20x20m internally, and its west, east, and north ranges. Within the cloister garth and abutting the north cloister walk are the clear foundations of an octagonal conduit house and, externally to the northeast of the cloister, the rather more ephemeral buildings almost certainly represent remains of the monastic infirmary. The GPR survey also demonstrated that a significant portion of the monastic church lies within the southern portion of Beauvoir Field.

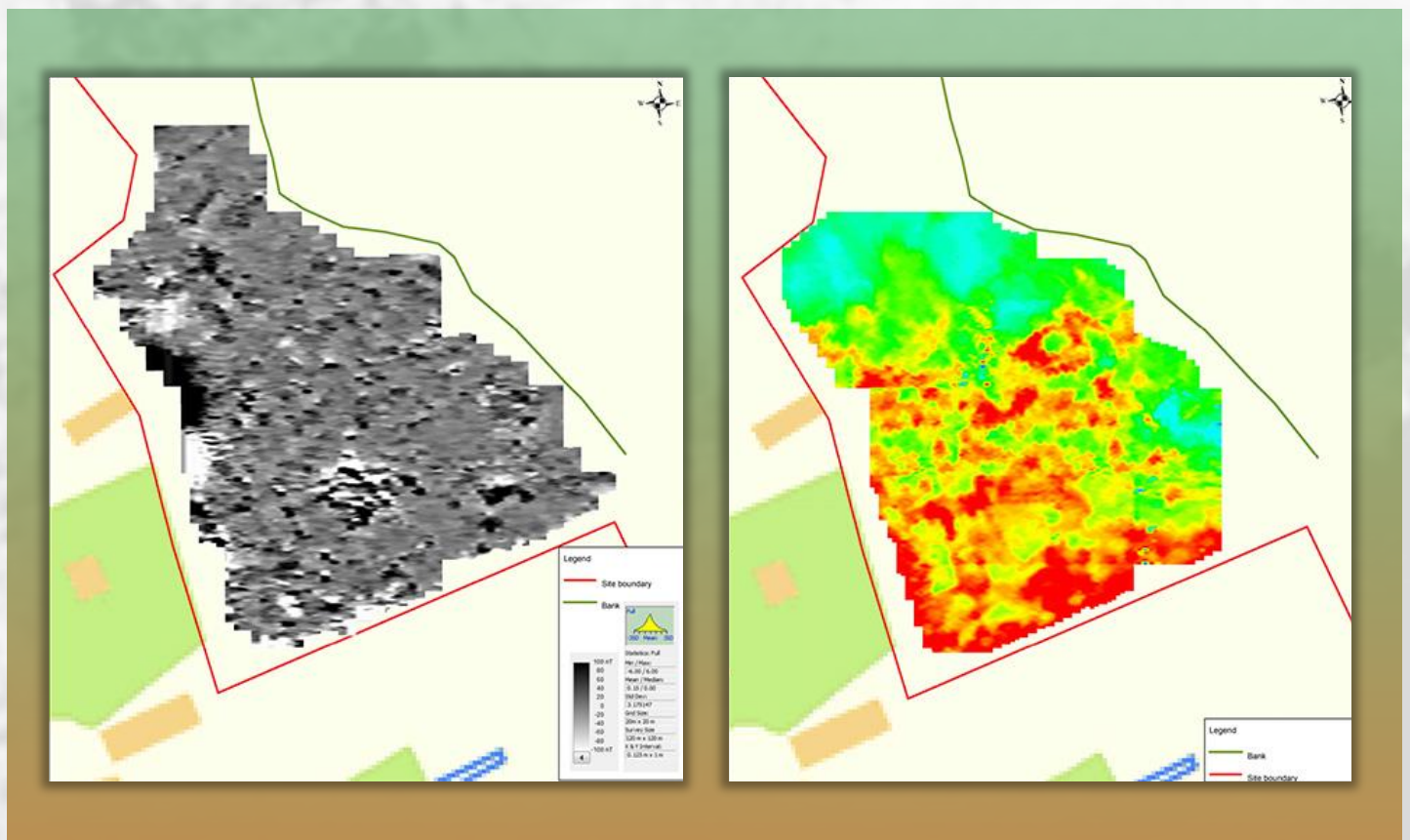
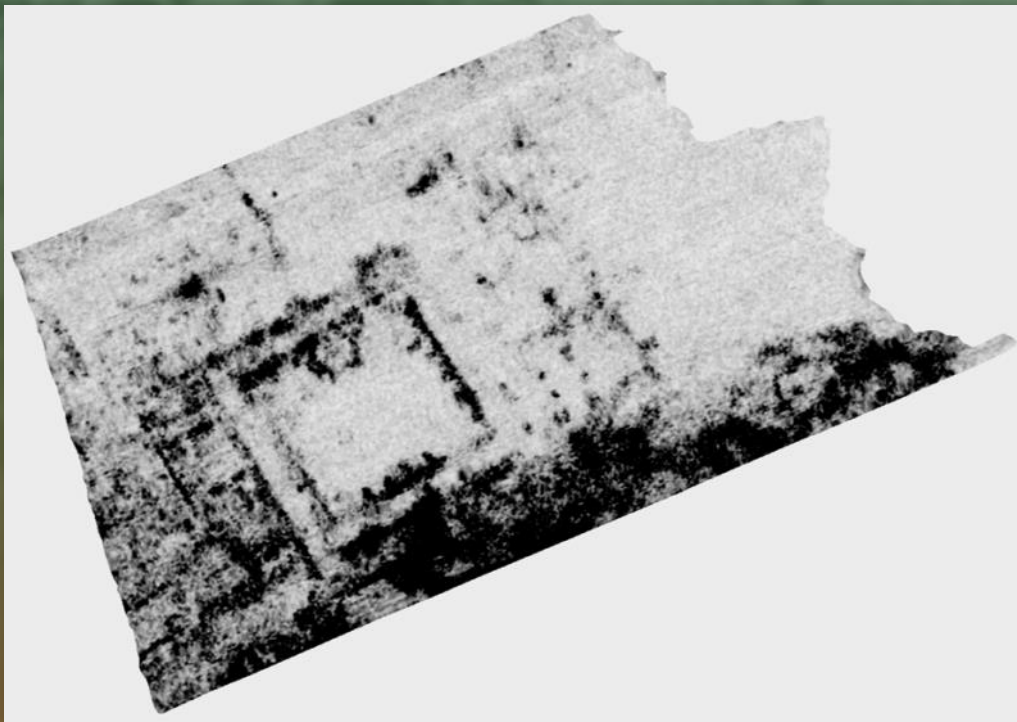
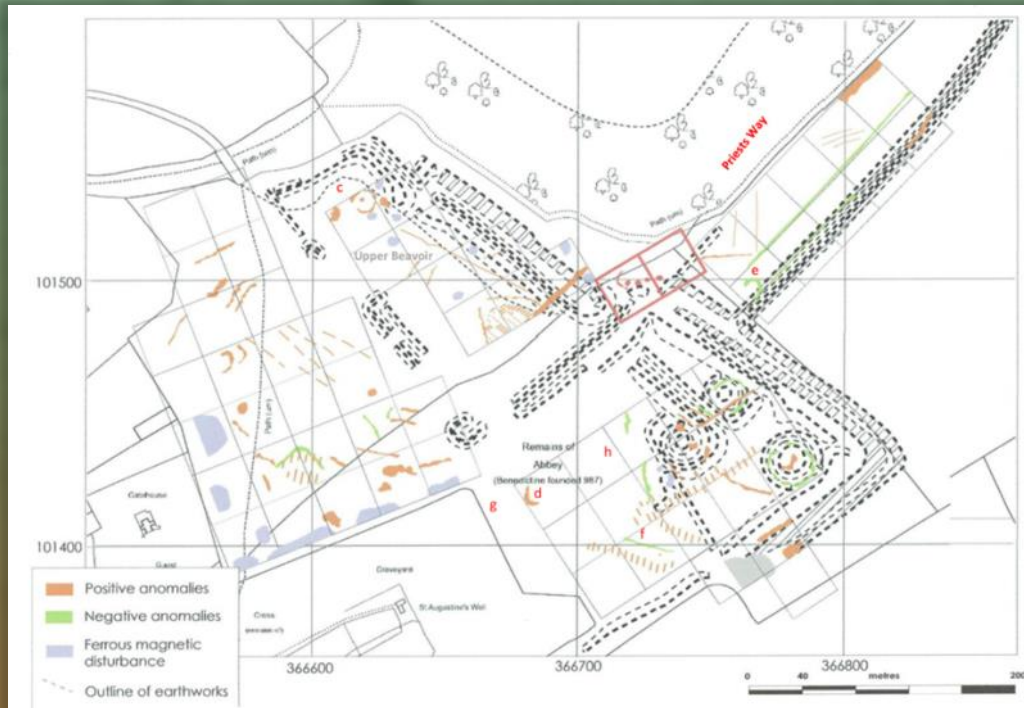


Fig 2 Gradiometer (left) and earth resistance survey (right) undertaken in 2011 (Bournemouth University 2014)



The outline of the church is far from clear, as it seems to be obscured by large dumps of rubble that appear on the survey as a rather amorphous compact area. Given the quantity of building material involved in the church's construction and ultimate demolition, this is hardly surprising, but its entire north aisle may lie within the area of the survey.

Excavation Rationale

The recent GPR now provides a definitive location for many of the key buildings associated with the later medieval monastery. However, the survey alone only answers relatively superficial questions concerning the location and layout of the complex. It is chronologically 'flat', providing little evidence for the date and development of the observable buildings, and only identifies solid features such as wall foundations. Consequently, whilst an essential first step, its overall value is limited, and it is only through excavation that more nuanced questions can begin to be answered.

Key questions that need to be addressed through excavation can be summarised as, but not limited to, the following;

- *Ascertaining the precise location of the church*
- *Characterising the development of the cloistral ranges*
- *Identifying evidence for the pre-Conquest monastery*
- *Understanding the impact of the Dissolution and later developments on the site*

Specific aims for 2023

There is clearly potential for a long-term archaeological project focused on the abbey and its wider environs, and to achieve its potential any such research project would require substantial and sustained funding over several years. However, in the short term it is proposed that a relatively low-cost and small-scale excavation is undertaken in the summer of 2023. This would seek to continue the momentum of work established in 2022, engage the interest and participation of the local community and inform future funding bids for a more substantial project. It is proposed that a trench measuring 10x10m (**Figure 5, Trench A**) be opened in the southern area of Beauvoir Field (centred on 50.81132800,-2.47526800). This will be located over the south-eastern corner of the cloister, its walkway, what appears to be the entrance of the chapter house, and the northern wall of the church.

Placing the trench here provides the maximum amount of information for several distinct areas within the monastic complex and will enable the relationships between these elements to be defined **(Figure 5)**. Furthermore, including an area of open cloister provides the best opportunity to be able to find surviving timber remains belonging to phases predating the substantial stone buildings.

A second small trench measuring 3x5m **(Trench B Figure 5)** will be opened to the east of this intervention and centred on (50.811350, -2.474980). The purpose of this evaluation is to locate the northern side of the church in this area, and thus allow for an accurate orientation of the whole building to be made.

Both trenches are located outside of the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.



Figure 5 Proposed location of the trenches (© University of Sheffield 2023)

Methodology

Each trench will be laid out using a high-precision GPS. The turf will be carefully removed, stored and watered, and the topsoil and initial demolition/levelling deposits removed by mechanical digger until the tops of the first archaeological features (walls, surfaces etc) are encountered. At this point excavation will be undertaken by hand until completion.

Excavation and recording will be undertaken stratigraphically, although when *in situ* architectural remains are encountered these will not be removed or damaged. Structures such as walls, floor-settings, hearths etc. will be investigated and excavated to the extent to which their date, function, form and relationship to other features can be properly established. On completion of the excavation all groundwork will be restored to original appearance, and the original turves replaced. If the trenches will require reopening at a future date it will first be covered by Terram permeable membrane before backfilling.

A full written, drawn and, photographic record will be made of all material revealed during the excavation. All archaeological features and deposits will be drawn and fully recorded for archival purposes. Plans will be completed at a scale of 1:20, whilst section drawings will be at a scale of 1:10. Survey information concerning known points to tie-in plans will be located and recorded onto the National Grid using a GPS unit during the project and will consist of upstanding permanent features and nearby roads.

All artefacts recovered from the excavation will be collected and systematically recorded using a standard method; each will be bagged and catalogued by site, trench, and context number. Any find of particular significance will be given a Small Find number, be 3-dimensionally recorded, and catalogued separately. Any finds that are within the remit of the Treasure Act 1996 will be reported via the Portable Antiquities Scheme, and all artefacts will be assessed and, if necessary, fully reported upon under the supervision of a qualified specialist from the University of Sheffield.

It is anticipated that all finds will be donated by the landowner to a suitable museum or repository to accompany the paper archive generated during the excavation.



Staffing and timing

The excavations will be undertaken under the direction of Dr Hugh Willmott and designated representatives from the University of Sheffield, working in partnership with Dr Helen Gittos (University of Oxford) and the Cerne Historical Society. As the site lies outside of the scheduled area, no statutory authorisation is required, and permission for the works has already been granted by the Digby Estate. It is proposed that the works take place between 22nd July and 13th August 2023.

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Den Denness

Cerne Abbas in 1851

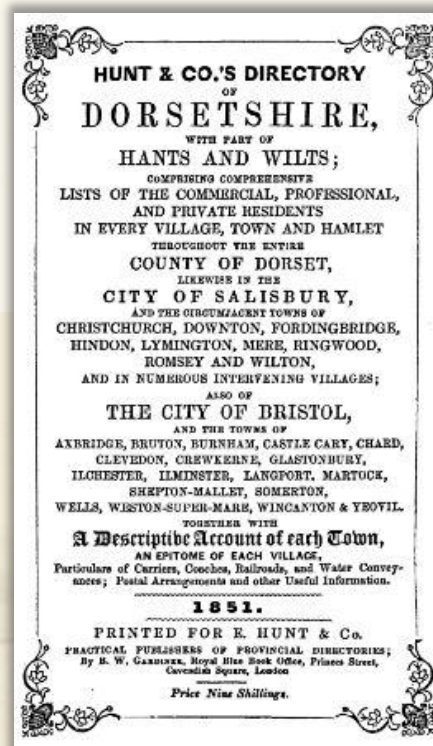
Few at the time would have known it,
but the middle years of the
nineteenth century would prove to be
a watershed in the history of
Cerne Abbas.

The ten-yearly Census returns reveal that, in each of the decades leading to 1851, the population of the village increased. Over fifty years, the number of Cerne residents grew by 60% and eventually reached 1,343. However, from that point, its population began to decline until, by 1931, only 448 people were living there. Consequently, the 1850s can be regarded as the decade in which Cerne Abbas was at its peak.

Clues to what life was like in the village at the time can be found in the 1851 edition of *Hunt's Directory of Dorsetshire*, a copy of which can be viewed online via the QR code. Its entry for Cerne Abbas starts with a brief description of the geography and history of the village. It notes that it is 'encompassed by chalk hills of a towering altitude' and that its buildings 'cannot boast of uniformity in their construction or attraction in their architecture'. Reference is also made to the principal trades of the 'town' – identified as tanning, brewing, malting and parchment making – and also to its weekly Wednesday market and biannual livestock fairs held on 'Mid Lent Monday' and 2nd October. The Cerne Giant is mentioned, along with the claim that the chalk figure was rumoured to have been cut 'in memory of Cenric, son of Cuthred, King of Wessex, who lost his life in battle'.



This description of the village is followed by a directory of the trades and services available there. A surprisingly large number of enterprises are listed.



[DIRECTORY.]		59	CERNE ABBAS
Inns and Public Houses. <i>Antelope</i> , Long st. <i>Watts David</i> <i>Giant's Head</i> , Dorchester road, <i>Batrick Thomas</i> <i>Nag's Head</i> , Abbey street, <i>Barn-</i> <i>well Richard</i> <i>New Inn</i> , Long st. <i>Roberts Wm.</i> <i>Red Lion</i> , Long street, <i>Guy Jasper</i> <i>Royal Oak</i> , Long street, <i>Curis</i> <i>Charles</i>		Saddlers & Harness Makers. <i>Dunning Thomas</i> , Long street <i>Edmunds Henry</i> , Long street <i>Strange Robert</i> , Long street	
Ironmongers. <i>Adams Joseph</i> , Long street <i>Bennett Joseph</i> , Long street <i>Derriman George</i> , Long street		Schools. <i>Andrews Mary Ann</i> , Back street <i>Beach William</i> , (boarding & day), <i>Bridge street</i> <i>Jerrard & Dominy</i> , (ladies), Long <i>street</i> <i>Norman Sarah</i> , Abbey street	
Linen Drapers. <i>Bennett Martha</i> , Long street <i>Clark Wm. Henry</i> , Long street <i>Groves Susanna</i> , Long street		Stone Masons. <i>Knell Joseph</i> , jun. <i>Acreman street</i> <i>Knell Thomas</i> , <i>Acreman street</i> <i>Northover James</i> , <i>Abbey street</i>	
Malsters. <i>Adams Joseph</i> , Long street <i>Dunning John</i> , (& brewer), East <i>street</i> <i>Guy Jasper</i> , Long street <i>Hellyar James Thos. & Son</i> , Ab- <i>bey street</i>		Surgeons. <i>Coles Wm. Fathers</i> , (& deputy co- <i>roner for the Cerne district),</i> <i>Abbey street</i> <i>Davis Alfred & John</i> , Long street <i>Davis Thos. Boys</i> , <i>Blackwater</i>	
Millers. <i>Dunning William</i> , Mill lane <i>Stroud James</i> , Tackling mill		Tailors. <i>Banger John</i> , Long street <i>Bennett Napoleon</i> , <i>Alton lane</i> <i>Bragg Jas.</i> , Long street <i>Clark William Henry</i> , Long street <i>Fountain William</i> , Long street	
Milliners & Dress Makers. <i>Biles Elizabeth</i> , <i>Acreman street</i> <i>Sherry Rebecca</i> , Long street <i>Strange Grace</i> , Long street <i>Stroud Charlotte</i> , Long street		Tanners & Curriers. <i>Hellyar James Thos. & Son</i> , Ab- <i>bey street</i> <i>Norman John Henry & Edwin</i> , <i>Blackwater</i>	
Painters, Plumbers & Glaziers. <i>Barnwell Richard</i> , <i>Abbey street</i> <i>Farr Thomas</i> , Long street		Tavern & Parchment Makers. <i>Dunning William</i> , <i>Abbey street</i> <i>Groves Levi</i> , <i>Abbey street</i> <i>Scard Simon</i> , Long street <i>Tucker Jas. & Dominy John</i> , Ab- <i>bey street</i>	
Registrars. <i>Beach William</i> , (of marriages & <i>clerk to the Poor law union),</i> <i>Bridge street</i> <i>Norman Henry</i> , (of births and <i>deaths), Long street, (deputy</i> <i>do.) Norman Edwin</i> , Long st.		Thatchers. <i>Hodder Benjamin</i> , <i>Bridge street</i> <i>Young George</i> , <i>Back street</i>	

In 1851 Cerne could boast four butchers, five bakers and eight grocers. Also listed were six shoemakers, five tailors, four milliners and three linen drapers. A choice of two blacksmiths and three ironmongers was available. Cerne even had its own clockmaker, bookbinder and chimney sweep. Among the professional class of the village were three doctors, two solicitors and a veterinary surgeon. The overriding impression given is of a village which was self-contained and self-sufficient.



*Mr Bonnett,
Tailor*



*White's Stores, Acreman St,
Butcher & Grocer*



*Jonathan Hardye,
Shoemaker and Gravedigger*

This is understandable given the combination of Cerne's remoteness and its poor communication links – in 1851 the only reliably maintained roads leading away from the village were the two turnpike roads known today as the 'top road' (the Old Sherborne Road) and the 'bottom road' (the A352). The village's sole links to the wider world were provided either by the horse-drawn coach which stopped there on its daily journey between Bath and Weymouth or by local carriers who conveyed people and goods to Dorchester or Sherborne two or three times each week.



Further insight into mid-nineteenth century Cerne Abbas is provided by the returns gathered for the 1851 Census. As mentioned, on that occasion the enumerators recorded a total of 1,343 number of people resident in the village on Census night, Sunday 30 March. This figure is slightly misleading as it includes the residents of two communal establishments who, ordinarily, might have been found elsewhere. The first of these was William Beach's Academy located on the northern corner of Duck Street and Mill Lane. Beach's school taught boys from wealthier Cerne families and also provided residential lodging for pupils from further afield. At the time of the Census, Beach's Academy housed 18 boys, aged from eight to sixteen, as boarders.

Parish or Township of		Electoral District of		City or Borough of		Town of		Village of							
Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House		Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851		Relation to Head of Family		Condition		Age of Males & Females		Rank, Profession, or Occupation		Where Born		Where Born	
		Richard Dennis		Son		U		50		Full Morgan Labourer		Dorset - Cerne			
		Ellen de		Wife				14		Scholar		Dorset - Blandford			
29	Long Street	Thomas Cunn		Head		Mar		32		Iron Broomer		Dorset - Cerne			
		Louisa de		Wife		Mar		30		Shaw-Broomer-Maker		Dorset - Weymouth			
		Frederick de		Son				2				Dorset - Cerne			
		William Brown		Son		U		10		Cummer workman		Dorset - Weymouth			
		John Palmer		Son		U		20		Shaw-Maker		Dorset - Weymouth			
30	Long Street	Thomas Benn		Head		Mar		38		Shaw-Maker		Dorset - Cerne			
		Charlotte de		Wife		Mar		37		Shaw-Broomer-Maker		Dorset - Cerne			
		Pauline de		Daughter		U		21		Shaw-Broomer-Maker		Dorset - Cerne			
		Elizabeth de		Daughter		U		19		Shaw-Broomer-Maker		Dorset - Cerne			
		George de		Son		U		19		Cummer apprentice		Dorset - Cerne			
		Henry de		Son		U		17		Shaw-Maker		Dorset - Cerne			
		Charles de		Son		U		15		Scholar		Dorset - Cerne			
		Richard de		Son		U		13		Scholar		Dorset - Cerne			
31	Long Street	Thomas Bellamy		Head		Mar		45		Groom		Dorset - Blandford			
		Isaac de		Wife		Mar		40				Dorset - Blandford			
32	Long Street	William Jones		Head		Mar		38		Black Smith		Dorset - Blandford			
		Pauline de		Wife		Mar		35				Dorset - Cerne			
		Elizabeth de		Son		U		10		Scholar		Dorset - Cerne			
Total of Persons								137							

The other communal establishment was the Cerne Union Workhouse. The 1851 Census records that 65 paupers, drawn from the twenty local parishes which formed the Union, were housed in a facility which had the capacity to accommodate two hundred. Of those in residence, twenty-five were born in Cerne. How much work these inmates were able to undertake is uncertain, although it should be noted that a third of their number were aged ten or under and a further 10% were over 65.

The Census of 1851 includes details of the 272 households within Cerne's parish boundary. Most of these were located in the village's five principal streets. The most populous street was Acreman Street which contained 71 households, and 334 residents (a quarter of the parish population). The people that lived there were among the poorest in the village. The occupations that they held were largely associated with agriculture, but a number of apprentices and various craftsmen could also be found living there. But it seems that, even by this early period, this part of the village had a reputation for poverty and what would today be termed 'high-density housing'.

Much of the commercial activity of the village was based in Long Street and it was here that most of its shops and offices were to be found. However, the street's properties also provided accommodation for many with, seemingly, a number of people living and working in the same building. For example, Joseph Bennett ran his grocery and ironmongery store from (what is now) 28 Long Street. But he also lived, along with his wife, sister-in-law, two servants and nine children, in the rooms behind and above his shop. Similarly, the confectioner William Diment worked and lived, along with his family, in the building which formerly stood on the site currently occupied by the car park of the New Inn.

Twenty-six properties, with 107 inhabitants, were recorded in Abbey Street. The residents were socially mixed. At the spacious house at the bottom of the street (now number one) lived Dr William Coles a General Practitioner and a member of the Royal College of Surgeons. Yet, two doors further up (in the range of Tudor houses) lived James Young and, next door to him, James Northover – both were described in the Census as ‘agricultural labourers’.

Parish or Township of		Ecclesiastical District of		City or Borough of		Dean of		Village of	
House No.	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Remarks
					Males	Females			
		George Mathews	Servt	U	29		Groom Domestic	Dorset Kingston	
47	Abbey Street	William F Coles	Head	U	29		Member of the Royal College of Surgeons	Dorset Bournemouth	
		Mary Coles	Wife	U		27	England daughter of the Headcarver	Dorset Bournemouth	
		Richard Coles	Brother	U	18		General Practitioner	Dorset Bournemouth	
		Elizabeth Legg	Servt	U		23	General Servant	Dorset Bournemouth	

Member of Royal College of Surgeons

Duck Street (alternatively known as Bridge Street) and Back Lane also housed large numbers of residents. The properties at the southern end of Duck Street, near the junction with Long Street, provided homes for several skilled artisans. The blacksmith Josiah Tizard lived here and, from what is now number three, eighteen-year-old Emma Minifie ran her ‘Berlin Wool Warehouse’ (Berlin Wool Work was a type of needlepoint which was very popular in the 1850s). At the further, northern end of Duck Street, the residents appear to have been less-skilled and poorer – a number are recorded in the Census as ‘paupers’. Back Lane was, like Acreman Street, inhabited largely by labourers employed in agriculture and other trades. In many instances the women that lived there found casual employment working as a ‘sempstress’ (i.e., a seamstress) or taking in laundry.



Victorian Berlin Wool Work

A few properties were found in streets whose names have now been changed, forgotten or both. Seven houses are listed in ‘Silver Street’, a name no longer used for the short stretch of road that separates the church from the Market House. Properties are also listed on ‘Pudding Knapp’ (the short hill that leads towards Dorchester, south of the junction of the A352 and Sydling Road) and at ‘Black Water’ (the former tannery site near Goose Green). There is also mention of two houses at a place in the village named ‘Filcheston’ – any ideas where this might be would be gratefully received.

Eight pubs are specifically identified; the New Inn, the Red Lion, the Antelope, the Nags Head and the Union Arms were within the village, as was a sixth – possibly the Calcraft Arms – in Duck Street. Two further inns, the Glove and the Giants Head, were located further out. The Royal Oak is not referred to as a pub but as a blacksmith’s shop, although it is recorded in contemporary newspapers that beer was also sold there.

Mid-nineteenth century Cerne was notably younger than it is today. Half the population were aged 23 or younger and only 6% of village residents would, if alive today, qualify for their old age pension. In another contrast to the present day, most villagers had local connections. Over half of Cerne's residents were born in the village, with a further 40% coming originally from elsewhere in Dorset. Sixty-four came from Somerset. More exotically, three of Cerne's population – one of which was the vicar, the Rev. Alexander Williams - were born in the 'East Indies'. The most popular forename for men was John (84 individuals), followed by William (80) and George (71). Among women there were more Marys (115) than any other name, with Elizabeth (77) and Jane (63) both well represented. Uniquely, also living in the village were one Tryphena, a Perinal and a Napoleon.

A number of causes have been offered to explain Cerne's decline in the eighty years that followed from 1851. One is the failure of the expanding railway network to reach the village. This had a negative impact on its small industries, as the benefits of easier access to urban markets which were felt elsewhere were not realised in Cerne. Another is the changes to longstanding agricultural practices, particularly with increased mechanisation, which reduced the local demand for manual labour. Outward migration, with native villagers being attracted to better paid, and less arduous, employment in the growing towns and cities of Britain, also took a toll on places like Cerne. In all likelihood, the village's decline was due to a combination of all of these factors. Since 1945, the village has experienced a resurgence in its fortunes, in part driven (literally) by increased levels of private car ownership. However, with a current population of approximately 900 people, Cerne Abbas still has just two-thirds of the number of residents that it had 170 years ago. And, arguably, it has yet to regain the social and economic diversity – and possibly the liveliness – that was such a striking feature of the village in 1851.





Have you ever considered that there could be a link between Cerne Abbas and smuggling? I hadn't, until I found an unknown family link to Dorset and evidence of smuggling, not connected to Cerne Abbas; however this set me off down the road of trying to find out more about smuggling in Dorset. It was while reading around the subject that I came across a reference to Cerne Abbas.

Smuggling, or 'Free Trade', had been going on for Centuries, with more at times than others, particularly when extra revenue was needed, e.g. for wars. The 17th and 18th Centuries saw a massive rise in smuggling into and out of the country due to the raising of Customs rates in 1604, when more goods were added to the Book of Rates, including tobacco for the first time. Later, during the English Civil War, in 1643, taxes were levied on goods produced for the home market, such as beer, ales, cider and perry, and more luxury goods were added, causing an outcry and protests. These duties were to be collected by the newly introduced Excise men working independently of the Customs officers who were based at ports.



It is worth noting that for much of the 17th Century the collection of duties in ports was awarded to financiers who paid rent to the king, and it was not until 1671 that the Crown established the Board of Customs to collect duties again. However corruption was widespread and many officers were open to bribery, so smuggling thrived!



This was a highly organised operation with a lot of money involved to fund it. It paid people with trade connections who might be willing to arrange the buying and movement of goods in and out of the country alongside legally bought goods, and local fishermen, with boats, crew, sea going skills and local knowledge of where to hide the contraband. 'Gangs' of men would then move the goods, via back roads and tracks, inland to larger towns and cities where the items could be bought by customers, thereby providing the cash to repeat the process.

So how did Cerne Abbas fit into this scenario?

In 1718 a certain Charles Weeks was a known figure to the authorities and operated in the Dorchester area. He was described as ***"a flying smuggler of no certain residence"*** by Philip Taylor, Collector of Customs at Weymouth from 1716 to the 1720s. Taylor's letters and reports to the London authorities give us an idea of what was going on. In 1717 he wrote:

"Smugglers ride with companies of armed men, twenty, thirty or forty in a gang and very dangerous to the officers in the night time."

To try to counter this activity Taylor wrote asking for three additional riding officers, without any links to the area, to be based at Dorchester, Cerne Abbas and Piddle Town (Puddletown). However he was permitted just one extra rider who was a local man!

Charles Weeks had links with London merchants as well as some in Dorset, and ran rings around the law, mixing legitimate goods with the contraband so that the officers had no way of knowing what was what. Among the Dorset merchants who paid Weeks to organise their contraband were the Randells of Cerne Abbas.



Two seizures of linen were made from the home of Thomas Randall in 1718, but it was George Randoll who gave them problems. In 1717 he told Weymouth officers that they had:

“no authority to stop or examine any person or goods on the road and that if we do not desist from so doing it will be attended with the murder of some or other of us.”

Secrecy was vital to the smugglers; they used false names and kept no records, so the officers had to catch them ‘red handed’ and rely on informants, such as Edmond Coish.

This description of Randoll’s gang was given to Philip Taylor by Edmond Coish who lived in a part

“through which the smugglers’ troops do frequently pass.”

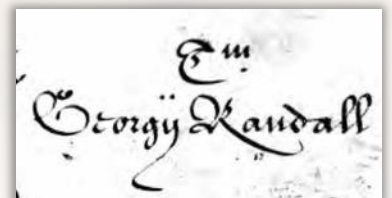
Note that he did not say where Coish lived. Taylor later reported:

“I liquored him with October (strong beer) and plied him with the usual questions I make to country people of the price of wine and brandy and how they are supplied with same, whereto he replied that there was a great running in their country and that the Tuesday before, soon after day, he saw between twenty and thirty men armed with clubs and stones and other weapons come from towards Cerne, where he was told they had conducted some goods for Mr George Randoll, but in what house the same was lodged and whither it was removed thence as usual he could not tell.”

So who were Thomas Randall and George Randoll of Cerne Abbas, and who was Edmond Coish?

Using Parish Records, including Wills, it has been possible to establish that there were some Randall families living in Cerne Abbas at this time, and there was also an Edmond Cosh.

Taking a closer look, there are five baptisms of children linked to a George Randoll and eight for a Thomas Randall, plus burials relating to both names. However, it was the Wills that proved to be most useful in establishing family members, which enabled me to construct a family tree.



In the 1617 Land Survey for Cerne Abbas a George Randoll is named as living in a rented ‘desmesne’ with ‘3 lives.’ Later in the Hearth Tax document of 1662-1664 a George Randoll is listed as having 5 hearths, indicating the size of the property, and therefore his wealth.

Although there is no information to help with where or when he was born, or lived, George Randoll Sr. left a generous and detailed Will when he died in 1708. In it George Sr left 40 shillings each to his son Robert and his two married daughters.

He also gave 40 shillings each to every grandchild alive at his death. Others also receiving 40 shillings each were Susannah Allin, Robert Roper, Joane Jeffrys, his sister, the three daughters of Thomas ----, deceased Minister in Abbey Milton, and Richard Orchard who was also asked to prepare a sermon for the funeral. The remains of his estate went to his son George Jr, who was also his Executor.

George Randoll Jr died in 1730 and from his Will we know that he was a merchant in Cerne Abbas. He left his three sons George, Robert and Samuel, and his three daughters Elizabeth (Roper), Mary and Martha, and his son-in-law Robert Roper £10 each for mourning. The rest of his estate was left to his wife, unnamed in the Will, although she is likely to be Elizabeth. We can deduce this from her own Will made in 1758, in which she says that she is a widow and names her son Samuel and her daughter Martha.



The most puzzling history is for Thomas Randall, with records which show several baptisms with Thomas named as the father for a range of dates, a few deaths and two Wills. Apart from these the only place the name Thomas Randall appears is in the Rental of Estates of George Pitt Esq, (later Lord Rivers) for the Manor of Cerne Abbas/Cerne Barton in 1772, when a Samuel Randall and a Thomas Randall were renting whole properties.

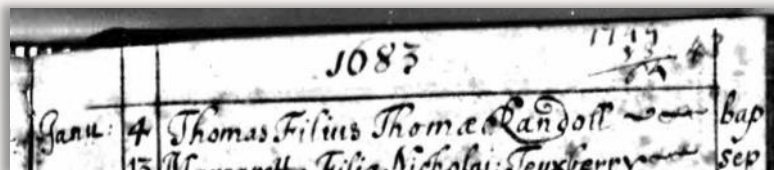
Using the information available I have attempted to build a family tree to try and make sense of it all, although some links are rather tenuous!

We know, thanks to the article on Churchwardens in the previous CHS magazine, that a **Thomas Randall** was churchwarden at St Mary's in 1679, and there's a memorial tablet on the floor of the church, plus a cartouche with his initials on the wall. He died in 1703 aged 63, and left a very detailed and generous Will which described him as a merchant of Cerne Abbas. In it he names his wife Hannah, to whom he leaves half of his estate. His two sons, Thomas and James receive £1000 each at the age of 21, provided they are dutiful and behave well to their mother. His grandsons Thomas and John Thrupp are left £20 and £10 respectively, to inherit at age 21, and his granddaughter Mary Randall inherits £10 also at 21. A detail he adds is that if either of his sons died before their father the money is to be divided between their survivors and daughter Elizabeth Thrupp, who had married John Thrupp, merchant of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis. He also leaves £5 to the poor of Cerne Abbas to be distributed in "**onerous times.**"

Hannah Randall survived her husband by another thirty years, and in her Will of 1728 she names her sons Thomas and James (merchant of London), and a grand daughter Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas.

The merchant's business clearly carried on in the family because their son John, died in 1699, aged 26, and is buried in St Mary's. His Will says he was a merchant, and names his father Thomas Executor, and brothers Thomas and James plus his sister Elizabeth Thrupp.

I could find no information about his brother Thomas, except a baptism date of 4/1/1683.



There is one final Will belonging to a Thomas Randall who was buried on 10/12/1795. It is a brief document, but in it he calls himself a **“Gentleman of Cerne Abbas”**. Thomas does not name a wife or other family members but leaves £200 to James Coombs, the eldest son of Thomas Coombs, his friend, Maltster and Brewer of Cerne Abbas. The rest of his estate was left to Thomas Coombs, who was also the Executor and married to Mary Randall, Thomas’s sister, in 1742. It is probable that it was also this Thomas who rented a **“whole property”** in 1772.

Finally let’s turn to Edmond Coish. There is a record in the 1617 Land Survey for Cerne Abbas showing that an Edmond Cosh had a Copyhold tenancy, and lists ‘3 lives’ as living there. Furthermore, the Protestation Return of 1642 lists Edmond, Thomas and William Cosh. Probably the same three lives as in the Land Survey. There are only further records for William Cosh in the Hearth Tax of 1662-1664, where we are told he had one hearth, and his name appears in the Churchwardens Accounts of 1654 as receiving 0-6, 6d or 6 shillings? He died intestate, and was buried in Cerne Abbas on 20/1/1684. This is clearly much earlier than the interview with Philip Taylor, but does show that a Cosh family lived in the area. I have also found a Will, dated 1750, for an Edmond Coish or Cosh, living with his family in Piddletrenthide. As Philip Taylor does not identify where he interviewed Edmond Coish it is quite feasible that this could be his informant.

So where does this leave the link between Cerne Abbas and the smuggling ‘trade?’

The Thomas Randall who had the linen confiscated in 1718 could be the one born in 1683/84, since the other two are either no longer living or are too young. Plus, he had links with other merchants, namely his brother James in London, and brother-in-law John Thrupp of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis.

I have not been able to find a link between Thomas Randall and George Randall, but looking again at the timing of the encounter in 1717, George Randall Jr, the merchant, was alive at this time, and in his Will says that he wishes to seek **‘the pardon of his sins which have been very many and great.’** It might have been usual to write this in a Will, or could it have been seeking forgiveness for his smuggling?

The facts we do have are the letters of Philip Taylor reporting smuggling activity in and around Cerne Abbas, plus we know that there were Thomas Randalls, George Randolls and a family named Coish or Cosh living hereabouts. Being respectable merchants may have provided the perfect cover, but in truth we can only speculate as to which, if any of them, were involved at a time when smuggling was rife and many people took part.

As for my ancestors, they were involved in smuggling at about this time, when they weren’t fishing!

Resources and Acknowledgements

Dorset Smugglers - Roger Guttridge

Smuggler’s Britain - online resource

Cerne Abbas Parish Records

Museums of Lyme Regis, Portland, Sherborne and Dorchester

Seining Along Chesil - Sarah Acton

A Short History of Lyme - John Fowles



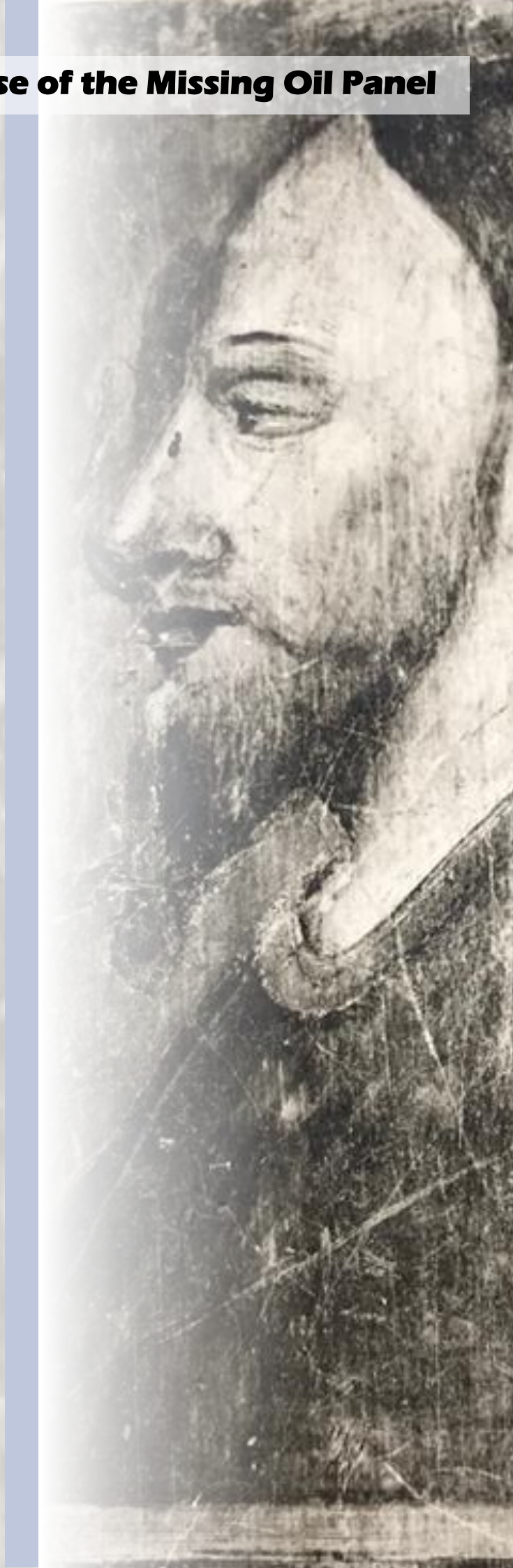


Jonathan Still, our Vicar, reports that when he and his daughter, Harriet, went up to Swindon to visit the Historic England archives, he was given a file to peruse which was a survey taken in 1939 of historic and cultural artefacts which might be lost in the coming conflict with Germany. One of the items recorded was an oil panel of Christ in 'Cerne Church'. A photograph taken in 1939 is attached. With it came a description of the panel, obviously written at the time, as follows.

On the first pier of the North Arcade, a small painting on wood, probably a 17th C copy of an earlier picture and of a type generically termed "Christus bilder". It has the head of Christ in profile, and below an inscription: "This similitude of our Saviour Christ was found in Amarald and sent from ye Great Turk to Pope Innocent the 8th to Redeem the Brother which was taken prisoner by the Romans".

Rawaus Bayezid II ruled as Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1481 to 1512. His rule was contested by his brother Cem, who sought the support of the Mamluks of Egypt. Defeated by his brother's armies, Cem sought protection from the Knights of St. John in Rhodes. Prince Cem offered perpetual peace between the Ottoman Empire and Christendom. However, the sultan paid the Knights a large amount to keep Cem captive. Cem was later sent to the castle of Pierre d'Aubusson in France. Sultan Bayezid sent a messenger to France and requested Cem to be kept there; he agreed to make an annual payment in gold for his brother's expenses.

In March 1489, Cem was transferred to the custody of Innocent VIII. Cem's presence in Rome was useful because whenever Bayezid intended to launch a military campaign against the Christian nations of the Balkans, the Pope would threaten to release his brother. In exchange for maintaining the custody of Cem, Bayezid paid Innocent VIII 120,000 crowns, a relic of the Holy Lance and an annual fee of 45,000 ducats. Cem died in Capua on 25 February 1495 on a military expedition under the command of King Charles VIII of France to conquer Naples.



Out of interest, Jonathan did some research into this description and, amazingly, the actual story reflects what was written on the panel, albeit in a slightly garbled form. The historical facts are astonishing and show that, within 40 years of the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Pope was willing to do business with the Ottoman Empire.

In response to a query about what might have been the ‘*the first pier of the North Arcade*’, as described as the site of the painting, Jonathan states that the first pier of the North arcade is the pulpit pillar, so it would have been where the little statue of Mary now is.

There is no reference to this panel or its fate in the Parochial Church Council records, now held in the Dorchester History Centre,. The vicar in 1939 was the Revd John Ray and the Cerne Historical Society is fortunate in holding copies of his diaries for many of the years of his incumbency. Although his diaries for the war years contain references to major events in the Second World War and much detail about his pastoral activities, as well as much domestic trivia, there is no reference to this panel or, indeed, any other artefacts that might have been affected by the conflict. His diary for the 1st September 1939 records that '*Germans invade Poland, British Ultimatum*' - and that he had a dental appointment for 10am! The diary entry for the 3rd September, a Sunday, was that the congregation were informed from the pulpit that Chamberlain had announced the '*Declaration of War with Germany*' at 11.15 am from 10 Downing Street. The subject for his sermon for that day: '*He had compassion*'. We will never know what he had in mind!

It will be extremely unlikely now for anyone to have any recollection of events from that time, not least the existence of this oil panel, but this article is included in this Magazine just in case a lingering memory passed down the generations is triggered.





This delightful article first appeared in the Dorset County Chronicle on the 24th February 1938.

It was written by W. Temple Pattinson about one of Cerne's many watch and clock makers, Ferdinand Jesse Everett. A transcription of it is set out below. The records show that Mr Everett, who was born in 1865, died in the year that the article was written and was buried in Cerne.

FAMOUS CLOCKMAKER OF CERNE ABBAS

CRAFTSMAN KNOWN ALL OVER THE WORLD

Mr. F. J. Everett and His Fascinating Shop

By W. Temple Pattinson

It is strange how frequently you can find industry tucked away in little corners of Dorset's most picturesque villages. I was strolling round lovely Cerne Abbas near here, when the possibility of discovering industry was farthest from my thoughts.

When I was gazing at the stately old church of Cerne, I spied, working in a window facing the church, a charming old grey-haired gentleman who must surely be one of England's oldest clockmakers and a craftsman whose knowledge of antiques is comparable with that of the world's great art collectors.

I interrupted Mr. F. J. Everett in his task of inserting a tiny Ruby into a £200 wristlet watch, and Mr. Everett, who is 77 years of age, told me of one of his most difficult jobs.

Single handed he completed the restoration of an ancient and valuable quarter chiming tower clock at Upcerne Church. The chimes were broken, many new parts had to be made by hand, the mechanism had to be rebuilt, and after three months' work Mr Everett's arduous task - one of a multitude in more than 60 years of clockmaking - was completed.

It is no exaggeration to say that Mr. Everett's clock making is famous the world over. He has orders from America, from China and Japan, and various cities in Europe. His work is to be seen in almost every English county and many a country mansion contains one of his magnificent hand-made clocks.

Continued

150,000 TIMEPIECES

"I have been a member of the British Horological Institute in London - the finest association of clockmakers in the world - for many years," Mr. Everett told me.

"It is impossible to tell you how many clocks and watches I have dealt with in my time," he confessed with a smile, "but at one time the total was well over 150,000 and since then I'm afraid I have lost count.

"Some of the best work I have done was for Sir Godfrey Lushington, who had many priceless clocks in his country home at Stokke, in Wiltshire. The best clock I made for him - and incidentally one of the best pieces I have ever turned out - went to his London house at 33, Old Queen Street, Westminster. I made that over 40 years ago.

"But I'm sorry to see the passing of so much of real clockmaking. The best workmanship ceased 200 years ago after the passing of Thomas Tompion, greatest of all clock makers. The trend of time and mass production have had a lot to do with the change. Nowadays there is not the demand for really fine timepieces and clockmakers have not the time to concentrate.

"We have also lost some of the skill in hardening the metals. We cannot get hold of the best of metals nowadays and the best of labour is not used for hardening metals.

Many processes of manufacturer had been lost with the passing of the old clockmakers."

A TREASURE HOUSE

Mr. Everett's fascinating shop is a veritable treasure house in itself. It contains the largest Cromwellian or Admiralty clock in existence. The timepiece was secured when it was auctioned in London about fifteen years ago and thereby hangs a tale.

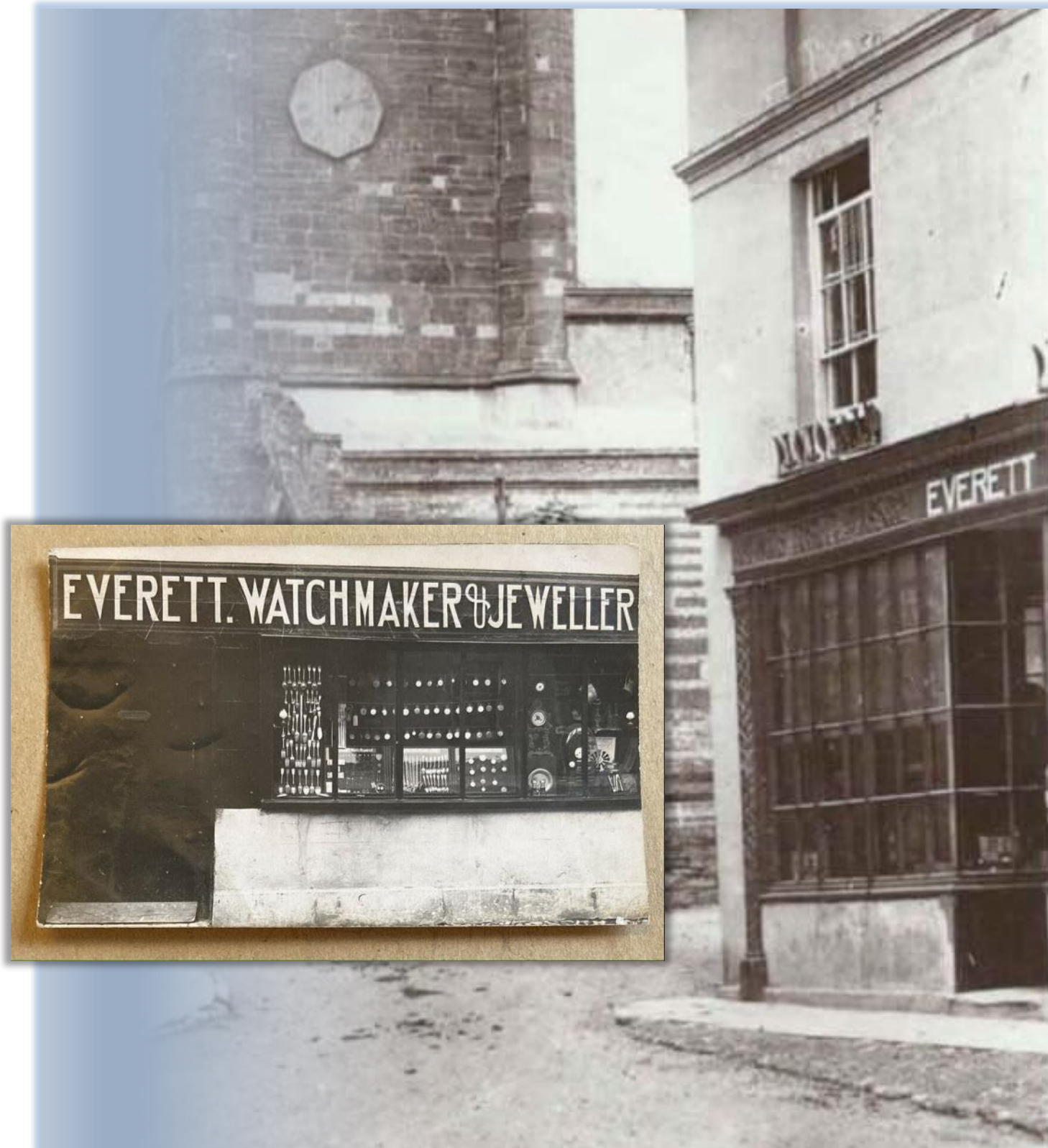
Temperamental people, art collectors! Some of them who had travelled from all parts of the world to bid for the historic timepiece were so annoyed at Mr. Everett's successful bid that when Mr. Everett went to collect the clock the next day one gentleman, excessively inflamed, hurled a piece of metal at the clock maker of Cerne. Calmly Mr. Everett picked it up from the auction floor, and if you call at his shop he will show you that very piece of metal which he keeps as a souvenir in his shop window.

Mr. Everett is also exceptionally proud of his Louis XIV clock, one of the finest of its kind in the country and one which is frequently being sought by collectors.

The old gentleman cannot be accused of not moving with the times. He travels all over the country repairing church clocks and makes his journey by car. He learned to drive when he was 72. Previous to that he used a motorcycle, and before that a pedal cycle.

The writer states that he first spied Mr Everett "working in a window facing the church" and he refers several times to his "shop" but he does not specifically identify the shop. Up until now we have always assumed for a number of reasons that it was the Old Market House. Firstly we know that Mr Everett bought the Old Market House from William Henry Clark in 1901. Mr Clark, a draper, had bought it in 1838, pulled down the old building and built the house we see today. He had carried on business there until he sold it to Mr Everett. Secondly, we have a photo of the Old Market House taken in about 1918, the shop sign of which reads "EVERETT". Thirdly, the 1919 and 1921 Registers of Electors give Mr Everett's address as the Old Market Place. A trade directory of 1920 describes Mr Everett's business as "Watch maker, cycle dealer and motor car accessories"

A postcard has recently come into our hands showing a shop front, the sign of which says “**EVERETT. WATCHMAKER & JEWELLER**”, but which is clearly not the shop front or part of the shop front of the Old Market House. Where does this photo fit into the story of Mr Everett? When was it taken and where; in Cerne Abbas or elsewhere? If you have any information which might resolve the mystery, please let us know.





Letters

Edited by George Mortimer

Will Best writes:

The article in the December 2022 issue of the Magazine discusses the February 1907 Sale of Godmanstone. The final paragraph is incorrect. The Dukes carried on with the estate after Henry's death, but sold most of it when the Great War of 1914 to 1918 ended. The farmland was divided between three families, the Piles (Field Farm), the Goddards (Bushes) and the Spicers (Manor Farm). Mrs. Duke retained the Manor House, the pub, the post office, a few cottages and about 20 acres and some farm buildings, which were all sold when she died in 1937. That was when my father bought Manor Farm and also the post office and the little farm that Mrs. Duke had retained. Colonel Beaver bought the Manor, paddock and wood and Church Lane cottages, Devenish brewery bought the pub, and some cottagers were able to buy their houses for £100 each!

In another article about the 'Mills of Cerne Valley', I also think that Robin is wrong that the Godmanstone Mill last ground grain commercially until 1939. I think that it was much earlier than that because the water wheel was converted before 1920 to drive a water pump to supply cattle troughs around the estate, while domestic water still came from wells. This was superseded in 1937 when the District Council installed mains water from the pumping station below Forston.

This letter was forwarded to Robin Mills, who is happy to stand corrected.

Diana Kimber writes:

Thank you and all contributors for another splendid and most interesting edition for Winter 2022. May I firstly say how heartily I endorse the suggestion in the article about the Churchwardens of St Mary's Church, that we install a plaque to record our appreciation of our wonderful present Churchwardens. A really good idea.

With regard to your article on Churchwardens also, I have a small query. You write of Thomas Dussell (1696) giving his name to the deep and narrow section of Duck Street beyond Springfield. I have also seen somewhere a reference to this section as the Runcible. This, I think, is the Anglicised version of Roncevalles, the narrow and forested mountain pass in the Pyrenes which the hero Roland, beloved of the French, was ambushed and killed in AD778 in the service of Charlemagne. I wonder if anyone else has heard of this.

Contd.



Letters

By the Editor

Acreman Street became 'Rouncibal Lane' north of 'Water Lane', the latter now the footpath opposite The Maltings into Springfield. This detail comes from the 1798 map of Cerne Abbas. Quite why 'Rouncibal', I know not. 'Rouncibal Cottage', one of a pair of cottages just below the Giant viewpoint, is all that survives from the original road name. I have heard before the idea that there may be a connection with the AD778 battle in far off Spain, but why this might have resonated in Cerne Abbas hundreds of years later is unclear. If this is not the connection, where does the name derive from? Is it like 'Dussels Lane', named after a person we know existed, from someone living thereabouts? The mystery continues! Ian Denness also makes the observation that if our 'Rouncibal' is a corruption of the now obsolete word 'rounceval', used as another word for 'Giant', then the explanation may be more straightforward than we think!



The Letters Page Editor will be pleased to hear from you on any subject that will increase a mutual understanding of our shared history.

gcmortimer@btinternet.com or put a note through the door at 3 Abbey Court, if you prefer.

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



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