

Report 5 (24th June 1972)**PORTRAITS AT
LYDIARD TREGOZ**

By Richard Ormond

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The address given to the 1971 annual meeting at Lydiard Park.

We are very inclined when going round a country house to take in only a general impression of the whole. We may react very strongly to individual rooms or suites of rooms, or indeed to the whole house; but I think it is rare for people to notice individual objects in any great detail. I always find myself becoming nostalgic when I go into a country house. The feeling of being able to step back in time, to re-enter the spirit of a past civilization, makes me reminisce about the people who lived then and the kind of lives they led. This day-dreaming makes me very receptive to influences of mood, but vague about specific objects. I find it very difficult after going round a country house to recollect the details of what I have seen. On the other hand, I should notice if something were obviously missing, as for example the subject of my talk – portraits.

We are so used to seeing portraits arranged in dining rooms, long galleries, drawing rooms, and elsewhere, that we tend to take them for granted. As we wander round a country house we have a vague feeling that we are moving, perhaps, from an Elizabethan portrait to a Georgian portrait to a Victorian portrait; but few of us would look at them as anything more than just a part of the ordinary furnishing of the house. They do not stand out as isolated objects demanding attention like pictures in a museum. And this is entirely as it should be: family portraits belong to the house in which they are hung. On the other hand, without its portraits a country house would be a very bleak place indeed, impoverished both psychologically and spiritually. They are the only visible record of the people who lived in the house, who made its history, the presiding deities, if you like, of the civilization that we acknowledge as we pay our 20 or 30 pence to go round.

What I want to do this afternoon is to discuss, in fairly general terms, the historical significance of the portraits at Lydiard. Re-assembled in this house through the enlightened patronage of the Swindon Corporation, they add immeasurably to the interest and importance of Lydiard. What a gaunt shell it would be without them!

How impersonal and lacking in human interest! Portraits make history come alive as no other documentary evidence can do. Here is the visual image of man, the most tangible link between ourselves and the past. After all, the problem of history is trying to re-create the past – its actual physical reality. Portraits show us how the individual looked, what sort of clothes he wore, the setting he lived in, and the accessories he had about him in his ordinary life. Of course, it is not an objective view of the individual, but the individual seen through the medium of an artistic style, subjective rather than documentary in the sense that a photograph is. (Even so, nothing could be less true than the old saying that a camera can not lie!) It is this inter-reaction between the artist and the sitter that really enlarges the significance of portraiture.

Portraiture is not a static affair, but a constantly changing mirror of the past. No-one could possibly mistake an Elizabethan portrait for a Victorian portrait. Not only are the costume, hair-style and accessories different, but each belongs to a particular period and sensibility, the distinction is as much spiritual as aesthetic.

Many portraits have unfortunately lost their identifications and float in the vast limbo of the unknown. Much of my work at the Gallery is concerned with identifying portraits. The processes by which one proves that a portrait represents the person it is supposed to can be extremely complicated. Often there is very little evidence to go on. One can compare the portrait with other known images of the same sitter, if they exist. There may be inscriptions, comparative engravings, or documentation of some kind. As far as the St. John portraits are concerned, these problems do not arise, since they have descended through the family in an unbroken line, and in almost every case have retained their identities.

However interesting a portrait may be as an isolated object, it does take on an added significance when one knows something about the sitter. The more one knows, the more interesting the image becomes. This is really the principle on which the National Portrait Gallery works. The decision to admit a portrait is based primarily on the fame of the sitter. To this extent we are gallery of famous British men and women – a somewhat Victorian idea – rather than just a gallery of portraits as such. However good a portrait may be as a work of art, we cannot acquire it unless it represents someone of national importance. If the portrait of someone famous happens to be a good work of art then that is by way of a bonus. Many of our portraits are crude in quality and of largely documentary significance, but they can be absolutely fascinating and unique none-the-less, as for example the haunting group portrait of the Bronte Sisters painted by their brother Bramwell. Then there is the little water-colour of Jane Austen by her sister Cassandra, the only known picture of her. It is very slight, very fragmentary, but it is all we have.

When one knows that a portrait represents Sir Francis Drake, for example, rather than just any Elizabethan gentleman, the portrait takes on a vastly added significance. Everything one knows about Drake, the picture of him that one has formed in one's own mind inter-acts with this visible image. One may feel that a portrait of Drake does him no sort of justice, it may appear to be a travesty, but none-the-less it has become a piece of evidence to be taken into account. It has to be sifted, interpreted, like any other historical document, but it cannot be ignored. Here is Drake. This is how he appeared in his own time. Drake is very much at the forefront of our minds at the moment, for we have just paid an enormous price in the sale-room for the great miniature by Hilliard, purchased from the Earl of Derby's collection. It conforms very closely with my image of Drake, a rather round-faced, jolly Elizabethan bully.

The St. John portraits at Lydiard may not be, by comparison, quite as important as the Drake miniature, but, in their own way, they too incorporate and illustrate history. As a series covering a range of centuries, they have also a cumulative significance. One is not looking at just one St. John but at a whole series of St. Johns, It was through families like theirs, with all their connections and ramifications, that power and influence were exercised in the past. It is very difficult in our democratic and egalitarian age to appreciate the vast importance of families like the St. Johns in the fabric of English life. They represented the entrenched and stable elements in an often fluctuating political situation. Individuals might flourish and fall, but the family tended to go on. The St. Johns were local Wiltshire magnates and landlords, and occasionally one of two of them rose to greater heights and played a role in national politics. The portraits here are to come extent a testament to their achievement. One by one they added their faces to the gallery of ancestral portraits for a mixture of reasons – tradition, family pride, and the desire to be remembered. The continuing status of the family meant that portraits were added more or less automatically, often at important moments in the lives of the individuals, like marriages, coronations, or the assumption of titles. (See for example [Report 4](#) p. 20 ff. for comments on the portraits in parliamentary and coronation robes.) The portraits were designed to hang in Lydiard, and are indeed an integral part of its history. Divided up and dispersed, they would lose all meaning and probably their identities as well. At a time when the fate of many country houses is in the balance, the Gallery is becoming increasingly worried about the break-up of these family collections. Lydiard has been very fortunate in this respect. It has lost all its furniture and fittings, all the things that were personal to it, but the pictures have come back. They have done more than anything to re-create its original atmosphere.

The collection of portraits begins in the church. The tombs there and, above all, the great St. John triptych represent the commemorative function of portraiture in a very interesting form. Before the sixteenth century the number of English painted portraits can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Apart from the Wilton diptych of Richard II in the National Gallery, the coronation portrait of Richard II in Westminster Abbey, and a very few others, one could almost say that there are *no* pre-sixteenth-century English portraits. People were commemorated in tombs, manuscripts, sometimes in stained glass windows, not as recognizable individuals, but as formalized images. The king was shown as a figure of kingly magnificence, the knight as a man of military prowess: they are stylized and remote, very un-individual in their effect.

During the sixteenth century, tomb-sculpture becomes more naturalistic, but it is still contained within very formal limits. In the delicious monument to Nicholas and Elizabeth St. John the figures are posed with moving simplicity. The sculptor of the monument may have worked from portraits or death-masks, but he was not aiming at a realistic result in the sense in which we should understand that work. It was more an approximation than a precise result. The same is true of the splendid effigy of Sir John St. John with his two wives, although the sculptural treatment here is very much more sophisticated than that of the earlier monument.

But, if you turn from the tomb of Sir John St. John to the triptych, you will see what I mean. Instead of a frozen mask, one is confronted in the triptych by an alert, intelligent, and above all, by a recognizable individual. Instead of a splendid effigy he has become a figure of flesh and blood. Standing out – as it does – from the stiff, and, I suspect, very over-painted hands and the ornamental armour, the head itself shows every sign of having been taken from the life: the painter had St. John before him as he painted the picture. We have crossed the line here from the commemorative image to the individual characterisation, the individual identity, the individual human being. The portrait is an extravagant conceit, a magnificent status symbol. I am sure that many of Sir John's neighbours would have thought that he was getting ideas very much above his station, even for a newly-created baronet. But it is also a group portrait of very considerable quality and unique design. Until it is restored it is difficult to do it full justice, but it remains an imposing and impressive object.

The figure of Sir John St. John himself combines an elegant though slightly angular pose with a very sensitive characterisation. Some of the other faces, particularly of his sisters opposite, are badly rubbed, and the face of his wife has clearly been over-painted. It is unfortunate that monuments of this type have, in the course of time, suffered so badly. Experience at the Gallery has shown that the cleaning of old panel portraits can lead to startling revelations. Where there is still some original paint left under the layers of over-painting and varnish, the result of cleaning can be quite breath-taking. The impression that Jacobean painting is rather dull is partly due to the extremely poor state in which these pictures have survived.

Sir John dominates the composition both physically and psychologically, as I am sure he was intended to do. He stands there looking out against a light background, and behind him, very demurely, is his wife; opposite him, is the frozen line of his sisters against a dark background, while his parents are set well back in the composition, in a rather awkward kneeling pose. The lighting and the extraordinary illusionistic architectural background to back to Holbein's great wall-painting at Whitehall Palace (destroyed 1697). In the St. John triptych this Renaissance formula has been translated into a very vernacular, English medium.

Full-length portraits of sitters, other than royalty or prominent courtiers, are rare in the sixteenth century, and are still uncommon in the early seventeenth century. The creation of the long gallery led to a demand for larger pictures, and this was encouraged by the growing naturalism of English portraiture. But in 1615, when Sir John St. John was depicted full length, this was something unusual. He must have been a man of considerable vanity and self-esteem.

In addition to the triptych we have other portraits of him in the house. There is an amusing picture of him at the age of seventeen, dating from 1603. It is only a copy, but it obviously records an original picture, and it shows him as a spirited young gallant in a white suit with his sword. He would have cut quite a dash in the London society of the day. There is also a half-length portrait of him in black with a falling ruff, a much more sober and restrained image of him in middle-age. Then lastly, there is the great tomb-effigy of him in the church. Four separate images, two of them of great splendour and importance, help us to study him from the age of seventeen through to death. This is very unusual for a country gentleman. I can't help feeling that he must have been a striking personality, and, in many ways, one of the early heroes in the history of Lydiard.

I have rather concentrated on him because he provides a point of departure for all the early monuments in the church and for the early portraits in the house. His grand-parents are commemorated in the 1592 monument, and his parents in the triptych: there are also portraits of them in the House. These are not contemporary as they are copies, but they obviously have a documentary significance. Copies are quite a common thing in families. Different branches would want portraits of their ancestors, so instead of dividing them up as in Solomon's judgement, they employed a hack to run off copies. Often the originals have disappeared altogether. People in the past were much less concerned with originality and uniqueness than we are. It was the portrait as an image that was important rather than the portrait as an individual artefact. We tend to think that a copy must be something rather second-rate.

The later seventeenth-century portraits at Lydiard are a rather mixed bag. It is nice to think that everyone sat to Van Dyck and Lely (incurable optimists refuse to believe otherwise), but the vast mass of seventeenth-century portraits are by

anonymous hands. Unfortunately there is little documentary evidence to go on, but it is clear that below the fashionable painters like Van Dyck and Lely, there was a whole world of anonymous journeymen, studio assistants, and travelling artists. They were churning out portraits in which they aped the styles of their betters but in a very much more primitive way. In the present state of knowledge attributions are very difficult and that familiar title 'English School' has all too often to be employed.

There are portraits at Lydiard of Sir John St. John's children, Walter the 3rd baronet and Henry, another son. In the church there is the splendid cavalier monument to Edward about whom you heard last year. (See Report No. 4, pp 7, 8.) The portrait of Walter's wife Johanna (No. 41 in the Catalogue) is one of the few works of real aesthetic distinction. It conforms fairly closely in style with the work of John Michael Wright, a considerable and, in many ways, a brilliant artist, who – like Dobson, Riley and several other seventeenth-century English painters – never fulfilled his promise. It was left to foreigners I am afraid, to Geerhardts, to Van Dyck, Mytens, Van Somer, Leley, Wissing, Kneller, and others, to exploit the rich pickings in England.

Wright began practising about the time of the Restoration. From the few portraits by him that we know, he seems to have been a considerable artist, rivalling Lely in fashionable popularity. Had he lived longer, he might have emerged as one of our major artists. I cannot be sure of the attribution for the portrait of Johanna, as it is in a very dirty and slightly damaged state, but in style and colouring, in format and design it conforms closely to Wright's style. When it is restored it will be a most attractive object. The faces of the women in Lely's work conform much more to a stereotype; they are all beauties like the Windsor series with their almond eyes and distinctive ringlets. There is far more of feeling of individuality in Wright. His portrait of Johanna is sensitive, dating on costume from the 1660's. There is another portrait of her (No. 56) in the house, as a woman of mature years, dressed in black.

Supplementing the main line of the Lydiard St. Johns are portraits of the Bletsoe St. Johns and of members of the Villiers family with whom they inter-married. Most of them are of fairly dim quality qua portraits but obviously of very great importance in enlarging the scale of the family collection. The more St. John portraits that can be assembled here, the more interesting will the collection become.

One of the more interesting items is the half-length of Oliver St. John, Lord Chief Justice, (No. 17), which has just been cleaned and is in the dining room. It is a splendid work, a version of a full-length portrait of him by the Dutch artist Peter Nason. . The original is dated 1651, and was painted in Holland, according to Mr. Smallwood, during the time that the sitter was in their country as an Extra-ordinary Ambassador of the Commonwealth Government. Nason practised for only a year or two in England around 1662-3. Had he stayed in England, he might

have become a major rival to Lely. Even though this portrait is not the first version it has great atmospheric feeling, and may well have been touched on by Nason himself.

One seventeenth-century portrait that has no connection with either the St. Johns or Lydiard is the rather amusing portrait of Dame Pigot (No. 50). It is a portrait of a lady with a hat, dressed in black with a red dress showing underneath, and is part of the Willis collection. While it is true that there are few of the great names of portraiture at Lydiard, there are one or two works by interesting minor hands. The portrait of Dame Pigot is one of them. It is very close to the work of an English artist, Gilbert Jackson, who was working in the 1630's and 1640's, in a style reminiscent of Cornelius Johnson, who was also practising then. While it is true that Jackson is much coarser and much less sophisticated than Johnson, his work has an engaging and quite unique charm and dottiness. This is evidenced by the rather flat way in which he models the features, and the pleasing motif of the glasses and the watch open on the table.

Although the 1st Viscount Bolingbroke was not at Lydiard for any great length of time he was, historically, by far the most important of the St. Johns. He was a prominent statesman and political theorist, coming finally to grief through his espousal of the Jacobite cause. Although oil portraits of him are known, he does not seem to have been as much painted as some of his contemporaries. The two at Lydiard (Nos. 9 and 32) are slightly disappointing. On the other hand his bust by Michael Rysstrack is a distinguished piece of sculpture. Rysstrack is one of the best English sculptors of the 18th century and his bust of Bolingbroke is conographically and aesthetically far more interesting than the two portraits in oils. The first of these (No. 9) is a rather poor version of the Kneller at Petworth, signed and dated 1715. The second portrait (No. 32) also seems to have originated in Kneller's studio, although no autograph original of the type is known. There was formerly another copy, similar to No. 32, at Blithfield House, Staffordshire. (See *Report No. 4*, p. 20.)

Kneller was probably the most productive artist ever to practice in England. He employed an enormous studio, organized on almost factory-production lines. Here again, the problem of original and copy seems to have mattered less to people in that age than it does now. After all, portraiture performed a very utilitarian function at the time, in the multiplication of images. The most painted people were kings, statesmen, and military commanders, whose faces were in constant demand. During a period of about ten years, from 1690-1700, sixty or seventy replicas of the state portrait of William III by Kneller were produced in his studio, to be sent to embassies abroad, or purchased by public corporations and private individuals. Here again, the design or pattern mattered more than the individual touch of the master. I am not suggesting that they couldn't tell what was original and what wasn't, but they were less concerned about it. Even pictures on which Kneller himself worked and which he himself signed may have gone to the drapery painter for the costume.

Bolingbroke's half-brother, the 2nd Viscount St John, is also represented at Lydiard, in two fairly mediocre portraits, one of them a large swagger work attributed to Highmore (No. 21). There is a companion portrait of his first wife Anne (No 45), but a far more unusual picture of her is the one by Isaac Whood (No. 11), a charming picture showing her with a fresh, almost milk-maid-like expression. Isaac Whood, like Gilbert Jackson and J. M. Wright, is an extremely interesting minor painter, known chiefly for his copies of other people's work, and his reputation has rather suffered as a result. There are some amusing letters from Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, to her daughter-in-law the Duchess, in which she discusses Whood's work and his habit of overcharging. Professor Waterhouse associates him with Enoch Seeman, painters who carried on the style of Richardson without yielding to new. I don't think his judgement is really fair, for there is in portrait 11 something almost French in its pastel-like colour and freshness, which shows that Whood, like other English painters of the period, was subject to rococo influence.

Another female portrait is number 14, listed as the 1st Viscount St. John's second wife, Angelica Magdalena, who died in 1736; aged about 70. It is rather a problem picture, showing a woman in a dark dress with a round fur collar. It has also been called Lady Luxborough's sister, but as no such person existed, that obviously won't do. It can hardly be Angelica Magdalena either as the costume seems to be of about 1740, some time after she died. (See *Report No. 2*, p. 31) The suggestion has been made that she is in some kind of Polish costume. It is quite common for people, both men and women, in the eighteenth century, to be depicted in fancy dress. Particularly popular was 'Van Dyck' costume, a pastiche of seventeenth-century cavalier dress.

It is a sign of the family's declining fortune that there are so few later eighteenth or early nineteenth-century portraits at Lydiard. This is a great pity. I hope that one day, if indeed they survive, some more of these portraits will come back. As things now stand, somewhere around the mid-eighteenth century the collection comes to an end, instead of continuing on. Although the later St. Johns are not so important, their absence means that the collection lacks balance.

There is a pretty pastel of the 3rd Viscount Bolingbroke by his mother, Lady Diana (Spencer), (No. 12), in the Entrance Hall. Then there are two rather standard Hoppners in very bad condition (Nos. 63 and 64). Until they are cleaned it would be difficult to tell whether they are by Hoppner or merely studio works. They are of the 3rd Viscount Bolingbroke and his brother Frederick. The 4th Viscount is represented only by his own painting of two dogs. The collection ends lamely with a drawing of one of his sons by Wilkins (No. 76).

The eighteenth-century gap in the collection is filled, to some extent, by the Willis portraits, on loan from the National Trust. As these obviously have no connection with the St. Johns or with Lydiard, they are much less interesting historically,

although they make up aesthetically for what they lack iconographically. Some of them are first-rate and they hang much better in an eighteenth-century interior like this than they would in the more anonymous setting of an art gallery. Look, for example, at the two oils by Francis Cotes (Nos. 25 and 28) – very distinguished eighteenth-century pictures by any standards. The Beechey in the same room (No. 19) or James Willis in military uniform is a superb work, Beechey at his best; strong, dramatic, and powerful. There is also a good Benjamin West (No. 35) of a Willis connection, Captain Nott: an interesting Tilly Kettle (No. 34) – a distinctly competent hand; and one or two smaller things – two Cotes pastels (Nos. 26 and 27); two Russell pastels (Nos. 18 and 20); and a charming Downman drawing (No. 22). From another source there are portraits (Nos. 15 and 16) of two very distinguished English statesmen, such as one might expect to find in a country house – the elder Pitt, later Earl of Chatham, by Richard Brompton, one of several good versions; and the Marquess of Wellesley, who was the Duke of Wellington's brother, shown in a portrait after Lawrence.

I have now come to an end of my somewhat perfunctory survey. What I hope I have done is to illustrate the diversity of the portraits here and their historical significance. As images of individuals associated with the house they form a unique documentary sequence, and it is only here that they have real meaning. Some of the images are more interesting aesthetically or biographically than others, and some of the sitters are more important than others, but it is their significance as a series rather than as isolated objects that is so important. Like an elaborate cake they illustrate the history of the family, layer by layer, from the sixteenth century onwards, providing a visual counter-point to the narrative history of Lydiard. I wish that the fate of other family collections had been or will be as fortunate as that of the St. Johns.

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Questions and discussion followed the talk. Among the contributions were the following:

In answer to a question about the use of canvas, Mr. Ormond said, "In England, as distinct from the Low Countries and Italy, where the use of canvas starts much earlier, you find some canvas used in the late sixteenth century, as in the Ditchley portrait of Elizabeth (1592). The change from wooden panel really comes early in the seventeenth century, but even so you find smaller paintings going on panel simply because it was so much cheaper. Occasionally you get little things on copper. If you are presented with a very early picture and it is on canvas, you ought to suspect that it is later copy".

It was announced that Swindon Coporation had recently acquired a portrait of Lady Diana Spencer, shortly to be added to the collection.

Mr. Ormond was asked whether he considered that the portrait of the parents of the 1st Baronet on the Triptych were copied from the portraits in the house. He replied, "I should have to line them up and try to form some idea whether or not this is so. One would expect that this is what happened."

Reference was made to the portraits of Sir Walter and Lady Johanna in Sir Walter St. John's Grammar School. Both these portraits are by Mary Beale. Confirmation of this comes from the coarse type of canvas used and the fact that beside Lady St. John's shoulder is a little dog, identical with one that appears in a self-portrait of the artist.

Mr. Ormond, commenting on the fact that it was often difficult to believe that portraits painted at different periods of a person's life by different artists were in fact of the same sitter, said "When you line up portraits of supposedly the same person, sometimes none of them looks in the least like the person in another of the portraits. Particularly is this true with female portraits where, for example, a Kneller face is so different from a Lely face."

In reply to a question, Mr. Ormond spoke about the inscriptions that often appear on portraits. "The inscription on the Isaac Whood may have been contemporary; some of the other inscriptions on the Lydiard portraits are clearly later additions. In the eighteenth century there appears to have been a great revival of interest in ancestors. Queen Caroline, wife of George II, got together all the historical portraits in their Royal collection. It became common to inscribe them at this time, in order to identify the different portraits in a collection. The spirited member of the family who added the block capitals did his best, but occasionally the information contained in the inscription is incorrect."

Mr. Ormond commented on the frames, "Most of them at Lydiard seem to be fairly right, although I cannot say that I have really studied them. The frame on the Isaac Whood is perfectly in period: it is a seventeenth-century type frame, but I shouldn't think that it was original to the picture. It is particularly difficult to judge authenticity especially where there is gilding."

Lastly, comment was made about similarities in portraits. Mr. Ormond said, "A classic example of this is the way which the Cromwellian Robert Walker adopted Van Dyck poses in painting Parliamentarians. One would have thought that the last thing they wanted to do was to be associated the Cavalier poses, but the fact was that Walker was rather a weak artist, he simply took over these poses and re-employed them, just inserting new faces."

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My early days

IN THE VILLAGES OF LYDIARD TREGOZ AND MILLICENT –
ALSO AT PURTON, WILTSHIRE.

By Nathaniel Hiscock.

I was born at the keepers' cottage, The Brook, Lydiard Tregoz, on the 14 th August, 1885. My father, Henry Hiscock, was Head Keeper on Lord Bolingbroke's Estate, and our cottage was at the end of Church Wood. A brook flowed round the side and front, it was the overflow from the big lake of Lydiard House which was just the other side of our cottage. Sometimes the lake overflowed then there was a great flow of water rushing along the brook, at times flooding the fields.

Just above our cottage on the hill was Lydiard House, the family seat of Lord Bolingbroke, and also the church, the Vicar at that time being the Rev. H. G. Baily. When I was very small I can remember going up to the Big House (backway) and going into the kitchen and seeing Granfur Holiday (no relation) attending to the joint of meat roasting on the spit which was slowly turning in front of the wood fire and basting it with the fat from the meat, also dipping a crust of bread in it and giving it to me to eat. Granny Holiday was the cook. It was a big kitchen and I can remember the copper saucepans and lids used to take up one side and they did shine; there was a large dresser too with shelves full of crockery. The only indoor servant I can remember was my step-sister Mary (with whom I lived later on at Purton).

We had some big kennels as father used to take in game dogs for training. They were fed on horse meat and barley meal which was cooked in large boilers in a building called the Dairy (as our cottage at one time was part of a farm house). The barley meal was also cooked and there was great activity at meal times. When we were young we were not allowed near the kennels unless father was there, patting of dogs was not allowed. The kennels were eventually pulled down, then we only had two dogs.

Now I must move along. According to the school register I went to Hook School on the 29th April, 1889 – I was then 3 years and 8 months old. I reckon Hook School was about 2½ miles from our cottage. We had to walk through the Big Wood and across Lydiard Park, past the old school, Freeths Farm, Edmonds factory, Hapgood's Smithy, Elliotts Farm, the cemetery, the Piece – a collection of

old cottages and Hales Farm, then the school.

How I got there I don't know but expect I was carried on my brothers back. Our food was carried in a big red handkerchief and consisted of Bread and Dripping, a piece of cheese and washed down by water from the tap. I don't think I broke any records for attendance in the early years, anyway I am not able to recall anything except being shown how to knit with 2 needles, but I don't think I produced anything. The alphabet we used to sing which was one way of learning it, then the tables up to 12 times. What a trial we must have been to our teachers whose names I don't remember. Of course we had Religious Instruction being a church School. Getting to and from School was the biggest worry, rain, snow and fogs and Lydiard Park was very bleak. And so it went on during my first period at Hook School.

After school and week-ends we used to play around the old farm buildings and in the fields also there was a gate across the main road to prevent cattle straying, sometimes we got a penny or a half-penny for opening it to let the traffic through and sometimes we were rude if they didn't say "thank-you" etc. On Fox Hunting days we used to get quite a few coppers but we could not spend them as the nearest shop was at Lydiard Millicent 1½ miles away or Shaw.

Sometimes Mother would take us to Swindon across the fields about 3 ½ miles to 4 miles to see our Grandparents – that was always an event in our lives to see the shops and Horse Buses and all the people as we very seldom saw many people except on Sundays when we went to Church then quite a lot came in their Horse and Traps. Some farmers came in their pleated Smock Frocks. The Vicar was the Rev. Baily and Mr. Ben Large was a churchwarden, Mr. Jack Hunt was sexton, Mrs. Hapgood played the organ and Harry pumped the wind and sang lustily with the Choir. After Church we had to hurry home to dinner and to tell father what the Sermon was about (as if we could remember). In the afternoons we used to help drive the cows in to the farm for milking and then to watch the farm workers milk the cows by hand. Sometimes we were allowed in the Dairy to see the milk being cooled and run into churns ready to go to the Station. So you see our fun was what we made and we dare not get into mischief – so time went on until I was seven when my Mother died.

Our family then split up. My young brother went to Swindon, I went to Purton, Fred and Ted stayed at home. I lived with my Step-sister and her husband until 1896 in the Old Toll House at the bottom of Purton Hill and went to the National School 1892. Mr. Brown was Headmaster and my first teacher was Miss Annie Garrett. I'm afraid I was a bit awkward at first but a few strokes with the cane helped the brain to function, but I must leave the school part for a while and tell about Purton.

My brother-in-law Mr. Fisher was a senior postman in the Village and he had a very long round morning and afternoon. He also had to take mail to the station and bring mail back; he had to collect from letter boxes at Pavenhill, Lydiard Green, Lydiard Millicent and Church Path in the evening and take them to the station at 8 p.m. all on Shank's Pony (feet).

The Toll House was more or less round with windows facing up and down the road, the fireplace was in the middle with the chimney stack through the centre of the bedroom. The bill of *fares* or *tolls* was on a board let into the front wall, I think it is there now. In later years there was an addition built on. In my early days there was no fresh water laid on and I used to fetch buckets of water from Mr. Kempster's well at the top of the hill. It was one of my duties to keep two big pans full of fresh water and we caught rain water for washing, etc. Opposite us was the *Hope Inn* – Mr. Shurey was Landlord, Carpenter, Undertaker, etc., they were good friends to us. Purton was a very neat and tidy village and a number of very well to do people lived there. The vicar was the Rev. Vesey, the Misses Waugh, Captain Wykeham Martin, Doctor Coombe's, Mr. Brown, Mr. Robson of Red House Stables, Tom Scott headgroom, Butcher Wilkins, Mr. Kempster – High Class Groceries; Mr. Foster – Tailor; Mr. Burgess – Baker and Confectionery; Mr. Barnes – Builder, etc.; Mr. Wilding was Host at the Angel Hotel; Mr. Francombe – Postmaster; Mr. Trollope – Police Sergt; Mr. Webbber – Newsagent, Barber and Bicycles for hire etc., etc; and several others who had their own Horses and Carriages but their names have slipped my memory now.

Now I must tell this episode. One Sunday my Step-brother Ted came over to see us and I was given a jug and sent over to Mr. Shureys for some beer. Of course I had to stumble and fall, smashing the jug and pushing my head and jaw in the pieces, cutting my cheek and jaw on a large piece. Billy Shurey ran out and picked me up and carried me home and it took quite a time to check the bleeding. I was then carried to the Doctor who strapped it up, after I got home it broke open so back for more strapping. I was fed with soft food for some time as I must not move the jaw, was in bandages for weeks and away from school. The scar still shows in 1966. One small point about this – I had a five shilling piece in my hand until the next morning. When they asked me if I remembered if I had dropped it and they were astonished when I opened my hand. They had searched all round where I fell as five shillings was a lot of money then.

My sister and I used to go over to Father's House about every week to clean up and put him straight, pushing a pram 2½ to 3 miles,. Sometimes we went over to Sunday dinner and then in the evening come back to Lydiard Millicent and the men had a few drinks, then back to Purton. So time went on.

Now back to school, we were a mixed lot girls and boys and Ethel Shurey was my *guardian*. The Schoolmaster had some very bony knuckles which hurt when he *tapped* your head. I managed to keep going but the lessons didn't stick very well and sums were not in my line at all. I liked geography, drawing and writing. Out of school my sister kept me employed about the house, no running about the roads or getting into mischief for me. I used to do most of the shopping also cleaning the paths, blacklead the grate, clean knives and forks with brickdust etc. It was all good training but I didn't like it at the time. I found it useful in later years.

Baby minding was another pastime (unpaid). Billy Shurey had a paper round the "Birmingham Argus" and he wanted to give it up, he asked my sister if I could take it on. So I became a paper boy. The paper used to come in on the 4.30 p.m. train from Gloucester and the price was halfpenny. I used to rush along the platform and sell a few to the passengers, they nearly always gave me a penny (no change) so I used to make a few pence on the side, I can't remember how many copies I sold but the agent used to come round and pay my sister – the money helped to pay for boots, etc. When I left Purton Stan Kennett took it over. I stayed at Purton until 1896 then went home to look after father when Fed went away. During my time at Purton I had learnt to look after a house in a way. I could light fires, make tea, boil potatoes and make beds, etc., so that was now my job also to go into the wood to gather firewood as we had no coal in those days. My day started with lighting the fire and making tea, laying breakfast, calling father, sweeping the room, fetching water from the brook for washing and fresh drinking water from the well, have breakfast, turn down the beds and do the necessary jobs upstairs, get fresh wood to light the fire in the evening after school, then wash up the breakfast things and off to school carrying my dinner usually being bread and cheese. School was 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. except in Winter – 9 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. and then hurry home to get tea ready for Father and Ted who worked in Swindon factory. Then get things ready for the next day, etc., get food ready for our 2 dogs, fresh bedding, fetch milk from the farm and chop wood. Sometimes Ted and Dad would help saw some logs, make beds which had been open all day, take messages around from Dad and do shopping at Lydiard Millicent Stores. Two old ladies kept the Stores – I have forgotten their names but they eventually lived in the small Lodge by the Church. We had a fair sized garden so of course in the seasons I had to help with the planting and one potato I can remember from that time was called *Magnum Bonum*. My schooling was varied and I'm afraid I did not go as often as I should as father wanted me with him so much especially in the breeding seasons to help with the gathering of eggs and getting broody hens used to the nesting boxes. What a job it was lifting then off, feeding them and putting them back again night and morning each to its own nest – it was one endless task. As I still had to look after home it was no wonder I was a bit backward at school.

I used to get about quite a bit with father in any spare time and at week-ends; he was a wonderful shot with his old 12-bore muzzle loader, he could load it very quickly too. He had one special retriever (Nep) who would not work for anyone but Dad and if he told him to mind something nobody else could touch it, he was a wonderful game dog – quick as lightning.

In the holidays when I was not wanted for other jobs, I used to get up to the farm and do all sorts of jobs with the farm workers, great fun to lead the big horses and carts about and in the Summer haymaking leading the horse on the hay wagon or driving the pony round and round to work the elevator, we boys and girls used to have quite a bit of fun tumbling about in the hay. Then when the pheasants were

hatched and put out into the rearing fields I used to help with the food, boiling eggs hard and then chopping them fine – shells and all – mixing the meal and going round the coops to help with the feeding, also to keep watch for vermin, Hawks, Foxes, etc. It was an endless job and then tear off home to do the house work as before.

Now back to School again. Our Schoolmaster was Mr. Leighton – very energetic (spare the rod and spoil the child) I had my share. I think we were an unruly lot and tried his patience very much although he was very considerate in my case and used to let me off early especially in bad weather. I can remember that he arranged a school concert, one item being a band without using instruments which we had to *mimic*, but sing when it was your turn to play. Mine was the Big Drum so waving my arms I sang, “*Rig, Jig, Bumm*” says the big bass drum and this is the way you do it. Also we sang a chorus of a song which went like this :-

Kime in Aro, Kilty Karo, Kime in Aro Kime,
Pim Strim, Stramadiddle, Arrobone,
A Ring Ting, Rig Nom, a Bolidin a Kime.

A few years ago Shirley Abicair sang the same chorus on B.B.C. Children’s Hour programme. Our school dinner hour was taken up with all kinds of robust games, one of which was a form of leapfrog, Mr. Leighton sometimes took part, Another one was Fox and Hounds and we were often chased by Farmer Hale and by golly didn’t he have a heavy hand. So school life went on until I was 12, although school records show I was 13 when I left. I am sure I didn’t go very often in that last year, but in later years I often wished I had learnt more at school.

So now to work. My first regular job was at Lord Bolingbroke’s for a while, doing anything that was wanted. Gardening with Mr. Chantler (don’t touch the fruit), sawing wood with Mr. Selvey – lots of it as there was no coal it was a full time job, any trees or branches falling in the woods had to be cut up by hand and stacked, then helping in the stables cleaning out with the Groom – Mr. George Beasant and sweeping up the Avenue and Yard a full days job. Then of course there was ferreting for rabbits with my eldest Step-brother Williams. He knew every rabbit burrow in the estate and my golly I had to work, it was a nasty job but the rabbits had to be kept down. In the big woods we used long nets and drove the rabbits to them. Sometimes we went over to Bynol on the Downs, the Keeper there was a Mr. Love, a great character and afterwards lived at Hook, there were some big woods there on the side of the hill. When we finished a day the rabbits had to be cleaned and packed ready for market. Then Partridge Shooting walking miles to drive the birds towards the guns. I sometimes carried a game basket strapped to my back (agony). When the Pheasants were strong enough to put into the woods there was night watching to keep away poachers; we used to have 2 nights in bed and one out and work all day (no overtime). I used to carry an old 12 bore with blank cartridges at night and fire off at different parts of the woods scaring off vermin and poachers, snatch a couple of hours sleep in between times.

Of course there was the home to look after as well, but my sister Mary came over twice a week during this period of the year to keep the house straight. Then the Pheasant shooting – beating through the woods and hedgerows, getting the game home and laying it out for inspection by Lord Bolingbroke who was not able at that time to get about much. I have a little story here -

The game had been laid out ready then father said to me “Stop there and look after it until I come back.” When the doors opened and his Lordship stood there with the Housekeeper. He looked at me and said “Who are you.” I said, touching my cap, “Please Sir, I am Nathaniel” and he said “Harry’s Boy.” I said “Yes Sir.” He then told the Housekeeper to get me a piece of cake whilst he looked over the game. After he had gone father came back and seeing me munching cake, asked “Where did you get that?” and I told him, Then he said “What did the *Lord* say?” and I said he had asked me who I was and I replied “Please Sir, I am Nathaniel.” I then got a smack in the ear, lost my cake and was told that the next time he speaks to thee call he *My Lord* (so be it). I mentioned the Groom, Mr. Beasant, and one of his daily tasks was to pump water for the Baths and Offices and it took 800 strokes to do it. I was watching one day when Dad and Mr. Painter another keeper was there, when I heard this remark from Mr. Painter “I can’t make out what these people want to keep on bathing for – I haven’t had a bath for 20 years and I’ll warrant my skin is as white as theirs” (*nuff said*). When we had a bath at home we had it in the brook, a bit chilly at times but you got used to it. In Winter we managed in the old tin bath if we could manage to boil enough water on the wood fire.

Before I go any further I must mention a few personalities I remember. The Postman – Mr. Mark Morse – he came out from Swindon every day and went back in the evening. He had a very long round and when he retired it was reported in the “North Wilts Herald” that he had covered a distance equal to *9 times round the world*. He carried a Horn which he sounded as he was passing and we had to run if we wanted to fetch or send a letter. During the day he used to make and mend boots at Lydiard Millicent. Then there was Mr. Huggins the Vicarage Gardener – he had a trick of wagging his ears which used to amuse us. The Sexton was Mr. Jack Hunt, in Church we had to sit in front of him; during the singing of the last Hymn he used to send us youths out to harness the horses into the carriages and traps for the owners. He then came out and took the tips, perhaps giving us a few coppers for our trouble. Sometimes we tricked him and received the full tip ourselves. He would also get us up into the Belfry to help chime the bells and toll the single bell for Service. On one occasion there was a big Gypsy Wedding and there were a lot of people there in all kinds of Vehicles and Saddle Horses. I got quite a lot of coppers that day. They came out of Church, the bells rang, everyone was cheering and the Bridal Carriage went off at a full gallop with outriders down the hill past our house, followed by the remainder – hooraying. Never had we seen such excitement and the birds had a lovely feed off the rice that was scattered.

The next thing that stands out in my memory was the death of Lord Bolingbroke. I remember being taken by Father to see him in his coffin. His death caused quite a stir as nobody knew that he was married. There was a large number of mourners, our stables and yard were full with carriages. He was buried in the Family Vault at Lydiard Tregoz. After the Funeral we discovered that the Housekeeper, Miss Elizabeth Howard, was now Lady Bolingbroke having married Lord Bolingbroke at Bath. There was also an Heir – Vernon – about 3 years old. (Quite a to-do.)

My step-brother Edward (Ted) was made Estate Manager and lived at the House and I was made stable lad, etc. I'm afraid I was not a great success, insomuch, he smacked my face one day and I threw the Stubby Besom at him and cut his ear and that ended my stable career.

I then went to work for Mr. Turk at Wick Farm and duties varied according to season. I used to drive the milk wagon to Rushy Platt Station twice a day, help clean up the dairy, help Mrs. Turk to make butter, (an arm-aching job turning the churn) feeding and watering the calves, pigs and fowls, turning the cutter to cut up the Mangolds and the cruchser for cake (jobs galore). Help the Carter with his horses when ploughing with a young horse, he was a good Carter – you dare not hit one of his horses. I can remember him saying to Mr. Turn – “If you sells one of them hosses you sells I”. I liked the farm work but it was long hours. I was sent with Mr. Welch to Avebury with two two-horsed wagons to fetch some straw and it was a bit tricky coming back down Broad Town Hill but we got home safely. On another occasion I went with the Carter with 2 wagons loaded with mangolds to Stratton, and going through Westcott Place, Swindon, a few housewives started taking some. The old Carter told them they were only cattle food but they did not care. He said that they would know all about it tomorrow if they ate them and we didn't lose many.

One other event – Mr. Welch and I were sent with a Bull to Wootton Bassett Market. Mr. Welch had a rod attached to the ring in its nose and I had a rope on the same ring. All went well until we were passing a farm on the Bassett road, there was a herd of cows just over the hedgerow bawling away, of course our Bull wanted to get among them and he tossed and pulled us all over the place until we got some help from another Farmer. The Bull was made fast in a shed and I was sent running back for more help. I don't remember what happened after that. Haymaking, walking up and down with the Haytusser and Hayrake, pitching hay on to the wagons, carting it to the stackyards, helping to make the ricks; then came corn and root harvest, jobs endless. But I had a piece of bad luck in coming away from Rushy Platt with my milk cart, my horse was scared by some children, he swerved up the bank and overturned. I pitched in the road and was stunned, the trap upside down, horse on his back – shaft broad – not much. A crowd soon arrived and put cart upright, got the horse up and put him in the shafts and we went back to the farm though I don't remember how. The Doctor came and doctored my face a bit and got the dust and gravel out. But I lost my job and unfortunately the horse died shortly afterwards and they said it was my fault.

So now my father sent me to Mr. Giddings at Lydiard Millicent to be an apprentice blacksmith, one month on probation and 2/6d per week. I was just an odd job lad, painting farm machinery, chopping and sawing wood, helping in the carpenter's shop drilling a few holes in some metal – not much time with the blacksmith. Then he put me on digging his allotment, so when my month was up I asked father to take me away and he did.

My sister Mary was staying with us now; her husband had been called up for service for the South African War so home life was better now for father and me. My step-brother Ted had taken over Flaxlands Farm so I went there to help at 8/- per week, the most I had been given up to now. Father gave me a shilling a week pocket money (riches). There was plenty to do, I had to be there at 6 a.m. 3 miles from our house and I got home at about 6.30 p.m. not much time for fun. I had to help with milking (by hand) then feeding cattle, cleaning up the Dairy and utensils, pumping water, etc. The other workers were Mr. George Leighfield and his son Fred; Mr. Norman Hitchcock was the Manager. I forget how many cows we had, but our milk went to the station once a day, driven by Fred, until one Saturday the milk had to go to Rushey Platt and Fred refused to take it, so I was ordered to do it. I did not get back to the farm until 8 p.m. Of course, I was very late home which father didn't like, and after some hearty talk I left.

I was not out many days and went to work for Mr. Plummer, Farmer at the bottom of the village of Lydiard Millicent. He was a good man to work for. I used to take the milk to Purton Stoke Station at first, then to the milk factory at Purton Stoke. Mrs. Plummer used to give me something warm each dinner time and I could have as much milk as I could drink. There were the usual farm jobs to do, but no slave driving. But I wanted more money – 8/- wasn't much.

Just at that time repairs were being started at Lydiard Tregoz Rectory (Vicar I think was the Rev. Jones), by Tydeman, Builders of Swindon, so I went and saw the foreman and he took me on @ 2 ½d per hour – 58 hours per week which gave me a bit more money, but my golly I did have to work. I was the plasterer's labourer to a big burly fellow called Mr. Blacker, he kept me on the run all day and I had to mix my own mortar and beat up the *Horse Hair* to mix with it, but it was interesting and I was doing something different and hearing different talk. I don't know how long it lasted, then they started the house where Mr. Bernard Wheeler lives at Lydiard Millicent. I went there and stayed until it was finished, @ 4d per hour for some time and then the other labourer left so they gave me 6d per hour. I was now rich and able to buy some decent clothes, etc., and the house was finished – it is still there.

So now I was looking for a job and got one with a Mr. Matthews going round selling vegetables, etc., with him. I learnt a few tricks on that job too, we used to sell potatoes by measure – so you didn't shake the measure when putting the potatoes in (nuff said).

Lydiard Millicent had a brass band – Conductor was Mr. Giddings, he got several of us youths together and lent us instruments. I had a Cornet but forgot the remainder although I believe one was Wilf Parsons. We used to make an awful row practising the Scales and father would not let me play anywhere near the house, so it soon fizzled out.

Some of the residents of Lydiard Millicent I remember. There was Mr. James Sadler J.P., Col. Tetley, Mr. Wheeler, Carpenter, etc. of the Butts. I think he made the Pulpit for the Church and carved his initials on it, Mr. Drew was schoolmaster and he went to Purton afterwards. I can't remember the Vicar's name. William and Bernard Wheeler used to play the handbells, fiddle, banjo and piano. Nellie Wheeler used to play the organ. Mr. Newman was Postman, Bill Clark of the Penetrating Voice, Parsons was Shopkeeper and Baker etc., and Mr. Worsley. Mr. John Rudler was the Landlord the 'Rising Sun' and Milly Rudler was his daughter. Many tales have been told and much liquor drank under the old trees at the back, screened by the Laurel Bushes, but they are not there now. As a young boy I often went there with Father and also carried many a quart when dad couldn't get there (4d per qt. those days). Mr. Morse & Son lived at Holborn. They used to do the mowing by scythe and reaping with the sickle, thatching, hedging and ditching – all contract work. They were big dour fellows. I can think of others who lived here. There were the Hazells at the Dower House Farm at the bottom of Park Copse. The Constable of that area was Mr. Robinson of Hood and he used to meet Dad sometimes and have a chat, but I was not included.

A little way along the road we come to the place called Shaw, at one time famous for its Nine Elms (the story I forget) but Mr. Carter, Baker and Confectioner, built a hotel there hoping to attract a trade. Swindon developed the wrong way and it was just a straggling village. There is not much I can say about it.

I now got a job in the G.W.R. Factory in the Paint Shop @ 16/- per week and it was a nasty dirty job mixing paints in great tanks by hand; the smell was awful especially in the mornings when the store opened. One thing I learnt there was that roof slates were crushed and used to make paint for the first coat on new wood. I used to work in the crushing shed during the dinner hour (extra pay). I was given a job to rub down some ochres which had gone lumpy, and I got smothered with yellow dust. I told the Chargehand about it and we had a few words, so I had to leave. I had spent six weeks there and if I had stopped longer I would have been ill.

So now I went and joined the 3rd Battalion Wiltshire Regt. (Militia) and did 6 weeks training at Devizes Barracks – what a life! But after a few days I liked it. I had a weekend pass and walked as far as Calne, then caught a train to Wootton Bassett and walked to Lydiard Millicent. When my brother William of the Butts saw me he said I was the funniest looking 'B' Soldier he had ever seen. I did three lots of training at Bulford and Devizes.

I now had a job with the Outside Works Dept. G.W.R., who were putting a water main in from Swindon to Kemble alongside the railway track. So I went to live with my sister at Purton. My stepbrother Tom's wife was looking after Father at the Brook. I liked the job and the navvies helped me quite a bit, they were a robust lot of fellows. It was coming on for Winter and a shelter had to be put up for the men for meal times, etc., and bogies (fires) to warm tea, etc. I was told to look after the shelter and the fires and to do a bit in the trench as well. Everything was going fine. I had to fetch water and milk for the men from the Farmhouses, make tea and warm up food, boil eggs, etc., for which I used to get a few odd pence from the men. One morning the Chargeman came along and said "We'll have the bogie inside this morning." They were already alight so he levelled off a patch and we carried it in. It was alright for a time when all of a sudden it tipped over and the coke ran against the tarpaulin cover and it went up in flames with the men's coats, food and everything inside. I saved as much as I could but that wasn't much; the language was awful and I had an uncomfortable time for a bit. The chargeman took the blame, but the men still blamed me. I stayed with them for about a week longer, then asked the foreman if he could get me a job in the Rolling Mills, which he did.

I went to see Mr. Wylde and Mr. Harris and was taken on – so to the Rolling Mills as a general labourer doing all sorts of jobs with another older man to show me how to keep out of danger. In those days it was very dangerous white hot metal all over the place being Rolled and Hammered into shapes, sparks flying. They could hit very hard if you got in the way. After about a fortnight I was given the job of supplying the furnaces with sand to remake the furnace after each heat (about 6 per shift). My gosh I had to get a move on to keep them going. In between times I had to move a big solid mass called a cinder which was formed from the liquid metal. It weighed about 2 cwts. and I had to use a trolley with a hook at the end which fitted into a link in the Clinker and move it very gently to the cooling platform. Two of us labourers were moving a very heavy one, one day, when it broke. My Pal broke his arm and I tore out my thumb and finger nails, that was very sharp. We were rushed off to the G.W.R. Hospital for treatment. I was on the sick list and full pay for 6 weeks. I then got put to sifting steel filings for the Puddling Furnaces. There were 2½ cwts. put in the furnace each heat and it used to come out in a huge ball, taken to the big hammer and knocked into shape and my, didn't the sparks fly. The Hammer Men used protective clothing – metal leggings and wire masks – they looked awful. I had to keep two furnaces supplied with enough for day and night. Another job I got was assistant at a furnace where old metal such as bolts, nuts, pieces of metal, rails and wheels were made up into piles of about 2½ cwts. and put into the furnace on a 'Slice' like a baker uses. I had to build 21 piles per shift and when they were heated take them to the hammer to be shaped up. One week I worked days and one week I worked nights. It was very well paid for those days, but we were constantly buying new clothes and boots. When doing ordinary labouring work you might be called on to do an extra shift to take the place of an absentee. Then there was the changing of the Rolls, Hammer Blocks, and Anvils. Piling up made metal is dangerous work for the unwary.

I used to travel to and from Purton by train @ 2/- per month. Well I won't bore you with any more details but there are many.

I was in there about 2½ to 3 years – my longest job and the pay was not bad and you had a set job most of the time without being bothered by chargehands etc. I met a lot of fellows from different parts of the country – Welsh, Irish and North of Englander and made quite a few pals. But I wanted a change. I had always wanted to see more as I had never been far from home. So I went to see Sergt. Loveday, the Recruiting Sergeant for the Royal Marines and joined up on the 8th December, 1904, age 19 years 3 months and 23 days, but this is another story.

Looking through this I haven't mentioned much fun. Well, I had my share of the Village Sport, etc., and we had to make our own fun in those days and pay for it. I used to play Football for Purton when they wanted to make up the Team. As Billy Shurey said, "He's not much good – but he fills up a gap". (Great praise.) I also played Cricket once on Purton's Cricket Ground (great honour), and if anything was on I managed to get in, and all games which young fellows get up to. Fox Hunting was fun too when we could manage it, but we didn't have much time for leisure, only Saturday afternoons and Sundays. If we wanted to go anywhere you walked so you had to use your legs.

Now I have not said much about Father in this last part. I used to go over very often to see him and we would have a walk round together and perhaps have a drink at John's under the Tree. But there were not so many people on the Estate now and I know that Father missed the old days when game was plentiful and there was more activity. Sunday evenings Mary, Albert and I often went over to Lydiard Millicent and met Dad and William for a chat and refreshment. Our walk back to Purton pushing the perambulator was sometimes a bit *hazardous*.

Looking through this tale I have missed out two farms, Brook Farm, farmed by the Misses Badcock – one worker I remember was a Mr. Bowler. Then there was the Home Farm, farmed by Mr. Kinchin whose workers I don't remember. There was another Estate Underkeeper and General man, Mr. James Love, who lived at Hook – a great old fellow full of fun and jokes. He used to call me Natty and I hated it.

Now there are others who I can't place so I hope they will not be offended and I hope none of those who are still with us will mind me mentioning them. So now I close this narrative with best wishes to all in the areas I have mentioned. I had a lot of fun there and made lots of friends.

So – Cheerio everyone from 'Old Nat' who is now anchored at ;-

13, Emma's Crescent
St. Margarets, Ware, Herts.

8th June, 1966

(See further note in the Postscript to this *Report*.)

Henry St. John The Elder And the Estcourt Murder

By F. T. Smallwood, M.A., F.S.A.

Henry St. John the elder, 4th Baronet (1708), 1st Viscount St. John (1716), receives fairly frequent mention in the writings of historians, mainly because he was the father of Henry St. John the younger, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke (1712), but also because he was involved in the much-discussed death of Sir William Estcourt in 1684. Nevertheless the information about him is not voluminous, inaccuracies and misinterpretations abound, and the significance of certain incidents has not been appreciated. Moreover, although the murder has been discussed at some length in several places, no writer appears to have presented all the available evidence. In spite of some unanswered questions, the present article provides a fuller assembly of material than any other known to the writer.

Pedigree

Henry St. John, eldest son of Sir Walter St. John, 3rd Baronet, was christened at St. Mary's, Battersea, on 17th October, 1652. His family claimed to be able to show its descent in the male line from Conquest times, though whether any St. John actually entered England with the Conqueror is not established, and the claim that one of them took part in the Conquest of South Wales under Rufus – as is freely stated – is now discredited. Henry belonged to the younger branch of the family, which had been settled at Lydiard Tregoz in Wiltshire since the middle of the fifteenth century. In 1627 a wealthy member of this branch, Oliver St. John, 1st Viscount Grandison, who had already been Batterseas's leading parishioner since 1593, had purchased the manor of Battersea with Wandsworth from the Crown and had settled it on his nephew Sir John St. John, 1st Baronet. Hence the presence of the St. Johns in the Battersea Manor House till 1763. Through his mother Henry was connected with the elder (i.e. Bletso) branch of the family, for she was Johanna, the eldest daughter of Oliver St. John, Hampden's counsel in the Ship-money trial (1637), Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (1648-60), Chancellor of the University of Cambridge (1651-60), and special envoy to the United Netherlands (1651). The whole family was proud of its kinship with all the English sovereigns from Henry VII, but the Wiltshire branch could boast of a double kinship with Queen Elizabeth I.

Education

When Henry was admitted to Gonville and Caius College as a fellow-commoner on 29th May, 1668, the entry recorded that he had been at Eton for seven years under Mr. Mountague. His career at Cambridge was short. Very soon he had migrated to St. John's College, which was not very unusual, for undergraduates were not necessarily closely tied to Colleges. But in the spring of 1669 Cosmo de Medici, Prince of Tuscany, visited Charles II at Newmarket and was about to pass through Cambridge on his return journey. The King therefore wrote to the Vice-Chancellor and Senate calling on the University to mark the event by conferring degrees on the Prince and members of his suite and in other appropriate ways. On Saturday, 1st May, the Corporation and the University rose to the occasion with addresses of welcome, a degree congregation, a Philosophy Act, a "musical divertissement" in King's College Chapel, and a dramatic presentation. The Prince himself did not accept a degree, but two or three members of his suite became Doctors of Laws, and twenty fellow-commoners, including young St. John of St. John's, were admitted M.A. (The Prince left on the Sunday morning.) The University's description of such degrees was "per literas regias". Why this boy of not yet seventeen was thus chosen after less than one year in the University is not explained. Admittedly his maternal grandfather had been Chancellor during the Interregnum, but that would not have been much of a recommendation nine years after the Restoration. At the Restoration he had succeeded in exculpating himself from a measure of responsibility for the death of Charles I, but in 1662 he left England and was at this time – and indeed till his death in 1673 – living abroad.

Forthwith, on 13th July, 1669, this sixteen-year-old Cambridge M.A. was incorporated at Oxford. What use he made of his membership of that University is not known, but the fact seems to provide the explanation of a curious mistake in Venn and in Foster, for these writers confer on him the honorary D.C.L. that Oxford conferred on his son in 1702. There is no evidence that Henry followed various uncles and other St. Johns to one of the Inns of Court.

First Marriage

Nothing more seems to be on record about young Henry till the summer of 1673, when he went a-courting. The chosen lady was Lady Mary Rich, the second of the three orphan daughters of Robert Rich, 3rd Earl of Warwick. The home of the family was at Leighs, Essex, but they had a town house in High Holborn. (The name of Warwick Court commemorates the fact.) The lady's grandfather, the 2nd Earl, had rendered invaluable service to the Parliamentary side by securing the navy for Parliament on the outbreak of the Civil War. The head of the Bletso St. Johns – Oliver, 1st Earl of Bolingbroke – and his elder son were prominent on the same side; so was Sir Walter from about 1650. Moreover, the St. John manor of Hatfield Peverel was not far from Leighs. The fact that the two families held neighbouring properties and were of the same political complexion may have had something to do with the choice.

On his death-bed the 3rd Earl had committed the three young girls to the care of his brother Charles, who succeeded as 4th Earl; and Charles's wife Mary, born Boyle, brought them up with the care of a mother. Details of the courtship may be extracted from the copious diary kept by the Countess. This very devout lady maintained a full record of her devotions, but mundane affairs sometimes interfered and earned the gratitude of the historian. The volumes are now at the British Museum.

Young St. John first addressed himself to the two guardians and soon obtained their approval provided, of course, that he could obtain the consent of the Lady Mary. This approval is important, for the Countess considered herself a judge of character. The eldest niece was already married to a Barrington, and the wooing of the youngest began at about the same time as Henry's courtship of Mary. In this latter connection the Countess wrote in her Autobiography :

“I had taken a resolution that no fortune though the greatest in the Kingdom should be offered me should be accepted where the young man was not sober, which made me instantly give flat denials to all the above named proposals – but afterwards I had from my Lord Keeper Finch a match proposed for his Son Mr Daniell Finch.”

The devoted aunt evidently had not such doubts about young St. John, and Lady Mary soon consented. The aunt and the two younger nieces then came to London, and the Countess and Lady Mary called on Sir Walter and Dame Johanna at the Battersea Manor House. Afterwards Sir Walter and Lady St. John went to Leighs to negotiate the marriage settlement. In the middle of the discussions the Earl of Warwick died, and the Countess had to complete the negotiations, arrange the wedding, and execute her husband's will alone, for her only son had died. (The execution of the will proved to be very bothersome, and eventually the Dowager Countess had to obtain an Act of Parliament enabling her to proceed.) But eventually the wedding was held at Leighs on 11th December, 1673, and the Countess recorded in her Autobiography her satisfaction,

“because it was a very orderly and realidgious famely, and ther was a very good estate, and the young gentellman she mared Mr Henry St Johns was very good natured and viceless and his Good father and Mother --- were very eminent for owneing and practiseing of Realidgeon.”

And when the youngest niece was married to Daniel Finch some six months later the Countess similarly recorded her “long deasired satisfaction of seeing the 3 young Ladyes --- mared to three young persones who are free from the raineing vices of these loose and profane times.” (Incidentally, the Countess went to Court on two occasions to wait on the Queen, and afterwards recorded herself as being more confirmed in her opinion “of the hapiness of being out of it.”)

Lady Mary sat for her portrait at least twice – to Sir Peter Lely (the original was in 1966 in private hands in Lisbon) and with her sister Lady Anne Barrington to Henri Gascar. The original of the latter cannot now be located, but a mezzotint, possibly by Gascar himself, is preserved at the British Museum. But from one point of view the marriage was most unhappy. The bride had a miscarriage early in 1674; three young children – Mary and two Walters – were buried in Battersea in 1675 and 1677; and the mother herself was buried at Lydiard Tregoz on 2nd October, 1678, eight days before the fourth child, the future 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, was christened at Battersea.

Place of Residence

The three burials and the ‘christening at Battersea seem to have been taken as evidence that the young couple resided with Sir Walter and Dame Johanna in the Battersea Manor House. But the conclusion does not attach sufficient importance to the following facts :

(1) In 1673, in view of the approaching marriage, Sir Walter settled Lydiard Tregoz on his eldest son Henry; the aunt’s diary, as long as it continues, has frequent references to the presence of the young couple, particularly the wife, at Lydiard; and the wife was buried there.

(2) There are evidences in the Diary of the presence of the young people at Warwick House, High Holborn, at Leighs, and at a town house of their own, but not at Battersea.

(3) A letter to Daniel Finch in June 1674 contains the only known reference to Lady Mary’s presence in Battersea during her marriage.

(4) Henry St. John was assessed for poor-rate on a house in Bury Street, St James’s, from 1676.

(5) The first child was born in Warwick House, was christened at St. Andrew’s, Holborn, and died in Warwick House. The third child was christened at St Martin’s in the Fields

(6) Four infant children of the Earl and Countess of Lichfield were buried at Battersea – though they had been born elsewhere – doubtless because both parents were of St John. descent. The burial of young children at Battersea does not prove that the parents resided there. The existence of a family vault there is more relevant.

Consequently the plausible deduction from the Battersea entries is very suspect. Nevertheless it is pretty certain that the motherless infant was brought from Lydiard Tregoz, where he had been born and where his mother had died and been buried, to Battersea to be looked after by his grandmother. There were at least five youthful uncles and three aunts – two of them young – to help, and perhaps to spoil the child.

Early Interests

The movements of the widowed father in the next few years are not well documented. Whether he maintained the house in Bury Street is not clear, though some of the facts to be recorded would support such a surmise. Evidently he was keen on horses, for in 1679 Henry Savile, writing from Paris on 16th April to the Earl of Rochester – John Wilmot, the 2nd Earl, was Henry's first cousin; his death in 1680 will be mentioned later – said :

“Our friend Mr. St. Johns with all his steeds is still at St. Denis in order to the fatning his horses for sayle, so that it may be hoped by that time they are disposed of, hee will not upon the whole matter be above fifty pounds a looser by the expedition --- I have been asked already if, besides not speaking the language hee bee not un peu fol.”

Further evidence occurs a year or so later. In July 1680 the Daniel Finch already mentioned, writing to his wife, said, “My bro. (i.e. brother-in-law) St. John has bin at Bath and will be tomorrow at Tunbridge with his chariott and six Flanders horses and all things suitable thereunto so that he will be the chief spark there.” The killing of Estcourt four years later arose out of a discussion of horses.

In the late summer of 1679 he was elected to the Parliament that Charles II prorogued seven times in order to prevent discussion of a bill for the exclusion of James from the succession, and he was in fact a member, generally for Wootton Bassett, of all the seven Parliaments that existed from then till the end of 1700. Apparently he was present in the Parliament that met for a tumultuous week at Oxford in March 1681 – Sir Walter was also a member, but whether he was present is not clearly recorded – for he appointed to serve on two Committees of the House; and in November 1683 he became one of twenty – three Deputy Lientenants for Wiltshire. Whether he was really interested in public life cannot be said. One evidence that will be recorded later suggests that he was not.

The Estcourt Case

The autumn of 1684 bring us to the most notorious incident in Henry St. Johns career, namely his part in the death of Sir William Estcourt. The three principals were members of eminent Wiltshire families, and had also been members of the Parliament that met at Oxford in March 1681. (For the last four years of his reign Charles II governed without a Parliament.) The King himself, Prince George of Denmark (the husband of Princess, later Queen, Anne), the Duchess of Cleveland (i.e. Barbara Villiers, Mrs Palmer, Lady Castlemaine – a second cousin of Henry St. John's), Nell Gwynn, the Duchess of Portsmouth (i.e. Louise de Kerouaille, popularly anglicized as “Madame Carwell”), Judge Jeffreys, and four ex-Members of the House of Commons, figure in the story.

Apart from the meagre, official Gazette and The Observer, which appeared four days a week to discuss the Popish Plot, there were no newspapers, but diarists and writers of newsletters recorded facts and hearsay, and two bishops afterwards discussed the constitutional and moral issues involved. Genealogists dealing with his son Viscount Bolingbroke have had to mention the case. But even such an eminent work as G.E.C. Complete Peerage, 2nd Edition, gives October as the month of this November incident and quotes from Burnet a sentence that is clearly contradicted by the records of the Court at the London Guildhall. In October 1869 G.A.H. writing in Notes and Queries wanted “to see the report of the coroner’s inquest and that of the trial”, but did not report that he had found them, although they survive. Such printed discussions as have appeared have only added to the contradictions. Perhaps most significant of all, a full narrative of the quarrel printed between the inquest and the end of the month – a specimen of which survives at the Bodleian Library – does not appear to have been laid under contribution. A full presentation of the evidences seems therefore to be justified.

The Principals

The victim, Sir William Estcourt (Hescot, Escott, Heathcote, Escourt), 3rd and last Baronet, was head of a Wiltshire family that had its seat at Newton, near Salisbury. He had been returned to Parliament in March and again in October, 1679, and in March 1680/1 as Burgess for Malmesbury, serving on several Committees of the House, and he had recently been foreman of the jury at the trial of Edward Nosworthy, a fact that two writers have associated with the murder in an entirely unconvincing way.

Colonel Edmund Richmond–Web, who shared the killing with Henry St. John, was certainly a third cousin of Henry’s; and a claim has been made that he traced double descent from the St. Johns in accordance with the following pedigree :

(family tree to be inserted here, page 27)

This view is clearly set out in a Webb pedigree, and is accepted by H.I. Richmond. But the Nicholas documents show that Jane St. John and her husband Robert Nicholas had a daughter Elizabeth, who married Sir John Henbury, but not Colonel John Richmond-Webb. It is, however, clearly on record that Major Edward “was in arms against Parliament and was slain”, a fact that was introduced in a garbled version into the discussion at the Old Bailey. The children of Col. Edmund, who was born in 1639, included John, well known to students of Marlborough’s wars and to readers of Thackeray’s *Esmond*, and a daughter Grace, who married into the Huguenot Devischer family, prominent residents in Battersea. Webb had been a member for Cricklade in the three Parliaments in which Estcourt served, and represented the same constituency in three later Parliaments. St. John has already been sufficiently identified; but the fact should be recorded that Francis Stonehouse, who figured prominently in the proposal that led to the discussion that led to the quarrel that led to the killing, had been a member for Great Bedwyn in the two Parliaments that were elected in 1679.

The Incident

The record “printed for L.C.” between the inquest and the trial and preserved at the Bodleian Library gives

A SAD

AND

LAMENTABLE ACCOUNT

OF A

Barbarous and Bloody – Murther, Committed upon the BODY

Of

Sir William Hescot,
KNIGHT

and provides the fullest available narrative of the incident.

“On Fryday the 14th of Novemb. instant, in the Evening Sir William Hescot, a Wiltshire Gentleman of known worth and reputation, going to the Devil Tavern near Temple-Bar, to drink with divers Persons, after having stayed there for some time, one of the Company desired him to go to the Globe Tavern near Shooe-lane, telling him, and the rest of the Company, that he could Command there a Glass of good Wine; which offer, after some difficulty being embraced by the deceased, and those that were present, they came there about Ten at Night, and being shewed up one pair of stairs, after some bottles drinking, and a general recommendation of the Wine, it becoming late and the Company increasing, Sir William was not over

desirous to stay, yet upon some importunity became so unfortunate, as not to follow his own inclinations, till at length disputes arose about Racing and Setting, or who had the best Horses or Dogs capable of imploy on that occasion, the principal discourse being between Sir William Hescot, and Henry St Johns Esq; who came with him from the first mentioned Tavern to the latter, and some Wagers were proposed in order to a Tryal of Racing, but it came to no result, for Colonel Web, another of the Company backing or taking Mr. St. Johns part, and the whole Company which consisted of Nine Persons, being divided in opinions, as to the Wager, hot words arose between the deceased, and Mr. St. Johns the latter telling the former he was an Ass, and that he had to Horse capable of running an Hundred pound Wager, which was the Wager that had been proposed, to which Sir William as roughly replying, and returning the word Fool, threatening Language on both sides insued, so that by flinging of Bottles and Pipes the House was Alarumed, and the scuffle growing hot, the Drawer run up, where he found Mr. St. Johns with his Sword drawn, as likewise divers other Swords, and that Sir William Hescot was relieved in much disorder to the Window, supposed to be Wounded, which afterwards appeared no less; whereupon the Watch being called, came into the Room, where the Constable of the Night commanded the Kings Peace, and thereupon the Swords were put up and delivered into his Hands, the Parties surrendering themselves, at what time order was taken to search Sir William, who after some staggering and reeling against the Chaires, was fallen on the flore, when upon opening his Cloaths the Blood in abundance issued forth, so that the Chirurgeons that were sent for, in vain used their endeavours to save his Life; for having declared himself a dead Man, and intimated as well as he could by what hand he fell, as likewise, with his Eyes lifted up, desired as it were mercy for his Soul, he fainted away, and although he breathed for the space of an hour or more, yet he could not be brought back to speak or give any other Signs of Life --- “

The use of the word “instant” at the beginning of the narrative indicates that the Account was published within about a fortnight of the incident.

ADDENDA

Very recently a broadside “Printed by E.Mallet” during the same fortnight and entitled

Strange and Bloody News from Fleet-Street Being a True Relation of the Murder of Sr. William Estcourt --- has come to light in Guildhall Library – Press mark B’ side 25.23. In the main the narrative agrees with *A Sad and Lamentable Account ---*. It confirms, for instance, that the argument arose about horse racing and that the Noseworthy jurymen were drawn from Wiltshire; but it adds that the Noseworthy trial had been held at Westminster, and that in the scuffle “the Candles were tumbled down”; it explains that Estcourt’s hand “was cut as is supposed by his taking hold on his Adversaries Sword who drew it threw (i.e. through) his hand”; and it concludes with the information that Estcourt “was contracted, and suddenly design’d Espousals with a young Lady of Eminent Fortune and Quality, whose sorrow is no less immoderate than her love was faithful, and affection constant.”

The broadside claims, however, that “The occasion of this misfortune was not from any heats of Wine, for the Company were all very sober, and all of them persons who are not easily either prevailed upon by any Intemperance, or in the least guilty of it; but the violence of passion does often force us upon those Actions, which a more mature & sedate Temper would both avoid and abhor.”

After the trial a month later, two reports were printed. The one, “Printed by E. Redmayne for R. Turner” and issued with the authority of the Lord Mayor, while agreeing in the main is sufficiently different in some details to justify quotation :

“--- Esq; St. Johns together with Edmund Webb, Sir WilliamHescot, and divers other persons coming to the Globe Tavern, somewhat late in the evening, after the Drinking several Bottles of Claret, a discourse arose in the Company about leaping Horses, being first started between Esq; St. Johns and one Mr Stonehouse, but long it lasted not, e’re upon that occasion Sir William Hescot urged that it was unfair since Esq; St. Johns had Twenty Horses in his Stable, and Mr Stonehouse but a few, which causing further Argument, Esq; St. Johns told him that all he had above six were Asses &c.

Whereupon the word Fool being returned a Bottle was thrown by Esquire St. Johns, and he pursuing the throw drew his sword, which Sir William observing made his retreat, but soon after being Wounded, he fell upon which Esq; St. Johns struck him several blows, and in approbrious Language, bid him beg his pardon, or ask his Life, it was likewise sworn, that upon Esq. St. Johns rising, Mr. Webb followed him, having his Sword likewise drawn, the which, as also his Cravat was afterward found Bloody and that notwithstanding, the endeavour of the other Persons present, so sudden was the mischief, that Sir William having received a mortal Wound in his Belly; as likewise three others in his Groin, and his hand much cut, he instantly dyed.”

Of the other report “Printed by E. Mallet” the copy preserved at the British Museum was destroyed by one of Hitler’s bombs, and no other specimen has as yet been traced. According to a writer in *Notes and Queries*, 23rd January, 1932, it gave “a slightly more circumstantial account of the affair” and ended :

“After this murder was committed, Mr. St. John and Colonel Web went down to the bar and call’d for a bottle of sack, where they drank it with their swords in their hands. When the constables came in they demanded their swords, chargeing them with the murder; to whom, after some passionate expressions, they submitted. In fine, the jury brought them both in guilty of murder.”

Corroboration of certain details is provided by a news-letter dated 13th December, 1684, and preserved at Longleat.

“The evidence against Mr. St. John was that he calling Sr Wm Estcourt “Asse” and Sr W^m replying “You are a fool” St John threw a bottle at Sr W^m, and immediately followed it with his sword (as Sir W^m sat in his chair unarmed) and after he had wounded him, cuft his face with his fist saying “Beg my pardon” several times; wh. Sr W^m took patiently; and replied nothing, being mortally wounded in the belly.”

Quite clearly the gentlemen had been drinking – claret, in fact. In an argument about a proposed match between “leaping horses” – apparently a point-to-point or steeplechase for a \$100 wager – St. John used the word “asses” as a description of some of his own horses. Estcourt evidently took the word as having been applied to himself by St. John – they were typsy; in retort Estcourt called St. John a fool, and in the ensuing affray St. John was far more aggressive than Webb.

Against this background of contemporary, detailed, reasonably congruent, and semi-official narrative the following variants may be recorded. (The contribution of Gilbert Burnet, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, will be discussed in

detail later.) In *Notes and Queries*, 2nd October, 1869, G.A.H. wrote

“I want to know the details of a duel fought in 1685 (36 Charles II) between Henry St John of Battersea, father of the great Lord Bolingbroke, and a Gloucestershire gentleman named Escott, whom he slew. It was in fact an atrocious homicide, since two principals stood their trial for killing this one man. There were more than three combatants, notwithstanding Burnet’s statement, and two men were left dead. [Then follows a mention of the “fourth man, whom tradition says was a Paston.”] I want to see the report of the coroner’s inquest and that of the trial, which would reveal the names of all concerned, which I am anxious about.

The whole party were at a “great public supper” at a tavern, and one refusing a health, St. John drew his rapier, and sallied out into the street, where they fought in a melee.”

The name Paston may be a garbled rendering of Perton or Purton, the home of one of the gentlemen present. The “great public supper” seems to come from Burnet – see later. The reference to a duel may be in some way connected with the expression “Col. Edmond Webb the duelist” quoted by H.I. Richmond, the source of which the present writer has not found. G.A.H. is alone in saying that two men were left dead.

G.A.H. was presumably the Mr G.A. Hansard who, “writing to Mr Cunnington in 1869” provided material for a Short Note by W. Cunnington in the *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine* June 1897. Hansard had written :

“Bp. Burnet mentions the affair, vol.2, p.600 – but not with perfect correctness; oral tradition supplied a different version. The circumstances are as follows : on the morning of the 20th Dec., 1684, Mr Henry St. John son of Sir Walter St. John, of Battersea [and Lydiard Tregoz], and father of Lord Bolingbroke, Secretary of State to Queen Anne, being at a Wiltshire County Club with Edmond Webb, Sir William Estcourt, Roland St. John and Michael Styles, a quarrel arose about the drinking a Republican health proposed by one of the company but declined by Sir William Estcourt – eventually, tradition says, the whole party sallied out into the street and a melee combat ensued, in which Sir William was mortally stabbed, either by St. John or Webb.”

One would like to know the history and credentials of an oral tradition that waited from 1684 to 1869 before being committed to writing. Roland St. John, Michael Styles, and the Republican health will be discussed later. For the present it may be noted that the “tradition” postpones the incident from the evening of Friday,

14th November, to the morning of Saturday, 20th December, a week after the accused men had, in fact, been sentenced to death (admittedly the Redmayne-Turner Proceedings also gives an incorrect date – 14th October), is unsupported by contemporary evidence in its mention of a Wiltshire County Club, though at least seven of the nine gentlemen present came of Wiltshire families, and transfers the combat from an upstairs room to the open street.

The Coroner's Inquest

Presumably all the eight gentlemen who were present were held in custody till after the Coroner's inquest, which was held the next day. The lengthy official record, written in Latin and preserved at Guildhall, names Edward Smyth, the coroner, and sixteen jurymen, and on the back is a list of nine, perhaps ten, men who were probably witnesses. St. John and Webb are both described as late of London – which has some relevance to St. John's place of residence, for Battersea would not be described as "London". The time of the incident is given as about 11 o'clock at night. Not having God before their eyes, but moved and seduced by diabolical instigation St. John, with a sword made of iron and steel in his hand, did "violenter felonice voluntarie et ex malitia sua precogitata" drive the aforesaid sword into the right part of the belly of Estcourt near the navel making a mortal wound a quarter of an inch wide and three inches deep, of which wound Estcourt instantly died, and Webb was present abetting, helping, comforting, and maintaining St. John in the aforesaid felony and murder "felonice voluntarie et ex malitia sua precogitata". The jurors therefore say upon their oath that St. John and Webb did "felonice voluntarie et ex malitiis suis precogitatis" kill and murder Estcourt, contrary to the peace of our Lord the King his crown and dignity. The record ends with the statement that as far as the jurors know St. John and Webb have no goods or chattels lands or tenements in London or elsewhere. (As a murderer's possessions were forfeit to the Crown there is probably an element of unreality in this statement, which is, however, hedged by the words as far as they know – "ad noticiam eorundem juratorum".)

By way of supplementary detail the *Sad and Lamentable Account* declares that the wound was six inches long, that there were three others in the groin, that the right hand was slit between the forefinger and thumb, and that the middle finger was almost cut off. St. John as Principal and Webb as Accessory were committed to Newgate: there is no mention of bail. The other six gentlemen – John Stoakes of Hatton Garden, William Yorke and Benedict Browne of the Inner Temple, Nevile Maskalyne of Perton, Wilts., Francis Stonehouse of Great Bedwin, Wilts., and Walter Grubb of Potterne, Wilts. – were bound over in very heavy penalties to appear at the next Sessions at the Old Bailey, and were released. In addition to his own recognizance of \$2,000 Walter Grubb, for instance, found three sureties of \$1,000 each.

The next stage in the official proceedings was that the two most material witnesses for the prosecution appeared before the Grand Jury and repeated –

possibly in an abbreviated form – the evidence that they had given at the Coroner’s Inquest. On this evidence the Grand Jury found a “true bill”, and two further indictments were therefore made against St. John and Webb separately in identical terms – that he “felonice et in furore animi sui Interfecit et occidit Estcourt contra pacem Domini Regis — et Dignitates suas” and against the form of the statute in that case made and provided. All was now set for the trial at the Old Bailey, with two charges – murder and manslaughter – against each prisoner.

Wire-pulling

The “King’s Commissions of the Peace, Oyer and Terminer, and Goal-delivery [sic] of Newgate, held for the City of London, and County of Middlesex, at Justice-Hall, in the Old Bayly” – to quote the full title as given in the Redmayne-Turner *Proceedings* – began on Wednesday, 10th December, and lasted four days. The Estcourt case was taken on the second day. But in the intervening weeks wires had been pulled – or were later said to have been pulled – behind the scenes. According to Burnet “the young gentleman [St. John] was prevailed upon to confess the indictment and to let sentence pass upon him for murder, a pardon being promised him if he should do so, and he was threatened with the utmost rigour of the Law, if he stood upon his defence.” The statement has been repeated by Lady Hopkinson, and the circumstantial narrative written by G.A.Hansard in 1869 and used by W.Cunnington in 1897 (see above) provides picturesque details :

“They intended to plead not guilty, but on the night before the trial a messenger came secretly to them from the court, saying that ‘two great ladies’ [Mrs. Nell Gwyn and Lady Castlemaine] had heard of their mishap, pitied and would intercede for a pardon, provided they pleaded to the indictment of murder. Knowing that Jeffreys was to be their judge they caught at this chance for life, and were condemned accordingly. Then the agent reappeared with a message that \$16,000 was the price of the ladies’ interference, and unless they were promptly paid the utmost rigour of the law awaited them. The men, being both of wealthy Wiltshire families, procured the sum and a long reprieve of fifty years was granted – the King took \$8,000 and gave the remainder to the ladies.”

The possible purchase of a pardon was already known and mentioned by Anne Stephens, later Lady Pye, in a letter dated from London as early as 29th November, 1684. “It is said good store of money Portsmouth shall have for his pardon.” (“Portsmouth” is the Duchess of Portsmouth already mentioned, the most influential power behind the throne in King Charles’s last years.) It is easily possible that these backstairs manoeuvres were going on, for Lady Castlemaine, though no longer so high in the King’s favour as formerly, was still residing in the palace and was a second cousin of St. John’s and a third cousin of Webb’s. And

the argument may well have been put to the men in custody in Newgate. But quite certainly they did not accept the suggestion, for in each case against the indictment the record now at Guildhall was the entry “po se”. This is the normal abbreviation of “ponit se” and means “he puts himself [upon his country, i.e, the jury].” In other words, instead of deciding the issue against himself by pleading “guilty”, the accused leaves the onus of proof to the prosecution and by pleading “not guilty” leaves the jury to decide.

The Trial

The December Sessions (Gaol-Delivery) lasted for four days, the 10th to the 13th, and were held before the Lord Mayor, the Recorder of the City and other Justices of London and Middlesex. The presence of Chief Justice Jeffreys is not recorded in the Redmayne-Turner *Proceedings*, but it is mentioned in a contemporary news-letter to John Squire at Newcastle, and he was certainly present at the January Quarter Sessions. Two juries of twelve men were empanelled, one for London the other for Middlesex, and the names of the jurors are recorded. Fresh juries were empanelled on the second day, when the Estcourt case was taken, and, the scene having been Fleet Street, it was doubtless tried by the London jury. Each of the accused faced the two indictments, the first for murder and the second for felonious killing without malice aforethought.

The Redmayne-Turner *Proceedings* contains a few details that have not been mentioned above. Estcourt’s sword was not drawn but lay in the window in the scabbard. (This is unfortunate for the theory of a melee in the street.) “The Prisoners endeavoured to prove their Innocence” – which is unfortunate for the claim that they pleaded “guilty” – “or at least strong provocations, yet the contrary being evident by many Witnesses present, before, at, and after the unhappy misfortune ---” - which is unfortunate for the “tradition” that Estcourt declined to drink a Republican health. The surgeon that searched the body declared that “the Wounds were given with different swords, according to the best of his Skill, and that those in the Groin, as well as that in the Belly were Mortal”. (The news-letter preserved at Longleat and mentioned above reported that one wound fitted St. John’s little sword and a large wound fitted Webb’s broad sword. Both swords were “bloody & greisy”. Another contemporary record, written five days after the inquest and preserved at Dr. William’s Library, sets the number of wounds at six or seven.) Both the accused were found guilty on each indictment. All the other six gentlemen who were present at the incident and who had been bound to appear “for being present and in company with Sir Wm. Estcott when he was murdered” did appear. The Redmayne-Turner report ends “--- after which the other Persons, that were in the Company were discharged upon Proclamation.”

Apparently all the sentences were pronounced on the Saturday, the last day of the Sessions. It is a grisly catalogue. Eleven person were to be burnt in the hand, five to be transported, eighteen (including St. John and Webb) to be hanged, six to be whipped, and five to be fined, in one case with a month’s imprisonment

and in three cases “to be of the good behaviour” for a stated period. Doubtless St. John and Webb were held in custody, despite their social status. No date of execution was there and then appointed by the Court.

More Wire-pulling – Reprieve, Pardon

Renewed action in other quarters began immediately and became known. On Tuesday, the 16th, a further news-letter being sent to Newcastle recorded that “greate Endeouers were used for getting them a pardon but I am asured there is none yet past & a greate doubt is made wether any will.” But by whom and on what grounds the representations were made to the King and whether orally or in writing cannot be firmly established, for no document has come to light. Contemporary hearsay mentioned the Prince of Denmark, Nell Gwynn, and the Duchess of Portsmouth; later tradition added St. John’s mother. On 1st January, 1684/5, for instance, Edward Bedingfield informed the Countess of Rutland, “Colonel Webb had a powerful sollicitor in his master the Prince of Denmark, [Webb was his usher] who could ask the boldlyer as it being the first request he ere had made unto His Majesty.” The inherent probabilities of the situation would include the Duchess of Cleveland, a relative of both the condemned men. The arguments were said to include a sum of money running up to £10,000 or even £20,000, “to be applied to the fabrick of Chelsey College.” Be that as it may, from Whitehall on the Tuesday – the 16th – after the sentences had been pronounced, King Charles informed the Recorder of London, the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex, and “all others whom it may concerne” that

“We have thought fit upon some circumstances humbly represented unto Us in their behalfe, hereby to signify Our Will and Pleasure to you, that you do forbear putting in execution the Sentence of death so passed upon them — untill We shall signify Our further pleasure to you.”

(This reprieve sine die is unfortunate for the “long reprieve of fifty years” contained in the oral tradition recorded by Mr. Hansard in 1869.) Eight days later (24 December) again from Whitehall King Charles granted pardon to Henry St. John

“for and concerning the death & killing of Sr W^m Estcott and of all indictm[en]ts Convictions Attainders &c with a Nonobstanter to the Statutes made in the 13th yeare of King Richard the 2^d, the 10th King Edward the 3^d and the first of Our Royal Grandfather King James.”

On the same date a similar pardon was granted to Webb. The warrants were sent to Mr. Solicitor Finch, father of St. John’s brother-in-law Daniel Finch, on the 29th, and a contemporary Journal records that after the warrant was signed but before the pardons were drafted and sealed the men were granted their liberty on bail. A news-letter at Longleat gives 13th January as the date of the sealing.

Restitution of Lands

The prisoners and their friends continued their activities, for, six days after the King's decision to pardon and about a fortnight before the documents were sealed, the King considered, on 30th December, their petition praying his Majesty "to extend his further Grace to them by granting them a Restitution of the Lands and Estates." Being graciously disposed to gratify the petitioners in their humble request, the King was "pleased to referre this Petition to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury for their consideration and to report what his Majesty may fitly doe in it." And on the 14th January the King did restore to them all the forfeited lands. The letters patent, still bearing two fragments of the Great Seal, survive in the possession of Viscount Bolingbroke.

Discharge

At the January Quarter Sessions, Judge Jeffreys being present, St. John and Webb were – as is reported in the Redmayne-Turner *Proceedings* – brought into Court on the first day, the 16th, and being

"demanded what they could say, in stay of Execution upon their late sentence, produced severally His Majesties gracious Pardon, which being allowed, they Pleaded then on their Knees, after which the Right Honourable the Lord Chief Justice, admonished them to be careful for the future, of such rashness as had created them so much trouble, and that above all they would make it the future business of their lives, to express their gratitude and extraordinary acknowledgment of His Majesties Grace and Princely compassion, in behaving themselves respectfully, shewing their Duty and Loyalty on all occasions, which his Lordship was pleased to say, Collonel Webb had signalized in the most turbulent and stagging times, then they proceeded to give Papers of Gloves to the Court, and Officers immediately attending, as in that case is usual."

(Giles Jacob's Law-Dictionary, enlarged by Tomlins 1797, says, "If a person pleads his pardon, the judges may insist on the usual fee of gloves to themselves and officers, before they allow it." As the expressions "Papers of Gloves" occurs in other reports, the phrase must not be taken as a printer's error for "Pairs".)

The mention of Webb's "duty and loyalty --- in the most turbulent and staggering times" is perplexing. The most obvious reference would be to the Civil War, for Monmouth's rebellion (1685), in which Webb commanded a regiment, had not yet taken place. But even at as late a stage in the Civil War as the Battle of Worcester (1651) Webb was only a boy of about twelve – a fact that hardly supports J.G.Muddiman's description of him (1933) as "a veteran of the Civil Wars, who had suffered much for his loyalty." The factual basis seems to be that

his father, Major Edward Webb, “was in arms against Parliament and was slain”, as was recorded by the Committee for the Advance of Money, and was mortally wounded and taken prisoner at Cropredy Bridge, 29th June, 1644. The entry in the burial register at Cropredy Church

Edward Webb maiger of the king’s horse was buried the sixth day of July

is reproduced in Toynbee and Young’s *Cropredy Bridge*. In signaling his loyalty and in suffering, the father had anticipated and deputized for the son. But even though inaccurately stated, it provided Jeffreys with a talking-point.

St. John and Webb had famous companions in trouble at the Old Bailey Sessions. In December Titus Oates faced a Bill of Indictment for willful perjury, and in January Richard Baxter, the Presbyterian divine who had ministered to St. John’s late wife in her distress at the loss of her first child, refused to take the Oath of Allegiance.

Six days before their final appearance in court a news-letter recorded that as soon as they had their liberty they would go abroad for some time. Details are not available, but at least two writers have misinterpreted this as meaning that they had to flee to escape hanging and that flight preceded the obtaining of the pardon. In fact, the men were arrested on the night of the incident (14th November), were held in Newgate till the King’s decision to pardon (24th December) became known, and were then released on bail. Till they presented their pardons in court of 16th January there was no question of “flight”, and by that time “flight” was the wrong term.

Kidwell’s Perjury – Proceedings erroneous

But what were the “circumstances humbly represented to Us in their behalfe” that led the King to grant first a reprieve and then a pardon? Is it possible that some genuine scruple on a legal or procedural technicality was at work in the King’s mind, side by side with other, less creditable considerations? There seem to be two such possibilities. One of the witnesses listed on the back of the Coroner’s Inquisition and named at the foot of the Grand Jury’s indictments was Habbcuke Kidwell. During the December Sessions an entry was made in the Calendar – “Habbcuck Kidwell committed for declining from his testimony given before the Coroner concerning the death of Sir Wm. Estcourt”. The MS news-letter dated 13th December and preserved at Longleat states the fact slightly more fully – “The Drawer of the tavern where this murder was done for mincing his evidence and denying what he swore at the coroner’s Inquest is comitted to Newgate”. Kidwell was apparently allowed bail by entering into a recognizance of £100 to appear at the next sessions, not to depart, and meanwhile to be of good behaviour. The charge against him in January was to be “for giveing a false testimony in a cause of Murther”.

Certainly Kidwell did appear in January and his bail was renewed till the February Sessions. But further entries seem to indicate that the case was transferred to some other court, probably the King's Bench, where the present writer has failed to find the rest of the story. But there may be little in this surmise. Kidwell minced his evidence on 11th December, but money for Portsmouth was mentioned as early as 29th November.

The other fact is that on 17th April St. John presented a petition to sue for a writ of error. His petition was granted. In May Webb did the same, with the same result. Although they had been pardoned and their property had been restored, they complained that they still lay "under several disabilities by that attainder" and that the proceedings whereon the attainder was grounded were erroneous. But what were the continuing disabilities and in what respects were the proceedings erroneous? Despite the pardons the stigma of the convictions remained, but here again the present writer has failed to find the rest of the story.

Contemporary Comment

Certainly the case was widely discussed at the time and later, and whatever may be the correct interpretation of the foregoing legal points, rumour provided a varied basis for scandalous talk. The following list provides evidence of the eminence of the people who wrote; in some cases additional details emerge.

14th November – Narcissus Luttrell – *Brief Relation of State Affairs*. A brief, forthright account of the incident and of the inquest next day, agreeing as far as it goes with the other contemporary records.

20th November – *The Entering Book* of Roger Morrice, preserved at Dr. William's Library. This mentions that Mr. Nosworthy – of whom more hereafter – was present at the Devil Tavern, but did not go on with the others to the Globe Tavern; it gives a nearly complete list of the nine gentlemen, agreeing, as far as it goes, with the *Sad and Lamentable Account*; but adds that they were all apprehended and committed to Newgate, but were bailed out on the Saturday except St. John and Webb. A further entry after the trial indicates that the sentences of condemnation were pronounced on the Saturday, the last day of the Sessions, and that there was already "a received opinion" that St. John and Webb and another gentleman who had been condemned to death would be pardoned.

29th November – A letter from Anne Stephens to Abigail Harley among the Portland manuscripts. This refers to the "good store of money Portsmouth shall have for his pardon" already quoted. The earliness of the date – a fortnight before the trial – is noteworthy.

12th December – A letter from Nathaniel Harley to his brother Robert among the Portland manuscripts. “It is thought they will hardly get their pardon, though great intercession is made.”

13th December – MS news-letter at Longleat already quoted. It adds, “It is not yet said whether there will be any pardons granted.”

20th December – John Evelyn’s Diary – “A villanous Murder --- on a knight of quality in a Tavern; --- so many horrid murders & Duels about this time being committed (as was never heard of in England) gave much cause of complaint & murmure universally.” (Evelyn had met Sir Walter and his sister Anne at Ditchley some twenty years earlier.)

1st January – Edward Bedingfield to the Countess of Rutland, a particularly informative letter.

“Till these two or three dayes last past the wholl entertainment of the towne was the buisnesse of the Old Baily, and in particular of Mr. St. John’s and Collonell Webb who have obtained their pardon though not yet drawne, they having in the interim a reprieve without day. They have had a hard tugg with His Majesty to get it, the first by virtue of his estate which bleeds for him though I doe not find ‘tis agreed to what summ.”

Then follow the figures quoted above and the mention of Chelsey College and of the Prince of Denmark, to whom Webb was usher, and who had married Princess Anne on 28th July, 1683.

Thomas Barlow, Gilbert Burnet, and Thomas Salmon

But the most eminent contemporary contributors to the discussions were Thomas Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, and Gilbert Burnet, later Bishop of Salisbury. Barlow, who, according to the biography in *D.N.B.*, seems to have been an episcopal counterpart of the Vicar of Bray, forthwith wrote a 40-page essay, dated 20th January, 1684 (i.e. 1684/5) which was published as the second item in his *Cases of Conscience*, 1692. Basing his argument on Scripture and “His Majesties Legal Rights and undoubted Prerogative” he concludes (p. 37) :

“ --- the sum of what I have said, endeavour’d to prove, and believe to be true is this That there is no Law of God or Man which does prohibit (and so make it unlawful for) Supreme Princes to grant such Reprives & pardons.”

The *D.N.B.* article on Barlow describes the tract as being “in support of the regal power to dispense with the penal laws.” This is inaccurate. The tract discusses the power to grant reprieves and pardons – a very different matter from dispensing with the penal laws. Later Barlow answered objections based on Genesis IX, 6 in a 14-page essay that forms the third item in *Cases of Conscience*.

Doubtless Barlow was legally correct. Burnet, however, who as an outspoken critic of his king ranks with Elijah, as is shown by his letter to Charles dated 29th January, 1679/80, brought moral considerations into the discussion. From what has been written above it is evident that some of his details are factually inaccurate, but the whole passage is worth quotation :

“ — being at a publick supper with much company, some hot words past between him and another Gentleman, which raised a sudden quarrel, none but three persons being engaged in it. Swords were drawn, and one was killed outright. But it was not certain by whose hand he was killed: So the other two were both indited upon it. The proof did not carry it beyond manslaughter, no marks of any precedent malice appearing. [A modern lawyer would probably agree.] Yet the young Gentleman was prevailed upon to confess the indictment, and to let sentence pass on him for murder; a pardon being promised him if he should do so, and he being threatened with the utmost rigour of the law if he stood upon his defence. After the sentence had passed, it appeared on what design he had been practised on. It was a rich family, and not well affected to the court: so he was told that he must pay well for his pardon: And it cost him 16,000 l; of which the king had the one half, the other half being divided between two Ladies that were in great favour. It is a very ill thing for Princes to suffer themselves to be prevailed on by importunities to pardon blood, which cries for vengeance. Yet an easiness to importunity is a feebleness of good nature, and so is in itself less criminal. But it is a monstrous perverting of justice and a destroying the chief end of government, which is the preservation of the people, when their blood is set to sale; and that not as a compensation to the family of the person murdered, but to the Prince himself, and to some who are in favour with him upon unworthy accounts: And it was robbery if the Gentleman was innocent.”

(A footnote to the 1833 edition correctly says, “The story is wrongly told. Mr. St. John, it is said, pleaded not guilty.” C.H. Firth repeated the correction in the 1900 edition.)

A few comments may be offered. Burnet’s mention of “a publick supper with much company” – to say nothing of its elaboration by Hansard into a Wiltshire County club – is not corroborated by the contemporary narratives. But his statement that the family was “not well affected to the Court” is more true than is generally known. Although three of his brothers had perished on the Royalist side during the Civil War Sir Walter had had strong Parliamentary connections during the Commonwealth and the Protectorates, and had shown lack of enthusiasm for the Restoration. By 1684 this might have ranked as ancient history, but as recently as 1679 he had been one of a group of Wiltshire members who presented a monster petition urging the King to allow Parliament to sit. Again and again Charles prorogued Parliament as soon as it assembled, in order to prevent

the Commons from proceeding with a Bill for the exclusion of James from the Succession. Numerous such petitions were organized, and the bearers became known as Petitioners. The King's friends therefore organized petitions expressing abhorrence at the activities of the Petitioners. Hence for a short time the two party names – “Petitioners” and “Abhorrrers”, which were soon replaced by “Whigs” and “Tories”, both, of course, at first terms of abuse. Charles informed Sir Walter and his colleagues that the summoning and proroguing of Parliament was his business. He would mind his own business, and he told the deputation to mind theirs. Moreover, in the summer of 1680 Burnet had attended on John Wilmot, the notorious 2nd Earl of Rochester, a few days before his death. Wilmot was a son of Sir Walter's eldest sister Anne, who was present at High Lodge, Woodstock Park, helping her daughter-in-law with the nursing and reporting to Sir Walter's wife. The incident of the monster petition was at that moment still sufficiently recent that Burnet was probably well informed about it. On this detail, therefore, Burnet was clearly right, and later events show both Sir Walter and his son Henry to have been Whigs. If the “two ladies who were in great favour” must be identified, they were probably Nell Gwynn and “Madame Carwell”, Duchess of Portsmouth. Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, was by no means “in great favour” during Charles's last years, and as a relative of St. John's would be less likely to receive money thus squeezed out of the family.

After Burnet's *History of my Own Time* had been published (1724) Tomas Salmon took him to task in his *Impartial Examination* — (1724) castigating him for

“that load of guilt and infamy which he endeavours to cast upon the memory of King Charles — Any story, how vile or improbable soever, or wherever pick'd up, must be look'd upon as ground sufficient to asperse the memory of King Charles II.:

As recently as 1932 J.G. Muddiman has joined forces with Salmon, claiming that Salmon “enables us to convict Burnet of gross and malevolent falsehood in this passage”.

Legal and Moral Questions

It may be advantageous to analyse the somewhat complicated problem into its constituent parts :

(1) Were the prisoners in fact advised to plead guilty in order to improve their prospects of a pardon? Burnet says they were, but it is difficult to see how pleading guilty would improve their prospects. Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, a relative of the two prisoners, though no longer in high favour, was still living in the palace. Webb's master, Prince George of Denmark, was at hand. The possibility of a pardon, with money for Portsmouth, was mentioned by Anne Stephens as early as 29th November, i.e., nearly a fortnight before the trial; and

afterwards Bedingfield recorded that they had “a hard tugg with His Majesty to get it”. The use of the argument in messages to the prisoners – unconvincing though the argument itself may appear – was easily possible – certainly there was plenty of time – and Burnet may have been right in saying that they were so advised.

(2) Did the accused, in fact, please guilty? Clearly, No. Clearly Burnet was wrong.

(3) Was the King legally in order in granting a pardon? The royal prerogative includes the power of mercy and extends to statutory as well as common-law offences. So Bishop Barlow argued, and despite his character as a political trimmer it must be conceded that he was right. Burnet did not categorically distinguish the legal aspect from the moral aspect, though he was probably right in questioning whether the offence went further than manslaughter and whether a prisoner should be urged to plead guilty to murder in a case that was, after all, only manslaughter. But quite clearly Burnet’s chief concern was with the moral aspect – “a monstrous perverting of justice --- when blood is set to sale --- to the prince himself and to some who are in favour upon unworthy accounts.”

(4) Is it reasonably certain that money was paid? Anne Stephens had it as early as 29th November. Bedingfield (1st January) had it from numerous sources – “there are that say ---, others ---, many says ---, all concurs ---“. If Bedingfield is completely correct about the purpose to which the money was to be devoted, then obviously Burnet is wrong about the two ladies who were in great favour. But on the very day of the murder the King had appealed to the clergy for contributions to the building of Chelsea Hospital, and Nell Gwynn’s interest in this scheme may to some extent resolve the discrepancy between Bedingfield and Burnet.

(5) Was the King morally in order in accepting money for a pardon? Despite the references of Salmon and Muddiman to “Burnet’s lying tale”, his “gross and malevolent falsehood”, and his efforts “to asperse the memory of King Charles II”, most readers will surely agree with Burnet.

Thomas Salmon’s Strictures

Oddly enough, Salmon himself fails to follow his own argument to what would have been its own unanswerable conclusion. He writes – the date of publication is 1724, nine years after Burnet’s death –

“If he [Burnet] had named Names, some curious Persons might have made a Trip to Battersea, and receiv’d a just Account of that matter; and notwithstanding that Load of Guilt and Infamy which he endeavours to cast upon the Memory of King Charles in this Place, the People of the Place where this Accident happen’d, and who were most nearly concern’d in this Business, give a very different Account of it.”

Henry St. John lived on till 1742. When Sir Walter died at Battersea in 1708, Henry succeeded to the baronetcy and the headship of the Wiltshire St. Johns, but continued to live in the West End. From 1717 he headed the Battersea assessments for poor-rate, but there is more evidence of his presence in Albemarle Street than in Battersea and very scanty evidence of his presence at Lydiard Tregoz, which appears to have been the home of his sister Barbara and her husband Sir John Topp, Baronet. Salmon himself or his deputy could therefore have been one of the “curious Persons” who could have gone to Battersea – or, more easily, to Albemarle Street – and have obtained, and published, the “very different account of it” given by the people “who were most nearly concern’d in this business”. The King’s good name would thus have been vindicated, Burnet’s discomfiture would have been posthumously completed, and an authentic account, free of conflicts and contradictions, would have been available for posterity. But Salmon failed to do the obvious, and two centuries later Muddiman repeated Salmon’s strictures without exposing the weakness of Salmon’s position.

Further Comments and Misapprehensions

One additional piece of evidence and three curious blunders remain to be mentioned. Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford, writing after 1736 but at least a year before St. John died in 1742, notes, “His mother, the Lady St. John, procured his pardon at a great price, said to be 10,000 l. Old S^r Walter, his father would not meddle with it.” This is indeed a hard saying, particularly as this belated jotting on the back of an old letter is not confirmed by any other evidence. Is it therefore to be believed? The lateness of the record and the absence of corroboration are, in fact, strikingly in accord with the situation. The murder itself was sufficiently embarrassing to Sir Walter and his lady; and if, to make things worse, they were themselves at variance on procedure, there was a cogent case for avoiding discussion even within the family. But with the passing of the years the subject would lose some of its sting. Dame Johanna died early in 1705, Sir Walter in 1708. Moreover, the murderer’s son Henry, later 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, was from 1701 a close friend and colleague, in the Commons and soon in the Government also, of Robert Harley. By 1708 Henry St. John the younger was willing to write to Harley about his father in disparaging terms. (See below.) After a lapse of two decades or more the hush-hush family secret could now leak out from St. John to Robert Harley and eventually from Robert Harley to his son Edward. Moreover, Dr. William Stratford was a close friend not only of the Winchcombe family, to which Bolingbroke’s first wife belonged, but also of the Harley family. The news might have passed through him. The evidence cannot be dismissed; it must therefore be interpreted as best may be.

The obvious meaning of Sir Walter’s refusal to meddle might be that he refused to provide the money, and in that case how are the workings of his mind to be read? The present writer has no direct evidence of the upbringing of either Sir Walter or Dame Johanna; but Walter, brought up in a Royalist family, might be

less rigidly Puritan than the daughter of a prominent Parliamentarian doubly related to Cromwell by marriage. Yet Dame Johanna seems, on this interpretation, to have been more successful in doping her conscience than Sir Walter. Was maternal instinct stronger than paternal? But even so, how did Sir Walter argue with himself? Was he a hide-bound legalist, arguing, “He has done it; let him pay the penalty: I’m not interfering”? Or was he a strait-laced moralist, saying, “If the King will exercise his royal prerogative and grant a pardon, fair enough. But I’m not going to engage in bribery, particularly if the money is going to those – women.” In either case we seem to have to write Sir Walter off as an inhuman brute.

Moreover, if Sir Walter refused to provide the money, whence did Lady St. John raise \$10,000? She was not an heiress, and her father had died eleven years before. Sir Walter’s last surviving brother, who was sharing the ‘Battersea Manor House when young Henry was born, after whom the boy was doubtless named, and who may have been his godfather, had been murdered by outlaws in Ireland in 1679, and his widow Catherine, Johanna’s sister, had died in 1681. In short, reasonably near relatives were not available. Was there a whip-round among the more distant relatives? Did the money come from the patrimony of Henry’s deceased wife the Lady Mary?

There is, however, a less embarrassing interpretation of Sir Walter’s refusal to meddle. On the basis of their families’ records in the 1640’s Sir Walter had a much stronger case with the King than his wife, for three of his brothers had perished on the Royalist side, while Lady St. John’s relatives – the 1st Earl of Bolingbroke, his heir apparent, her father, and his half-brother – had been prominent on the Parliamentarian side. But in 1651 Walter and his brother Henry had marched with the Surrey militia to fight Charles at Worcester; his record as a Parliamentarian had prevented his return to the “Convention” Parliament of 1660; he had not shared his wife’s eagerness that he should go “in a rich riding coat to meet the King” on the latter’s return a couple of months later; and less than five years before the Estcourt incident Sir Walter had protested against Charles’s use of the royal prerogative to prevent Parliament from discussing the Exclusion Bill. Having protested against the King’s action in protection of the legitimate, constitutional rights of his royal brother, how could Sir Walter plead for royal intervention to save a convicted murderer from the due consequences of his own felony? Having received one snub from Charles, did Sir Walter, realizing the weakness of his own position, refuse to invite a second? Was maternal instinct, however, stronger – and perhaps less scrupulous and self-conscious – than paternal? Did she pity the motherless, six-year old grandson, who now had the prospect of becoming fatherless also? In short, could Harley’s words – “would not meddle with it” – mean merely that Sir Walter knew, as indeed Gilbert Burnet indicates, that he was *persona non grata* at court, that he therefore deemed it politic to keep himself in the background, and to leave the wire-pulling to his women-folk, but that ultimately he did provide the money? After all, Barbara, Lady Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland, had a very strong case, quite apart from her personal status with the King, in pleading for her second cousin. Her father William, 2nd Viscount Grandison, had died of wounds received while fighting for

Charles I at the siege of Bristol (1643); and his brother John, the 3rd Viscount, had been with Charles II at Worcester (1651), had been taken prisoner, had languished in the Tower for several years, and had died in misery in France before the Restoration. Did Sir Walter say to his lady, in effect, "Keep me out of this. Let Barbara pull the wires."?

Now for the blunders.

(1) G.A.Hansard, writing in 1869 and quoted by Cunnington in 1897, makes Roland St. John and Michael Styles members of the company at the Tavern. But these two men are not listed among the nine, and they figured in an entirely different, though contemporary, case, in which St. John was found guilty of the manslaughter of Styles.

(2) In 1901 Charlotte Fell Smith devoted a volume to Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, the diariest mentioned above. After increasing the number of Sir Walter's brothers who fell in the Civil War from three to four and describing the family seat as Castle Lydiard in Somersetshire, she records Harley's account of the purchase of the pardon and adds, "But there is not much ground for supposing that either Sir Walter or Lady St. John, avowed Puritans as they were, possessed the necessary influence with James II [sic] or his entourage." Whatever the writer may have meant by the words "avowed Puritans" and "the necessary influence", there is clear evidence that after the Restoration Sir Walter and his wife were conforming Anglicans, and that Lady Castlemaine was a near relative. What is equally clear is that the pardon was granted, engrossed, sealed and presented to Judge Jeffreys at the Old Bailey all three weeks before James II succeeded to the throne. But why he bothered about dates. The future Lord Bolingbroke, we are told, "experienced little of his mother's care, for she died when he was about seven." She was, in fact, buried at Lydiard Tregoz when the child was sixteen days old.

(2) But the strangest of these blunders is the one that connects the Estcourt incident with the Nosworthy trial, which in its turn arose out of the Fitzharris trial. In 1897 W.Cunnington wrote :

"The Diary of Narcissus Luttrell — says that it [the affair at the Globe Tavern] arose primarily out of Edward Fitzharris's recent condemnation for treason, 33rd Charles II."

And in 1932 J.G.Muddiman wrote :

"Muddiman's letter of Saturday, Nov.15, 1684, then shows how all this bears upon the murder of Estcourt."

The case of Edward Fitzharris caused a great stir in the spring and early summer of 1681, when the scare about the Popish Plot was at its height. This Roman Catholic conspirator, who had already been intriguing with influential people for eight years, wrote a libel advocating the deposition of Charles II and the exclusion of James. Presumably he intended to father this writing on some ultra-Protestant Whig, reveal the "fact", and earn the wages of an informer. He was, however, betrayed by an accomplice. The rest of the story is extremely complicated, involving problems of constitution law, a "concocted confession", a "tissue of falsehoods", and charges of subornation against four men. Fitzharris was convicted at common law in June and executed on 1st July.

From March 1681 Charles II governed without a Parliament, the scare about the Popish Plot and the controversy about the succession continued, and it is not surprising that some three years later Edward Noseworthy said – or was alleged to have said – “He hoped to see the judges hang’d that tried Fitz-Harris”. He was imprisoned in April, pleaded “not guilty” in May, and was tried at the King’s Bench Bar on 13th November for seditious words. In his entry for that date Narcissus Luttrell records, “This was laid to be done in Wiltshire [- presumably for this reason the jurymen were drawn from Wiltshire -] but the witnesses testifying the words to be spoken in Dorsetshire, he was acquitted.”

As is the manner of diarists, Luttrell recorded the events of 14th November immediately after those of 13th November. Quite categorically he states that Estcourt had been foreman of the jury on the 13th and that some fellow-jury men were at the Globe Tavern on the 14th. (As has already been mentioned, Noseworthy was of the company at the Devil Tavern, but did not go on to the Globe.) But, with all due deference to W.Cunnington, Luttrell says nothing that can be taken to mean that the quarrel “arose primarily out of Edward Fitzharris’s recent condemnation for treason”. Luttrell simply states that the quarrel arose, and the present reader now knows how it arose. And were the events of midsummer 1681 still “recent” in November 1684? Similarly, the newsletter of Henry Muddiman quoted by J.G.Muddiman in 1932, simply states that on the 14th Estcourt, foreman of the jury “was unfortunately killed, being in the company of some other gentlemen of the jury”. J.G.Muddiman notes that the 14th was “the very next day” and claims that this passage from the newsletter “shows how all this bears upon the murder of Estcourt”. (Apparently J.G.Muddiman never heard of the fallacy of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*.) He then discusses the Sessions Papers, which “recorded the proceedings at these Sessions, omitting, of course, a good deal that would have traced the quarrel to its origin.” Much virtue in “of course”! The “Republican health” remains a mystery.

St. John’s Second Marriage and Family

How long St. John remained abroad is not recorded, but on 26th March, 1685, he was returned as burgess for Wootton Bassett to James the Second’s Parliament, and on 1st January, 1686/7, he remarried at St Anne’s, Soho. The lady was Angelica Magdalena, daughter of George Pelissary, and widow of Philip Wharton, Warden of the Mint. When the Vicar General of the Archbishop of Canterbury issued the marriage licence on 22nd December, 1686, the lady’s age was recorded as “abt. 20”. One might suspect an understatement, for the bridegroom’s age was given as “abt.31”, when he was, in fact, 34; and the suspicion is confirmed, for when she presented her “reconnaissance” (evidence of church membership) to the French Church of the Savoy, on 2nd June, 1687, her age was given as 23. The lady had arrived in England as the wife of Philip Wharton just when the Estcourt case was holding public attention; on 14th January, the day on which he granted the restoration of St. John’s lands, the King also authorized a warrant for the grant of denization of Angelica Magdaleine, wife of Philip Wharton, an alien born, and on 5th February – the day before his death – the

King, according to the Index to the Patent Rolls,

“Concessit Angelice Magdalene Uxori Phi Wharton Armigeri in p[ar]tibus
Transmarinis Nate quod sit Indigena.”

Naturalization by Act of Parliament followed on 27th June, Angelica having taken the Sacrament at the French Church on the 7th and the oaths on the 13th; but in the meantime Wharton had died on 23rd February, leaving his widow as sole executrix and residuary legatee but not guardian of his only daughter by his first marriage. The family – originally spelt Pelizzari – hailed from Chiavennes in the canton of Graubunden (Grisons) but had settled in Protestant Geneva. Her father Georges had died in 1676, when Angelica was about twelve, which probably explains the inaccuracy in the details about him on her coffin-plate at Battersea and on the triptych at Lydiard Tregoz. He was naturalized as a Frechman in 1647, entered state service under Cardinal Mazarin, became Tresorier general des galeres in 1651, bought the additional office of Tresorier general de la Marine on the death of his elder brother in 1662, and obtained from the King in 1670 confirmation of his status as noble and armigerous. He was seigneur de la Bourdaisiere and an ancien (elder) of the Protestant temple at Charenton on the S.E. outskirts of Paris, where he occupied a residence in the precincts. Consequences of this Huguenot connection continued till the end of St. John's life. In 1721 Lord and Lady St. John, as they had now become, were godparents – whether in person or by deputy is not clear – to Henry Rieu in Paris, and two years later Henry was godfather to Henry Langlois at the Church of Rider Court. When Angelica died in 1736 Henry gave twenty guineas for the poor of the French Church of the Savoy, and in his will he left a further \$50 for the same purpose.

Writers record four children of the marriage – George (1693-1716), who was at Utrecht during the negotiations for the Treaty and died in Venice, to the great distress of his mother; Henrietta (1699-1756), Lady Luxborough and Countess Catherlough; John (1702-48), 2nd Viscount St. John; and Holles, the youngest (1710-38), named presumably after the wealthy Whig leader, John Holles, Duke of Newcastle (1662-1711). But the registers at St. Anne's Soho, St. Martin's in the Fields, Battersea, and Lydiard Tregoz, contain entries about eight others, including four christenings at St. Martin's and seven burials at Battersea. (All together, Henry gave his father's name Walter to four of his sons – two by each marriage; but all died in infancy, and, as far as the present writer knows, the name has not been given to any later Wiltshire St. John.) Whether Henry the younger, the future 1st Viscount Bolingbroke was transferred from his grandparents' care at Battersea to his father's new household is not known. Two rather obscure details in his biography square more easily with residence in the West End than with residence in Battersea, and his fluency in French may have owed something to his stepmother.

Apart from membership of four more Parliaments, biographical material is scanty. Incomplete records show that he was assessed for rates in Berkeley Street 1692-1700 and in Albemarle Street 1704-1717. At the right dates the entry rises from “Henry St. John, Esq.” To “Sir Henry St. John” and eventually to “Lord St. John”. (When he made his will he expected to die in Albemarle Street, and he did, in fact die there.)

But when Sir Walter died in 1708 Henry did not make the Battersea Manor House his home, for till 1717 Sir William Humphreys, Lord Mayor of London 1714–15 and Baronet, heads the Battersea assessments; and although St. John maintained an establishment there later, the contemporary references generally point to his presence in the West End.

His mother, Dame Johanna, making her will in March 1703/4, did not appoint him as an executor. For the most part her bequests consisted of small personal possessions. To Henry she left “the Great Bible in my Closet with the Pictures of the 4 Evangelists”; to Henry’s wife “the rest of my silver salvers wch are 6 in number & my two silver candlesticks alsoe I give her”. Sir Walter, however, making his will in 1705/6 appointed Henry the elder and Henry the younger as his executors, “Reposing in both of them an intire Confidence that they will see this my Will in every respect duly performed and I earnestly desire their utmost care and Assistance in that behalfe.” The younger Henry’s presence in Battersea when his grandparents died is mentioned in his letters. The absence of similar references to the elder Henry’s presence on these occasions may be due to the fact that the father did far less correspondence than the son and that very little evidence has survived.

Writers about St. John and his more distinguished son mention the “quarrel” between them; but details of the quarrel itself are scanty, and its causes seem to be matters of surmise rather than of evidence. One of the clearest matters of act emerged at the general election in the spring of 1708. After membership of seven consecutive parliaments 1679–1700, the father did not seek re-election in February 1700/1, and the son was returned for Wootton Bassett to the four parliaments of the period 1700/1 – 1708. This grandson and son of Whigs surprised everybody – perhaps he shocked and offended his father – by joining the Tories, but he soon made his name in the Commons and obtained a sequence of offices, notably that of Secretary at War 1704–8, with a share in the glories of Blenheim and Ramillies. But in the spring of 1708 the father indicated his intention of standing for Wootton Bassett, and the son had to seek nomination elsewhere. In this he failed, and was out of parliament for the next two years. Presumably the Whig father did stand, but the members returned for the borough were one Whig and one Tory and, despite his status in the county, the Whig father was not the successful Whig candidate. The whole situation is confused. In the middle of the electioneering – 1st May – the son wrote to Robert Harley from Bucklebury (the home of his wife’s family), “My father makes a scandalous figure, neglected by all the gentlemen and sure of miscarrying where his family always were revered.” This evidence that the father had failed to maintain the family’s prestige among the county gentry accords with two statements made some thirty years later and, indeed, with the very scanty evidence of his interest in Lydiard Tregoz.

The election put the Whigs into power at Westminster, but just as the new parliament was due to assemble (8th July) Sir Walter died in Battersea at the age of 86 and was buried in St Mary’s on the 9th. As 4th Baronet Henry succeeded to the title, the headship of the Wilts branch of the family and the family revenues.

This may well have stimulated his social ambitions, for in the following spring a news-letter written from London in French stated that Sir Henry St. John, Sir Henry Furnese, Sir William Windham, and Rear-Admiral Wager were to be made peers. In September 1710, on a change in the Ministry the son became Secretary of State for the Northern Department – in effect, one of the two foreign secretaries – and in the ensuing general election he was returned for Wootton Bassett and Berks County and chose to sit for Berks. Thereupon Swift wrote – November 1710 – in his *Journal to Stella*, contrasting the father of 58 with the son of 32 :

“... here is a young fellow, hardly thirty, in that employment [Secretary of State]. His father is a man of pleasure, that Walks the Mall, and frequents St. James’s Coffee-house, and the Chocolate-houses, and the young son is principal secretary of state. Is there not something very odd in that?”

(The St. James’s Coffee-house was the favourite coffee-house of the Whigs.) In combination with the facts of the Estcourt murder, this quotation from a very well-known source is the basis of most of the published estimates of the father’s character – “his brawling tendencies --- mature escapades --- who squanders time and fortune in chocolate houses or taverns”; “disinctly, one gathers, a Restoration type --- an ageing rake”; the “libertine father, who drank and swashbuckled his way through life --- the prodigal father --- Sir Walter St. John’s scapegrace son”; “--- an empty old rake, who qualified ardent Whig politics by private morals of the lowest restoration type.” One of the “very odd” things is that while references to the son’s excesses are frequent and explicit the present writer has found no support for these strictures about the father beyond the evidence already presented.

By Letters Patent dated 7th July, 1712, Queen Anne raised the son to the peerage as Baron St. John of Lydiard Tregoz and Viscount Bullingbrook, and on 10th August le Duc d’Aumont, the new French ambassador, recorded “son Pere Mr de St. Jean est encore en vie, et est Wight [Whig] aussy outre que le fils est Thorris [Tory], ce qui fait peu de commerce entre eux.” But the father is said to have remarked, “Ah, Harry, I always said you would be hanged, but now I find that you will be beheaded.” To this comment one writer has applied the adverb “cynically”, and another has taken it as evidence that “little love was lost between father and son.” But is it necessarily more than the old man’s idea of a joke about his admittedly scapegrace son? Against the repeated references to a “quarrel” – with precious little supporting evidence (on 25th June, 1711, Dr. William Stratford, of Christ Church, Oxford, a close friend of the Winchcombe family, to which Bolingbroke’s first wife Frances belonged, mentioned in a letter to Edward Harley “a coldness between that unhappy man, [i.e., the future Bolingbroke] and his father” but added “--- I know not the cause.”) – must be set the terms of the letter that the son wrote early in 1715 thanking his father for the efforts he had made when King George was known to be pressing for the attainder. After denying having had dealings with the Pretender and declaring himself to have been “always

as true a Friend to his [i.e. King George's] Succession as any of those who clamoured the loudest", Bolingbroke added, "A thousand Thanks for your speaking to Lord Treasurer, and for all other instances of your Care and Tenderness." Whatever other facts may have been involved, it is evident that in what was probably the son's darkest hour the father made serious efforts on his behalf, and the son appreciated them. These efforts may have delayed the peerage that was again in the offing for the father.

Soon after Henry the younger became Viscount Bolingbroke in 1712, an anonymous author, who on the evidence of one sentence may have been the genealogist Arthur Collins, published *Notitia St. Johanniana*, a 42-page booklet sold at sixpence. A paragraph about the new peer's father runs :

Which Sir HENRY has often serv'd his Country in Parliament, and not degenerating from his Noble Ancestors, bears that good Character which Flattery cannot reach, and Truth speak for Bashfulness. He hath Married twice --- and has Issue --- among others, George, who (tho' young) is endu'd with Excellent Accomplishments, and is now Her Majesty's Secretary at the Congress at Utrecht.

In fact, Bolingbroke's half-brother George actually brought the signed document of the Treaty to England.

Viscount St. John

In June 1714, six weeks before the death of Queen Anne, a news-letter reported that Sir Henry was going to drink the waters at Aix-la-Chapelle, a yacht being ordered for him. On 27th July the Queen dismissed Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, her Lord Treasurer and principal minister – an event for which Bolingbroke had been scheming – and for a brief moment Bolingbroke became, in effect, head of the government though not Lord Treasurer. But on Sunday, 1st August, the Queen died, King George was proclaimed, and Bolingbroke took the oaths at a special session of the Lords. Later in the autumn the new King did not retain him in office – Whig ministers were appointed. *The Weekly Packet* for 25th December – 1st January 1714/5 reported :

His Majesty has likewise honoured Sir Henry St. John, father to the Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, with his Royal Presence at Dinner.

On 16th February 1714/5 Mary, Countess Cowper, Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess of Wales, recorded in her diary the report of the Duchess of Roxburgh that Sir Henry St. John was to be made an earl, and the Duchess desired her to try to prevent it. On the following day Baron Bernstorff confirmed the report, and the Countess argued that such a mark of favour would infallibly damp the prosecution that the King was driving against Bolingbroke in the next session of parliament. On the 28th Lady St John supped with the Countess and showed her the letter quoted above – that Bolingbroke had recently written to his father with professions of his innocence in respect of the Pretender. (The Countess took a copy.)

Bolingbroke's professions and his father's efforts failed, for in the following summer the son was impeached and attainted; but the protests against the proposed earldom succeeded, and nothing happened about the peerage till July 1716.

Meanwhile, in January 1715/6, George, Henry's eldest son by his second marriage, had died in Venice. Half an hour before his death he had said to his servant, "Tell my Father I die a Whig and always was one." On 2nd February the Countess called upon Lady St. John, and described her in her diary as "the most melancholy and afflicted Woman for the Loss of her Son that I ever saw in my Life." Even on 8th July, 1716, when at long last a peerage had been granted and Lady St. John again called on the Countess, the diary recorded, "She talks of her dead Son, cries, and tells of the Ingratitude of the Duke of Marlborough to him."

The letters patent dated 2nd July, 1716, raising St. John to the peerage, granted him not the earldom that had been mooted earlier but the Titles of Baron of Battersea, in the County of Surrey, and Viscount St. John. Various comments may be quoted. In 1752 the anonymous author of *Memoirs of the Life --- of --- Bolingbroke* used the expression "by which the Loss which the Family sustained by the attainder was repaired". In 1797 Mark Noble wrote that Henry St. John was "for his great worth created by King George I ---", and in 1884 R. Harrop mentioned "half a century's service in the cause of freedom." But the letters patent referred at some length – in Latin – to his distinguished descent from the baronial families of Ewyas, Tregoz, Grandison, and Beauchamp – who had held the Lydiard manor – ; to his great-great-uncle Oliver, who had become Baron Tregoz and Viscount Grandison; to the many members of the family who had been distinguished at home and in war; and to Henry's own many and great services to the state ("ob multorum magnorumque in republicam meritorum rationem"). Three years later – on 6th May, 1719, when supporters were granted to the new peer (the document survives in the vestry of St. Mary's, Battersea), this was summarized in English in the words, "considering the Great Vertues, Illustrious Antiquity and Nobel Extraction ---". There is, however, the contemporary entry in the Countess Cowper's diary, 8th July, 1716, "Everybody believes that the Duchess of Munster had 5,000l. for making Lord St. John a Lord." (Late in June Erengard Melosine, Baroness of Schulenburg, mistress of King George I, had been created a Baroness, Countess, Marchioness, and Duchess of Ireland by the Name, Style and Title of Baroness of Dundalk, Countess and Marchioness of Dungannon, and Duchess of Munster. Later she became Duchess of Kendal in the peerage of England.) The new viscount took his seat in the Lords on the following 20th February, wearing his parliamentary robes and escorted by Viscount Townshend and Viscount Longueville. Presumably his lordship and his lady were present in their coronation robes at the coronation of King George II on 11th October, 1727.

From 1717 the new viscount headed the Battersea assessments for poor-rate; but he continued to reside in the West End, and he expected to die there, for he left legacies to all his "Meniall Servants --- who are living with me in my House in Albemarle Street at the time of my Decease".

Evidences of his interest in Lydiard and his presence there are scanty. Presumably, but not necessarily, he was there for parliamentary elections and for the burial of an infant son Powlet in 1695, but Lydiard seems to have become the home of his sister Barbara and her husband, Sir John Topp, Bt., for they were both buried there in 1700 and 1727 respectively. Only two material evidences of his activities there remain. The genealogical tree executed on the triptych in the church in 1694 – presumably by order of Sir Walter – was brought up to date in 1718 by the addition of evidences of the viscounties of 1712 and 1716. The heraldic details on the engraved plate of the sun-dial on the terrace of the mansion suggest that it is to be dated between 1716, the date of his viscounty, and 1736, the date of his wife's death. He left forty pounds for clothing twenty poor persons of Lydiard Tregoze and twenty pounds for clothing ten poor persons of "Lydiard Millicent or North Lydiard". There are isolated references to his daughter Henrietta's presence there in 1719 and 1731.

Similarly, evidence of Viscount St. John's presence in Battersea is scanty. St. Mary's served occasionally for such family events as weddings and funerals. Henrietta, later Lady Luxborough, the only daughter who grew up, was married there to Robert Knight on 20th June, 1727, although the bride is described in the register as "of the parish of St George's, London". Viscountess St. John was buried there in 1736, and Holles, their last-born child, in 1738. Henrietta, his executrix and sole residuary legatee, erected the monument that is now on the wall of the south gallery, for which purpose Holles had left a sum of fifty pounds. But two other incidents in Battersea raise unanswered questions.

In 1723 King George I granted a pardon to the attainted Bolingbroke, and he could therefore dare to return from his exile in France without the risk of losing his head. On a visit to England that summer he spent one night in Battersea, and the churchwardens paid the ringers twelve shillings "for ringing when my Lord Bullingbrook came to towne". In fuller details *The Daily Post* for Tuesday, 2nd July, recorded :

"Great Rejoycings were made at Battersea on Friday last, upon the late Lord Viscount Bolingbroke's Arrival there, where his Father the Lord Viscount St. John hath a pleasant Seat, is Lord of the Manour, and much respected. A stately Bonfire was made on that Occasion, and a Hogshead of Strong Beer given among the Populace to drink his Health: Next Morning he set out from thence."

But *The Daily Journal* of the same date gives Sunday as the day of the rejoicings, and hints that political feelings were aroused by reporting that "notwithstanding all Precautions to the contrary, some of the People were for shewing a Satisfaction, in their Way, at his Presence". The scandal of the South Sea Bubble had discredited the Hanoverian dynasty and stimulated Jacobite intrigue, and Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, had been tried and exiled. Bolingbroke, returning from exile, is said to have met Atterbury at Calais as he went into exile. (Atterbury is said to have remarked, "My Lord, we are exchanged." Nothing in the relevant dates discredits the story.) But what is the significance of the "Precautions

to the contrary”? Was the father in residence? Why did the son stay only one night? Is this related to the “quarrel”, the estrangement between Whig, Hanoverian father and Tory, quondam Jacobite son?

On “June 28 O.S. 1730” Bolingbroke added a postscript to a letter to his half-sister Henrietta, Mrs. Knight, in the words :

“--- Jack [i.e., his half-brother John] and his wife dine here [i.e., at his “farm” at Dawley] tomorrow. I suppose you know they had y^e honour the other day to entertain his R: Highness y^e P: of Wales att Battersea.”

Obviously Viscount St. John was not host and was presumably not present. Three weeks later – on July 20/31, 1730 – Bolingbroke again wrote to Henrietta :

“--- I dined at Battersea on my way from London on Saturday. There was more company than dinner.”

(Fifteen years later Bolingbroke wrote, “They [i.e., Jack and his wife Anne] have made y^mselves a proverb in the country already for their stingyness.”)

Angelica Magdalena, Viscountess St. John, died on 5th August, 1736, and was buried in St. Mary’s, Battersea, on the 10th. Writing to his son-in-law, Robert Knight, shortly before her death the Viscount had said “--- what I am sure of is that --- I shall lose a Virtuous and good wife, and you a good relation and friend.” But when the news reached France Bolingbroke’s wife wrote :

“--- La chere mylady St. Jean est morte; c’est ce qu’elle a fait je croy de mieux depuis qu’elle estoit au monde. On dit que son mary et ses enfans n’en ont pas este plus afliges que moy.”

(Dear Lady St. John is dead; I think it’s the best thing she has done while on earth. They say that her husband and children haven’t been more distressed about it than I.)

Doubtless an embarrassing incident at the funeral was long remembered in Battersea. *The London Daily Post, and General Advertiser* for Friday, 13th August, 1736, recorded :

“On Tuesday night last, when the Corpse of the Right Hon. the Lady Viscountess St. John, which was inclosed in three Coffins, was taken out of the Hearse, some of the Bearers not having strength sufficient to bear it, it fell to the Ground; by which Accident Robert Ball, one of them, who endeavoured to save it from falling had his Arm broke: It was aferwards taken up, and decently convey’d to the Church-Door, where the Entrance into Battersea Church was so low as not to permit it to be carried in on Men’s Shoulders, so that they were obliged to convey it on Rollers from thence to the Place of Interment.”

On 13th October, 1738, the Viscount, aged just 86, made his will, signing the four sheets with a clear, neat, but shaky signature. His youngest son Holles had died a week before and had been buried in St. Mary's on the 11th. Bolingbroke had been in England since midsummer, selling his property at Dawley and renewing his political contacts, and may have attended his half-brother's funeral. It seems probable that at this time there were discussions of family business, the upshot of which was that Bolingbroke resigned his interests in Lydiard Tregoz to his half-brother John. In 1743 Bolingbroke wrote a letter to John – it is quoted in *Our Lady of Batersey*, p.90, but its present location cannot be traced – in which he said, “I said you and y^r children were to keep up the Family and in that view I put you four years ago in possession of the seat of it”. In fuller details he wrote to his half sister Henrietta from Battersea on 10th August, 1745 :

“--- I am glad that my Lord St. John has done so much at Lydiard. I abandoned it to him that he might restore that family seat, and that by living there decently and hospitably he might restore a family interest, too much and too long neglected. He may perhaps do the first in time, he seems pleased with what he has done --- ”

This squares neatly with the evidence of the stone in an attic at Lydiard Park recording the re-building of the house in 1743. The re-modelling of the building itself was so thorough-going and the quality of the external stonework and the internal decorations so high that a period of some four or five years between the initial agreement and the completion of the work must have been necessary. But presumably the prior acquiescence of the old Viscount in the arrangement between his two surviving sons was also necessary. Incidentally, the fact behind the decision is the same as had been declared thirty years earlier: St. John had failed to maintain the family prestige in the County. This may well have been the cause – or, at least, a cause – of the “quarrel”, “estrangement”, “coldness”, or whatever is the right word, between father and son. Bolingbroke's letters to Marchmont indicate that in his opinion a gentleman of parts and spirit ought to be active in high politics, as Bolingbroke himself was – or tried to be – throughout his adult life. As Professor Hart puts it (in *Viscount Bolingbroke, Tory Humanist*, p.26) Bolingbroke's political ideals included “a genuine devotion to the idea of public service, a willingness to accept the responsibilities of the governing class”; and it was just here that his father conspicuously failed. This is the point of Swift's oft-quoted comment. But a caveat must be entered. St. John was a member of the Commons for twenty years and of the Lords for a fairly long period in his active life. A fuller investigation of his career there than the present writer has been able to make might modify the judgement. Quite certainly it would dispose of Lady Hopkinson's words, “who had never done a day's work for his country”. (*Married to Mercury*, p.133.)

But the old viscount, now in his middle eighties, lived on, seeming “at present not to have the least inclination toward [solving Bolingbroke's financial problems by dying]. I verily think he is more likely to marry again than to die”,

as William Pulteney put it in a letter to Swift on 21st December, 1736. A few days earlier Bolingbroke had written from France asking his brother-in-law, Robert Knight, to keep him informed about the old man's health, or rather, as he put it,

“any accident y^t may happen to him. as I should not be sorry for his death, so I do not wait with impatience for it, nor build Schemes upon the prospect of it. He may possibly live longer than myself. but knowing the little honour, & conscience that he carrys about him, prudence would oblige me to take certain measures if I Saw any reason to expect he might go off soon, which may be neglected with more decency in his present state.”

A year or so later Lady Bolingbroke wrote in French to the Countess of Denbigh a passage that may be rendered :

I have heard no other news of Lord St. John except that he is always seen driving about in his coach. He has had a quarrel with his son-in-law, young Knight; he just keeps himself alive and that is all. God will take him when it pleases Him; nobody on this earth will regret him, and Heaven will not gain much by it.

And five months later, on the eve of Bolingbroke's visit mentioned above, she wrote again in terms that may be rendered:

The undying father – “le pere eternel” is her phrase – has been very ill indeed, but he always has himself walked about in the streets although his legs are very swollen. If he is to go and sleep with his forefathers it would be convenient to us that it should be now.

Similarly, in March 1741 Bolingbroke informed his friend Marchmont that his own movements would depend on my Lord St. John's health” – by which he really meant “death” – or a rupture between France and Great Britain, neither of which contingencies he regarded as likely. And he had to wait for dead men's shoes for more than another year.

The letters of John, later 2nd Viscount St. John, and his wife Anne (born Furnese) refer rather to the old man's mind than to his body. On 11th August, 1737, Anne mentioned “That Fit of nonsense rather than Palsy”, adding “I suppose he continues to enjoy good health and Ill humour.” On 11th October John asked his brother-in-law Knight, “what Signifys an old fools being wrong headed? Tis but what's Common; sure y^e Divines are out when they say rewards and punishments are not of this world when it is plain old frump & Morris were sent to us for our iniquitys.” John and Anne had recently called on the old man in connection with his birthday – which squares with his christening on 17th October, 1652 – for the letter continued, “Our Birthday odes were both very stiff & formall.” They both made ironic remarks about certain recent actions of the viscount's “and ye fool took it for Earnest & baulk'd us.” A month or so later Anne wrote, “We at

present propose being in Town about the 9th of December, when I don't doubt we shall be regaled with the sight of 85 more blooming than 84." Anne was right on her basic facts – the birthday that made the old man 85 instead of 84 had occurred some two months before. But Walter Sichel embroidered this into his annual birthday parties which compelled the clan around him." George and the Viscountess were dead; Bolingbroke and his wife were in France; and Henrietta was exiled to Warwickshire. At most the party could have consisted of John and Anne, one or possibly two of their young children, and Holles – hardly a "clan" – and within a year Holles died.

In short, apart from the drunken brawl and Swift's one sentence, there is fairly consistent evidence of his character throughout his life. As early as 1680 he was cutting a dash with his chariot and six Flanders horses in Bath and Tunbridge, and as late as 1738 he was parading himself in the streets in his coach when his legs were too swollen for him to walk. In between he was residing in the fashionable West End, hob-nobbing with Royalty and High Society, angling for a peerage, but failing to maintain the family's prestige in the County. As early as 1679 the French thought him "un peu fol" – a bit of an ass; and as late as 1737 his son John mentioned "an old food being wrong-headed".

At long last, on 8th April, 1742, the old man did die, half way through his ninetieth year, and was buried in St Mary's, Battersea, on the 16th. In addition to the legacies already mentioned he settled ten thousand pounds on trust for Henrietta with ultimate reversion to five named grand-children, and made small legacies to near relatives and friends. He left \$40 to the Free School in Wandsworth, in which he had taken a benevolent interest, but nothing to his father's school in Battersea, presumably because his father had endowed it; and \$20 for clothing ten poor persons in Battersea not receiving alms of the parish. (The wills of his sons Holles, John, and Henry contain no such bequests to the poor of the two Lydiards and Battersea.) He had erected no monument to his parents or to either of his wives; his surviving children erected no monument to him.

Two portraits of 1st Viscount St. John are known to the present writer. The one at Lydiard Park (No. 31) shows his lordship in parliamentary robes and must be dated about 1718. The late Mrs. Stirling's collection of St. John portraits at Battersea – formerly in the possession of Miss Raleigh King – includes a full-length of his lordship in coronation robes, dated 1727 the year of the coronation of King George II. Its ascription to Kneller is untenable – he died in 1723. In the same collection a companion portrait and a head-and-shoulders show the Viscountess, but the identification of No. 14 at Lydiard Park is very doubtful.

SOURCES FOR THE ESTCOURT MURDER

Official records at Guildhall, London

The Coroner's Inquisition finding St. John and Webb guilty of murder, 15th November, 1684.

Two Grand Jury documents indicting St. John and Webb individually for murder and manslaughter.

Six recognizances, dated 15th, 16th November, to appear at December Sessions – Stokes, Yorke, Browne, Masklyne, Stonehouse, Grubb.

Entries in the Sessions Book for December and January.

Entries in the Sessions Calender for January.

Recognizance of Kidwell to appear in January.

Official records at the Public Record Office

1684, 16th December. The King's decision to reprieve – SP.44/335, p.381.

1684, 24th December. The King's decision to grant pardons –
SP.44/335, pp.402, 403.

1684, 30th December. The King's reference of the petitions for the restitution of lands and estates to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury –
SP.44/71, p.81.

1684/5, 14th January. Restitution of lands, etc. – Index to Patent Rolls.

1685, 17th April. St. John's petition for leave to sue forth a writ of error granted – SP.44/71, p.128.

1685, 10th May. Webb's similar petition granted – SP.44/71, p.142.

Contemporary printed references

- 1684, November. *A Sad and Lamentable Account* --- Bodleian Library, Ashmole F5 (92).
Guildhall Library has recently bought a copy of *A Sad and Lamentable Account* --- Press mark B' side 29.9. (The two Guildhall Library press marks to be added.)
- 1684, December.) *The Proceedings on the King's Commissions of the*
1684/5, January.) *Peace* --- Printed by E.Redmayne for R.Turner
Available at Guildhall and Guildhall Library.
Similar accounts printed by E.Mallet, formerly available at the British Museum; not now available.

Contemporary private references

(i.e., before the death of St. John 1742)

- 1684, 14th November. Narcissus Luttrell – first printed in his *Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs*, 1857.
- 20th November. Roger Morrice's Entering Book, in MS at Dr. William's Library.
- 1684, 29th November. Anne Stephens, letter to her cousin Abigail Harley – Portland MSS Vol. III, p.383. *Hist: MSS.Comm.* 1894.
- 10th December. Narcissus Luttrell – see above.
- 11th December. Newsletter to John Squire – printed in *C.S.P.D.*
- 12th December. Nathaniel Harley, letter to his brother Robert – Portland MSS Vol.II, p.237. *Hist: MSS. Comm.* 1893.
- 13th December. Newsletter at Longleat – quoted in *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* 1897.
- 16th December. Newsletter to John Square – printed in *C.S.P.D.*
- 18th December. Roger Morrice – see above.
- 20th December. John Evelyn, *Diary* – first printed 1818.
- 30th December. Newsletter at Longleat – quoted in *W.A.M.*, see above.
- 1684/5, 1st January. Edward Bedingfield, letter to Countess of Rutland – *Hist: MSS. Comm.* 12th Report, Part 5, p.84.
- 10th January. Newsletter to John Squire – printed in *C.S.P.D.*
- 13th January. Newsletter at Longleat and Muddiman's Journal – quoted in *W.A.M.*, see above.
- 15th January. Roger Morrice – see above.
- 16th January. Narcissus Luttrell – see above.
- 20th January. Muddiman's Journal – quoted in *W.A.M.*, see above.
- 20th January. Thomas Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, The King's Power to pardon Murder; printed as No.2 in his --- *Cases of Conscience*, 1692.
- Before 1692. Objections from Gen.9, 6 Answered – printed as No. 3 in Barlow's *Cases of Conscience*, 1692.

LYDIARD TREGOZ

by the late Christopher Hussey, C.B.E., F.S.A.

(Being the architectural description of Lydiard Park, extracted and adapted from the two *Country Life* articles of 19th and 26th March, 1948, by Christopher Hussey. The extracts appear by kind permission of the Editor of *Country Life*.)

This little-known but remarkable house is best approached from the churchyard. This unprepossessing view reveals at once that the house is of much greater age than the lovely Georgian facades disclose. These, of which only the south-eastern and south-western are visible from the park, have tower-like pavilions. They are faced with finely jointed ashlar of golden hue, probably Chilmark stone, which has preserved the sharpness of the sparsely used but fine mouldings. A balustraded parapet surmounts them in front of a roof of stone slates (lead on the pavilions). [The lead has since been replaced with copper.] These fronts overlook a level wooded park falling slightly to the south-east whence the house was evidently intended to be approached.

A good deal of the old house is evidently incorporated in the Georgian rebuilding, notably the east wing. But the back elevation is a jumble of additions of many dates. The present main hall probably occupies the position of a Tudor or mediaeval great hall.

The contrast between the picturesque patchwork behind and the highly finished fronts is at first sight extreme. But it is more apparent than true. The attic pavilions are actually timber-framed and lined with boards internally, with stone facing on their outer sides and the return faces in some cases hung with slates. The timber-framing of the main roof penetrates and turns inside the south-east pavilion, which is a dummy, as is its south-west counterpart. Only the north-east pavilion contains a room, approached by a turret. The inference is that the corner pavilions were afterthoughts [?], added when the main reconstruction was already well advanced. This may account for a double angle at the south-west corner of the front, visible in the plan and suggesting that either the main façade did not quite fit the older structure, or the facing of the pavilion did not quite fit the façade, at this point.

Despite the [possible] change of intention or interruption of building, and the obvious parsimony or haste in finishing it, the principal rooms were completed with utmost magnificence, and the external craftsmanship is of the finest.

No architect is known to have been employed, and identification on stylistic grounds is clearly a risky undertaking. Moreover, the unprofessional manner of its finishing off might confirm the lack of a regular architect. Nevertheless the exquisite simplicity of the elevations and quality of the details, and the assured accomplishment of the internal decoration, surely disprove a master mason having along been responsible.

The beauty of the main hall, 30 ft. by 25 ft. and about 25 ft. high, can be appreciated all the better now, with the architect's treatment of the noble space as its only furnishing. The plaster busts on their brackets are part of the original scheme. Rysbrack's marble portrait of Bolingbroke is dated 1737, and it owes its continued presence to the reverence of an old housekeeper. Dallaway, in a note to his edition of Walpole's *Anecdotes* (1828), mentions that when the furniture of Lydiard House was on a previous occasion dispersed by auction, the bust was hidden by this faithful servant in a vault under the church until it could safely be restored to light. [The bust also survived the sale in 1843.]

The rebuilding of the house was never completed, and possibly the design was altered in course of construction. Only the south and east fronts were rebuilt; the back of the house was left a patchwork of many dates, and the three angle pavilions are mere shells.

Nevertheless the principal ground-floor apartments were completely decorated, and are exquisite examples of the taste and craftsmanship of the 1740s. By then the political distinction between Whig and Tory architectural allegiances had largely disappeared, though Tories tended to be the more conservative. To the left of the main hall, which occupies the entire centre, is the library (30 ft. by 25 ft.) lined with a continuous arrangement of shelves accented at intervals by broken pediments which project slightly on plan. Plaster busts of ancient and more recent philosophers occupy the pediment breaks, and the faces of the shelving are richly carved to patterns. The broken pediment motif is repeated in the fireplace of white and coloured marbles surmounted by an ornate overmantel. The ceiling has a design of broad ribs, moulded with a key pattern, consisting in a central circle with radials to semicircles and smaller octagons.

Right of the main hall is a rather narrow dining-room, 18 ft. by 30 ft., with two columns forming a service division at its inner end. The walls are simply treated for hanging family portraits, and decoration is concentrated on a very graceful overmantel composition.

Beyond, occupying the entire east end, is a grand suite consisting of drawing-room, state bedroom, and ante-room. Both the former measure 30 ft by 20ft., and their walls above the dado have an old flock paper with a crimson damask design. The drawing-room has a ceiling of oblong divisions formed by straight ribs, their surface moulded as swags of fruit and flowers with a female mask at each intersection: a design reproduced from one at the Queen's House,

Greenwich. There are good entablatured door cases, as in all these rooms, and the chimney-piece is a version of the pattern in which the impost consists in cherub-headed terms (cf. Examples at Chiswick House and Houghton). The state bedroom is chiefly notable for the rococo of its ceiling, charmingly light and graceful, which, however, gives place to a more strictly architectural though equally sumptuous design in the space beyond the columned screen at the north end. There is (or rather was) an analogy to the two side panels in features of the library ceiling of Isaac Ware's Chesterfield House (c. 1750). Beyond the state bedroom is a narrow apartment, 15 ft. by 10 ft., which has a particularly rich ceiling, and an apse in its north wall. The latter strongly recalls Kent's handling of the same motif at Holkham and Chiswick.

Too much importance need not be attached to these resemblances, most of which lie within the repertoire of the early Georgian purveyors of decoration. The chimney-pieces, for example, no doubt came from Carter's or another sculptor's shop. On the other hand, the analogies are definitely with London and not with any provincial centre; the execution is first-rate and the themes are not only consistent in each room but with one another, producing the impression that they were selected and combined by a knowledgeable and fastidious mind.

The house has been twice damaged by fire, though the principal rooms were not affected. Apart from the subsequent repairs, no alteration and little maintenance of the building seem to have been undertaken. Consequently it remained devoid of modern conveniences, the roof has fallen into a deplorable state and dry rot has since been discovered in much of the woodwork. But for the timely intervention of the Swindon Corporation in acquiring the house, this historic example of Georgian architecture and decoration would probably have soon become beyond repair. Even as it is, the expenditure required is formidable. Conservative plans have been made for adapting the house to a centre for social and other conferences, with residential quarters in the west wing and upper storey, thus preserving the beautiful reception-rooms intact for meetings, lectures, etc. The view may be expressed that the highly commendable initiative of the municipality in preserving an outstanding historical monument for cultural purposes deserves substantial encouragement in order that the work of restoration, already begun, may be completed in a worthy manner.

Monumental Inscriptions – 3

Sir John St. John, 1st Baronet, d.1648, and his two wives
Anne (Leighton) and Margaret (Whitmore).

Translation by the Rev. J.T.Wharton, M.A., with additional notes.

INSCRIPTION

D : S
IOH^S: ST IOHN MILES ET BARONETT^S ANNV AGENS XLIX
MORTALITATIS SVAE MEMOR H. M. M. P. C. A. MDCXXXIII
ET SIBI ET II VX
ANNAE SL. ET
MARGARETAE

ANNA	MARGARETA
FILIA FVIT TH: LEYGH-	FILIA FVIT GVIL:
TON EQ: AVR: EX ELIZ:	WHITMOR ARMIG: DE
CONIVGE GENTIS KNOW-	APLEY PROVINCIAE SALOP.
LESIAE ET REGINAE ELIZ:	VIVIT
TAM VIRTVTIS Q. ^M COGNATIONIS	LVIII AGENS ANNVM VIRTVTIS
ERGO IN DELICIIIS.	LAVDE SPECTABILIS, ET BONIS
VIXIT	OPERIB' INTENTA IN ISTVD
AN. XXXVII EXIMIIS ANIMI ET COR-	HVIVS FAMILIAE REQVIETORIUM
PORIS ET GRATIAE MVNERIB' DOTATA	SVO TEMPORE (NI ALITER IPSA
RARV VIRTVTIS ET PIETATIS EXEM	OLIM STATVERIT)
PLV XIII LIBERORV SVPSTITV MATER	AGGREGANDA.
TANDE AERVMNOSIS VLTIMI PVERPERII	
AGONIB' DIV CONFLICTATA ET DEMV VICTA	
FVGIT IN COELV XIII CAL. OC A MDCXXXVIII	

EXPANSION OF TEXT

Deo Sanctum

Johannes St. John miles et baronettus annum agens nonum quadragensimum mortalitatis suae memor hoc monumentum marmoreum ponendum curavit anno MDCXXXIII et sibi et duabus uxoribus Annae scilicet et Margaretae

Anna
filia fuit Thomae Leyghton
equitis aurati ex Elizabetha
coniuge gentis Knowlesiae
et Reginae Elizabethae
tam virtutis quam cognationis
ergo in deliciis.
vixit
annos septem triginta eximiis animi
et corporis et gratiae muneribus dotata
rarum virtutis et pietatis exemplum
tredecim liberorum superstitem mater
tandem aerumnosis ultimi puerperii
agonibus diu conflictata et demum victa
fugit in coelum xiii calendas Octobres
anno MDCXXXVIII

Margareta
filia fuit Guilielmi
Whitmor armigeri de Apley
provinciae Salopiensis
vixit
octavum quinquagesimum agens annum
virtutis laude spectabilis, et bonis
operibus intenta in istud
huius familiae requietorium
suo tempore (ni aliter ipsa
olim statuerit)
aggreganda.

TRANSLATION

Sacred to God

John St. John, Knight and Baronet, in his 49th year, mindful of his mortal nature, had this marble monument ^A put up in the year 1634 to himself and to his two wives, namely Anne and Margaret.

Anne ^B was the daughter of Thomas Leighton, Knight ^C, by his wife Elizabeth, of the Knowles family and of the kindred of Queen Elizabeth, as blessed in character as in connection. She lived for thirty-seven years, endowed with noble gifts of mind, body, and manner, a rare example of virtue and piety; she was the mother of thirteen surviving children; in the end, long worn down by the painful agonies of her last confinement and at last overcome, she fled to heaven on 19th September, 1638 ^D.

Margaret was the daughter of William Whitmore, Knight, of Apley in the county of Shropshire; she is living, in her fifty-eighth year, notable for the fame of her virtue and given to good works; she is to be added to the tomb of this family when her time comes ^E (unless she one day otherwise decides).

NOTES

- A. Marble monument. Pevsner describes it as all alabaster. (*The Buildings of England. Wiltshire*, p.285.) It is of alabaster, but the columns and platform are either of black marble or, more probably, of slate. Pevsner describes it as “Sumptuous eight-poster, the centre part raised in an arch. Top achievement and excellently carved little allegorical figures.”

Dimensions of the monument:

Height		14' 9" above plinth (4½ high)
Maximum width		6' 4"
Length	12' 8"	
Height of kneeling figures		from 1' 8" to 2'0"
Length of recumbent figures		
- Sir John		6'0"
- his wives		5'4"

Sir John is depicted in full armour, with sword and spurs, and wears a standing ruff. At his feet is the St. John falcon with a crescent for difference. His first wife, Anne, holds her thirteenth child, whose birth was the cause of her death. His second wife, Margaret, is holding a book and has fashionable slashed sleeves to her dress. Of the five boys at St. John's head, the eldest three wear swords, spurs, and long boots, the other two wear shoes. The eldest boy has a falling ruff; the other four hold books. All three girls at Sir John's feet hold books.

The base of the monument on its north side carries representations, on roundels and rectangles, of the four children – three sons and one daughter – who died prior to 1634. Two of the children are kneeling, two are reclining. The representation of these children includes four skulls, two palms, and one wreath. The base on its south side carries similar roundels and rectangles, but these are all blank.

The lace-work on the clothes of all sixteen figures is particularly note-worthy, the designs are all different.

The monument is steadily deteriorating through the corrosion of the iron dowels which join together the several parts, particularly the upper work. As stated in *Report No.4*, p. 74, the buttresses and crowning falcon crashed

inside the monument during December 1970. The urgency of a complete restoration of this monument cannot be over-stressed.

- B. The inscription states that Anne Leighton was the daughter of Sir Thomas Leighton and Elizabeth Knowles. She was their granddaughter. Much confusion has been caused by the fact that there were two Sir Thomas Leightons, father and son. (See *Report No. 3*, pp.36-37.) Anne's grandmother was a first cousin once removed of Queen Elizabeth I: a fact which is triumphantly expressed on panel 3 of the triptych. (See *Report No.2*, p.25.)
- C. Literally 'golden knight'. (See *Report No.4*, pp.33-34.)
- D. This is an error. Anne Leighton died in 1628.
- E. Margaret Whitmore died in 1637 and was apparently buried according to her wishes in Lydiard Tregoz church. Sir John's will states his wish to be buried at Lydiard Tregoz "betweene my two wives that lye buryed there." Margaret Whitmore is also represented on a memorial in the chancel of Great Wishford church, Wiltshire, lying beside her first husband, Sir Richard Grobham – full-length figures under a canopy.

Further description of the monument

The upper structure bears achievements, crests, and allegorical figures.

(Diagram of monument needs to be inserted here)

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- 3 Twelve quarterings on a cartouche, with swags of fruit. (See below.)
- 8 St. John with Ulster hand in a canton in dexter chief impaling firstly, Leighton, and secondly, Whitmore. All three coats have a crescent for difference.
- 10 Twenty-three quarterings on a cartouche with swags of fruit. (See below.) There is a wyvern for crest.

CRESTS:

- 2 Hames for Tregoz.
- 4 Wyvern for Leighton.
- 9 Dove (with a crescent on its breast for difference) for Whitmore.
- 10 Falcon (St. John) formerly in pride of position, surmounting crossed buttresses.
- 12 Garb and two sickles for Hungerford.

ALLEGORICAL FIGURES:

- 1 Faith represented by a female figure looking up to heaven, book in left hand, right hand resting upon a plain cartouche shield.
- 5 Hope represented by a female figure with left hand resting on an anchor.
- 7 Charity represented by a female figure with two children, one in her arms.
- 13 Immortality represented by a female figure with wreath in right hand holding in left hand a palm branch with stretches over the left shoulder.

INSCRIPTION:

Numbered 6 on the plan. Set out at the beginning of the article. The tablet is set beneath an entablature bearing a broken pediment and the helm of a knight.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

Report No.3, pp. 25-34, discusses the marshalling of the several achievements in the church and compares the achievements on this monument with the seventy-one quarterings on the triptych, noting that there are minor differences between them. Here are listed these differences. The figures in the brackets refer to the corresponding coat among the seventy-one on the triptych. For a full list of these, see *Report No.2*, pp. 28-29.

3 The Hungerford Twelve

1(45),	2(46),	3(47),	4(48),
5(49),	6(50),	7(51),	8(54),
9(57),	10(55),	11(69),	12(68).

The differences in this group are as follows :

1st Baronet's Monument	Triptych
4 Argent, 3 garbs Or...	(48) Azure, 3 garbs Argent ...
5 Argent, a lion rampant Gules within a bordure engrailed Sable	(49) Argent, a lion rampant Gules crowned Or within a bordure engrailed Sable charged with 8 bezants
6 Gules, a chevron Or	(50) Gules, on a chevron Or 3 eagles displayed Sable
11 Gules, 3 pales wavy Or	(69) Paly wavy of 6 Or and Gules

10 The St. John twenty-three

1(1),	2(3),	3(4),	4(5),	5(6),	6(7),
7(8),	8(2),	9(9),	10(10),	11(12),	12(14),
13(21),	14(23)	15(24)	16(25)	17(26)	18(27)
19(29),	20(30),	21(31), 2	2(39),	23(44).	

The differences in this group are as follows :

1st Baronet's Monument	Triptych
1 The Ulster hand is in dexter canton. (See note below.)	(1) The Ulster hand is in centre fess.
4 Chequy Or and Gules, a fess Ermine	(5) Chequy Or and Azure, a fess Ermine
6 Azure, seme of cinquefoils Or, a lion passant guardant	(7) Argent, a lion passant guardant between 10 cinquefoils Gules
7 Ermine, on a fess Azure 3 cross crosslets Or	(8) Ermine, on a fess Azure 3 crosses moline
8 Argent, a lion rampant double queued Gules	(2) Argent, a lion rampant Sable armed and langued Gules
9 Addition of a mullet Sable for difference	(9) Pronominal Beauchamp
12 ... charged with 12 bezants	(14) ... charged with 8 bezants
16 ... a bendlet Sable	(25) ... a bend (bendlet?) Gules

NOTE ON THE ULSTER HAND

A baronetcy is represented heraldically by the addition of the badge of Ulster – Argent, a sinister hand coupé at the wrist Gules – as an “augmentation”. It may be borne on a canton or on an inescutcheon. Sir John’s arms bore the family’s two mullets in chief and a crescent at fess point for difference. Where should the augmentation appear? There is evidence at Lydiard Tregoz of four attempts to solve this problem :

1. The seventy-one quarterings on the triptych show an inescutcheon at fess point – with the consequent displacement of the crescent.
2. The hatchment to Anne (Leighton), d.1628, in the south aisle has a small canton in centre chief. Perhaps Sir John thought this treatment belittled the honour.
3. The arms over the south-east doorway (1633) bear a large inescutcheon in centre chief. Such an addition might be obscuring a third mullet.
4. The 1634 tomb has the least satisfactory answer: a canton is in dexter chief, and one mullet is completely covered. This solution was also tried in the east window at Battersea (c. 1631).

It would appear that Sir Walter preferred the first of these solutions, as evidenced by his treatment of the subject throughout the later work on the triptych.

INSCRIPTIONS ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE MONUMENT

SR. IOHN ST IOHN HAD ISSVE BY ANNE HIS FIRST WIFE

OLIVER	FEB	9	1612	OLIVER MARIED KATHERINE
ANNE	NO	5	1614	DVGHTR AND HEIRE OF HORACE
IOHN	MAR	24	1615	LORD VERE BARON OF TILBVRY
WILLIAM	MAR	29	1616	
EDWARD	FEB	26	1617	ANNE MARIED TO SR HENRY
BARBARA	FEB	15	1618	LEE OF DITCHLY IN THE
				COVNTY OF OXFORD BARONET
NICHOLAS BORNE	MAR	29	1620	
LVCY	IVLY		1621	
				NICHOLAS AP 18 1629
WALTER	MAY		1622	
FRANCIS	IVLY		1623	FRANCIS IAN 13 1633
				DIED
ELIZABETH	AV		1624	
				ELIZABETH AP 2: 1629
THOMAS	SEP		1625	
HENRY	IVLY		1628	THOMAS IVLY 23 1630

(N.B. The error in the date of the birth of William is pointed out in *Report No.1*, p.3. The date should read March 29, 1617. Furthermore, the Bishop's Transcripts at Salisbury give January 13, 1632/3, for the burial of Francis.)

God form'd a Mould of Clay which then beganne
 when he first breath'd into't to be a man
 we raise this Pile of stone and in its Wombe
 laying that breathles Clay make it a Tombe.

A Tombe soe pretious that what here w^{thin}
 Sleeps for a while shal rise a Cherubin
 in which the wealth of Natures treasury
 (more beawty goodnes Vertue cannot dy:)
 The loue and glory of her Sex, the best
 of women, mothers, and of wiues doth rest
 first went the Mother, after her must goe
 Father and Children, and you (Reader) too.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

- 1586 Born, the second son of Sir John St. John and Lucy (Hungerford). The year of his birth is usually given as 1585 – presumably on the evidence of the inscription on his tomb. But at the Inquiry (Inquisitio post mortem), held at Salisbury on 27 September, 1597, (P.R.O. C142/249/82) after the death of his elder brother Walter (See *Report No.3*, pp.36-8), John was stated to be 11 1/3 years old – which, if correct, would give his date of birth as about May 1586.
- 1592 August. Visit of Queen Elizabeth I to Lydiard Tregoz. Knighthood conferred on his father. (See *Report No.4*, p.70.)
- 1594 His father died, aged forty-two. Under the terms of his will, uncle Oliver St. John, his father's younger brother, was made responsible for John's education. Oliver married Joan (Rydon or Roydon), widow of Thomas Holcrofte and lessee of the Battersea manor, presumably before – but not long before – 16th October, 1593, for he headed the Lay Subsidy Roll of that date for Battersea. Oliver's career in Ireland was a distinguished one. He was successively Vice-President of Connaught, a Commissioner for the Plantation of Ulster, and, from 1616 to 1622, Lord Deputy of Ireland. In 1620/1 he was created 1st Viscount Grandison in the Irish Peerage and, in 1626, Baron Tregoze of Highworth in the English Peerage. In March 1626/7 he purchased from the Crown the manor of Battersea and Wandsworth.
 (The significance of Battersea for the Wiltshire St. Johns is seen in the number of their weddings, births, and burials that took place there.)
 By his father's will John inherited a life interest "after the expiration of Ashcombes lease in my farme in Garsington with the appurtenennces called by the name of Havelles Fee" and \$200 to be received at the age of twenty-one "towards his better prefermente". Garsington is about 3 miles S.E.of Oxford. The manor had been surveyed by Nicholas St. John, d.1589, John's grandfather, who was

also responsible for the enclosure of the manor of Lydiard Tregoz. (See V.C.H. Oxfordshire, vol. V, p.140 and V.C.H. Wiltshire, vol. IX, p.84.) The Battle of Bosworth, 1485, saw the triumph of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond. But as King Henry VII, he found that his throne was far from secure. In April 1486 he was nearly captured in York by a conspiracy of three lords, and in the spring of 1487 Lambert Simnel, posing as Edward, Earl of Warwick, was crowned in Dublin Cathedral on Whit Sunday, May 24, as King Edward VI, and crossed to England on June 4. Prominent among his supporters was John de la Pole, who had been created Earl of Lincoln during the lifetime of his father the Duke of Suffolk. He had been with King Richard III at Bosworth but had later taken an oath not to maintain felons. In the three-hour battle at Stoke-on-Trent on June 16 he was slain, and shortly afterwards his forfeited properties at Hatfield Peverel in Essex and Garsington were given by the king to Oliver St. John, d.1497, the younger of his mother's half-brothers. Garsington was held by six generations of St. Johns till 1611, Hatfield Peverel remained in the family till 1674. The fact that Garsington Rectory was held by the President of Trinity College, Oxford, may explain the choice of that College by several Wiltshire St. Johns. Both properties had at one time been held by Alice Chaucer, granddaughter of the poet.

- 1597 John inherited the family estates on the death of his elder brother Walter on 18th August. These estates included, in addition to the manor of Lydiard Tregoz, the manors of Hatfield Peverel, and Purley in Berkshire. Lydiard Tregoz had come to the St. Johns through the marriage of Oliver St. John, d.1437, with Margaret Beauchamp, d.1463. It was their younger son, Oliver, d.1497, who received the manors of Hatfield Peverel and Garsington from King Henry VII in 1487. The manor of Purley (and Farley Chamberlayne – see *Report No.4*, p.48) had come through the marriage of Sir John, of the next generation, d.1512, with Jane Ewarby. (This fact was commemorated at Purley by John, 1st Baronet. See below, under c. 1633.)
- 1598 4 June. His mother died, aged thirty-eight, after a short second marriage to Sir Anthony Hungerford. (See *Report No.4*, pp. 16-17.) Either at this time or before, the family was dispersed. Lucy Hutchinson, in her *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, 5th edition, p.11, states that her mother Lucy, one of John's sisters, went to live with uncle Oliver at Battersea, "the rest of my aunts, my mother's sisters were dispersed to several places."
- 1601 3 April. Matriculated at Trinity College, Oxford.
- (1602/3 24 March. Death of Queen Elizabeth 1. Accession of King James I.)

- c. 1603 Portrait painted, aged seventeen, (portrait No. 49 at Lydiard Park). Two other portraits are at Lydiard Tregoz: the 1615 portrait on the triptych, and probably portrait No. 40 in Lydiard Park.
- 1604 15th October. Student at Lincoln's Inn.
- 1606/7 3 February. His eldest sister, Katherine, married to Giles Mompesson. (See *Report No.4*, pp. 35-47.)
- c. 1607 Sister Jane married to Robert Atye, of Kilburn.
- 1608/9 2 February. Knighted at Whitehall.
- 1610/11 12 February. Sister Anne married to Sir George Ayliffe, of Grittenham, Brinkworth parish.
- 1611 (The order of events in this year is not known.)
 Sold the manor of Garsington to John Wise and John Smith.
 Married first wife, Anne Leighton. According to Lucy Hutchinson, John's sisters returned to Lydiard Tregoz.
- 22 May. Created baronet by King James 1. Perhaps partly because of his age, he ranked seventeenth in the list of the eighteen to be so created. This was the first creation of baronets. The king wished to raise money for his Ulster project, the project in which uncle Oliver was so involved. For those qualified by their estate, hereditary baronetcies were obtainable for a once-for-all payment to save each generation the bother of obtaining a knighthood and paying the necessary fees. Baronetcies carried precedence over knights of the bath and knights bachelor, but not over bannerets, who ranked after barons. The price of a baronetcy was based on the cost of maintaining thirty soldiers in Ulster at eight pence per day per man for three years, i.e. £1,095: incidental fees brought the total to £1,200. As Sir John had already been knighted he was not among the ten of his fellow baronets who were knighted in 1612.
- c. 1611 Sister Barbara married to Sir Edward Villiers, half-brother to George Villiers, later created 1st Duke of Buckingham.
- 1611/12 10 February. Sister Eleanor married to Sir William St. John at Battersea.
- 1612 Presented Thomas Marler, later Archdeacon of Sarum, to the Rectory of Lydiard Tregoz.
- 1612/13 9 February, first child, Oliver, born. Christened at Battersea, 23 February.

- 1614 Some insight into Sir John's character is afforded by Lucy Hutchinson in her *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, p.12. After describing a visit to Guernsey made by Lady St. John and her sister-in-law Lucy about 1614, she goes on to hint at a rift in the lute after they had returned to Lydiard:
... some malicious persons had wrought some jealousies, which were very groundless, in my uncle [Sir John] concerning his wife; but his nature being inclinable to that passion And my mother [Lucy St. John] endeavouring to vindicate injured innocence, she was not herself well-treated by my uncle, whereupon she left his home ...
- 5 November. Daughter Anne born.
- 1615 20 July. The commemorative triptych in Lydiard Tregoz church, made in memory of his parents. (See *Report No.2*, pp.18-29.) "The most splendid and remarkable monument of the kind surviving in England." (*Lydiard Park and Church*, p.20.)
- 14 October. Sister Jane (formerly married to Robert Atye) married to Charles Pleydell, later Sir Charles, of Midgehall, at Lydiard Tregoz.
- 23 October. Sister Lucy married to Sir Allen Apsley, d.1630, at St. Anne's, Blackfriars. (Their children included Lucy who married Colonel Hutchinson.)
- 1615/16 24 March. Son John born.
- 1617 29 March. Son William born.
- 1617/18. 26 February. Son Edward born.
- 1618/19 15 February. Daughter Barbara born. (Nothing further is known about Barbara except that she married a Mr. Egerton, and died sometime between 1634 and 1645, i.e. between the making of her father's tomb and the drawing-up of his will.)
- 1620 29 March. Son Nicholas born. Christened at Lydiard Tregoz, 17 April.
- 1621 Parliament proceeds against Sir Giles Mompesson.
- July. Daughter Lucy born. Christened at Lydiard Tregoz, 15 July.
- 1622 - May. Son Walter born. Christened at Lydiard Tregoz, 3 June.
- 1623 - July. Son Francis born.

- 1623/24 12 February. Member of Parliament for the county of Wilts. This Parliament was prorogued on 29 May, 1624; successive prorogations kept it in being until it was finally dissolved by the death of the king on 27 March, 1625.
- 1624 - August. Daughter Elizabeth born.
- 1625 (Death of King James I. Accession of King Charles I.)
- September. Son Thomas born.
- 1628 - July. Son Henry born.
19 September. Wife, Anne (Leighton) died. Her funeral achievement is in the south aisle of Lydiard Tregoz church.
- 1629 2 April. Daughter Elizabeth died, aged four years.
18 April. Son Nicholas died, aged nine years.
- 1630 23 July. Son Thomas died, aged four years.
23 October. At Great Wishford, married Margaret (Whitmore), the widow of Sir Richard Grobham, aged about fifty-four, and ten years his senior. Margaret Whitmore was born about 1576, the daughter of Sir William Whitmore, of Apley, Salop, and of London. She married, about 1602, Richard Grobham, of Great Wishford, Wilts., who died at the age of seventy-eight on 5 July, 1629. Richard Grobham was steward to Sir Thomas Gorges, of Longford, Wilts., who was married to a former Marchioness of Northampton, a lady-in-waiting and a great favourite of Queen Elizabeth I. The Queen presented Lady Gorges with the hull of a ship belonging to the Spanish Armada which had been wrecked in Southampton Water. A descriptive notice in Great Wishford church tells us :
... in the hull were found bars of silver and such a vast treasure as served to complete the pile at Longford [Longford Castle, the Gorges' home, re-built 1591], and to enrich their steward Richard Grobham who procured the honour of knighthood [1st April, 1604, at Royston], and left a fortune almost equal to that of his master. In the year before his death he founded the almshouse for four poor people and enriched it with lands at South Newton.
- 29 December (according to the monument in Battersea church) or the 30th (as appears on his coffin plate) Uncle Oliver, Viscount Grandison, died. Sir John inherited the manor of Battersea and Wandsworth.
Our Lady of Batersey, p.70 :
The new Lord of Battersea, Sir John St. John, Knight and Baronet, was a man of considerable wealth and some culture – with a proper sense of the dignity and importance attaching to his illustrious descent and to the exalted connections of his ancient family.

- 1631 Supervised the erection of the memorial to Uncle Oliver, a memorial for which the latter had already contracted during his life-time with Nicholas Stone. The Latin inscription declares that Sir John, placed the monument – a claim that gives him a little more kudos than was appropriate. Sat to Cornelius Jonson for Portrait No. 40.
- c. 1631 Responsible for the erection of the east window in Battersea church. (See *Our Lady of Batersey*, chapter IX.) The window is of three lights, and is a remarkable heraldic composition. The St. John family and its connections are here presented in thirteen badges, thirty-four coats of arms, and the portraits of Margaret Beauchamp, King Henry VII, and Queen Elizabeth I. Sir John's penchant for display is almost unbelievable!
- 1632 2 October. Marriage of eldest daughter Anne to Sir Francis Henry Lee, of Ditchley, Oxfordshire, d.1639, at Battersea. Patron of Liddington, Wilts. (Phillipps, *Institutions*.)
- 1632/33 Sheriff of Wilts.
- 1632/33 13 January. Son Francis died and was buried the same day at Lydiard Tregoz, aged nine years.
- 1633 Remodelling of the chapel in the south aisle of Lydiard Tregoz church. "Only the 15th-century east wall and window were retained; the south wall was rebuilt, being embellished on the outside with his and his wives' arms, and the party wall with the chancel was completely removed and replaced by an open Tuscan screen." (*Lydiard Park and Church*, p.18.)
- c. 1633 Erection of the east window in Lydiard Tregoz church. (See *Report No.1*, pp.13-19.)
- Christopher Hussey, in his *Country Life* article of 16 April, 1948, drew attention to two other windows "apparently duplicates of the "Oliver St John window at Lydiard Tregoz , at Purley and at Hatfield Peverel – formerly a St. John manor." The evidence for a St. John window at Purley is fairly good, but at Hatfield Peverel the evidence is against such an attribution. The fragments at the latter church do include part of a figure that is presumably St. John the Baptist, judging by the hand supporting a book on which a lamb is resting, but the glass dates from a century before our Sir John. The companion figure, not necessarily the other of an original pair, wearing a long ecclesiastical robe, cannot be identified. Furthermore, the St. John manor and its church lay to the north of the main Chelmsford-Colchester road; the church containing the fragments lies to the south of the road and belonged to a different manor and to a different family.

Mention of Purley church must include the memorial erected by our Sir John to his great-great-grandmother, Jane Ewarby, through whom the manor came to the St. Johns. The memorial was formerly on the south wall of the chancel but is now on the south wall of the tower.

Lydiard Park and Church, p.20, rightly states that at Lydiard Sir John contributed greatly “to the extraordinary wealth of St. John monuments which give the impression of a private chapel belonging to a patrician family rather than of a parish church.” Apart from his own tomb and that of his fourth son, Edward, what did Sir John contribute in addition to the 1615 work of the triptych, the east window, and the remodelling of the south chapel? In an enthusiasm to ascribe everything produced in the 17th century to him, it has been suggested at times that he also provided the Royal Arms on the chancel screen together with the screen itself, the early carved work incorporated in the present manorial pew, and the arms of his elder brother, Walter, at present positioned on top of the monument to Nicholas St. John.

The case for Sir John having been responsible for these four additions can neither be ruled out nor proved. The Royal Arms were first placed in parish churches after the year 1534 when King Henry VIII assumed the headship of the Church of England. Each successive change in the royal achievement meant a renewal or, at least, the repainting (where the arms were on canvas) of the Arms in each parish church. The Royal Arms in Lydiard church belong to the Stuart dynasty between 1603 and 1688. During the Commonwealth the Royal Arms were removed – to become compulsory once again in 1660. Our magnificent set, unusual for its being carved and painted on both sides, could well be ascribed to the time of the Restoration rather than to Sir John’s time.

The chancel screen is undoubtedly early 17th-century work, although a photograph taken prior to the 1901 restoration shows that the central span of the screen was replaced at the time of the restoration. The model of the church on view in Lydiard Park made by Thomas Loyd, c.1840, has a central span. The pair of gates, at present in the old church stable, completed the screen originally. (The photograph, formerly the property of Rector Baily, also shows that the Royal Arms were at that time fixed to the wall above the chancel screen – a position for which they cannot have been originally intended.) The screen is a very simple affair, hardly worthy of Sir John’s panache, although very fine for all that.

As for the other two, nothing can be certain. The carved work on the manorial pew may well have been commissioned by Sir John. Sir John’s elder brother was head of the family for only three years, as a boy in his teens. He may have commissioned the carving of his arms during that period – otherwise they are a memorial set commissioned by Sir John.

- We return with certainty with:
- 1634 The erection of his own tomb. (See description earlier in this article.) “A superbly extravagant canopied monument for himself and his two wives.” (*Lydiard Park and Church*, p.20.)
21 November. Presented Thomas Temple to the Vicarage of Battersea.
- 1635 Marriage of his eldest son Oliver to Catherine, daughter of Horatio, Lord Vere.
- 1636 Patron of Nettleton, Wilts. (Phillipps, *Institutions*.)
Birth of first grandson, John, eventually 2nd Baronet.
- 1637 Death of Margaret (Whitmore).
- c. 1638 Description from Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, p.56: “her mother ... was gone into Wiltshire ... where her brothers Sir John St. John and Sir Edward Hungerford, living in great honour and reputation, had invited her to visit them.”
- 1639 Contributed \$50 toward the cost of the new steeple at Battersea. (See *Our Lady of Batersey*, p.71.) (One of what must have been many benefactions to the churches on his estates.)
- 1641 Eldest son Oliver died.
- Before
1642 Daughter Lucy married to Richard Brogham Howe, of Great Wishford, the great-nephew of Margaret (Whitmore). (See M.I. in Great Wishford church.)
- 1642 Outbreak of the 1st Civil War. *Our Lady of Batersey* makes claims about Sir John’s active participation in the field – “During the period of the Civil War ... Sir John St. John and three of his sons were away busy in the King’s cause in the north and west” (p.72), and “With his elder sons and many of his connections [Sir John] took up arms in the Royalist Cause, to which he was zealously attached, contributing generously to its funds ...” (p.164). No evidence has been found to support these claims about Sir John, either that he himself took arms or sent plate or money to the King. He disappeared from the Battersea assessments for the three years, 1643,4,5, when it is presumed he was resident at Lydiard. Perhaps Battersea was too close to the Parliamentary stronghold of London. For the involvement of his sons and wider family, see [Report No.4](#), pp.13-18.
- 1642/43 2 February. Son Lieutenant William aged twenty-five, killed at Cirencester. Buried at Lydiard Tregoz, 8 February.

- 1643 Presented William Blackbourne to the Rectory of Lydiard Tregoz.
Son Lieutenant-Colonel John, aged twenty-seven, killed. Buried at Newark, 15 December.
- 1644 *Calendar of the Committee for the Advance of Money*, I, p.406:
30 June 1644 Sir John St. John, Battersea.
Assessed at £2,000.
- 29 July 1644 The £30 paid, with £200 lent, to discharge his assessment, being his proportion on oath, for which the Public Faith is given to Clement Oxenbridge, contractor of Dean and Chapter lands.
- 27 October. Son Captain Edward, aged twenty-six, mortally wounded at the Second Battle of Newbury. Died five-and-a-half months later, and was buried at Lydiard Tregoz, 17 April, 1645. His memory is preserved in the Golden Cavalier monument at Lydiard, the last monument commissioned by his father. (To be described in next year's *Report*.)
- c. 1654 Daughter Anne, widowed in 1639, married to Lieutenant-General Henry, Lord Wilmot.
- 1645 Presented Timothy Dewell to the Rectory of Lydiard Tregoz. (Rector for forty-seven years.)
June. The St. John Chancel Fund established by Sir John and endowed with a rent charge of \$10 in perpetuity. (See *Report No.2*, p.9 ff.)
June and July. Will drawn up, "a document of voluminous length and copious verbiage." (*Our Lady of Batersey*, p. 165.)
- 1648 Died at Battersea at the age of sixty-two. The date of death is not known, but probate was granted on 20 September. His will directed :
- And as for the manner and charge of my funerall, and the blacks for mourning and other thinges necessary concerning the same I leave it to the care and discretion of my sonnes Walter St. John and Henry St. John or such of them as shalbe then living and within this Kingdome [Walter supervised, for Henry was in Holland in 1648], But therein I doe hereby direct them that it be done privately without any pompe or Ceremony more than for blacks and mourning, wherein though I doe not direct any thing, yet I doe hereby limitt them that therein and the rest of the charge of my funerall they doe not exceed the sume of five huded pounds in the whole.

It may well be that the actual funeral at Lydiard, which took place on 18 October, was without pomp and ceremony, but the lying-in-state at Battersea was such that Walter was prosecuted by the College of

Heralds. William Ryley, *Lancaster Herald*, (B.M. Harl. MS. 5176 ff.186-8.) reported that the heraldic display far surpassed what the Heralds would have permitted for a baronet. (Fuller details of this will be given in a later *Report*.)

In the light of all this, Mr. Richard Ormond's comment about the making of the triptych in 1615 – see page 4 of this *Report* – is interesting: “I am sure that many of Sir John's neighbours would have thought that he was getting ideas very much above his station, even for a newly-created baronet.” Perhaps by 1648 they had ceased to be surprised.

Sir John's heir was his grandson John who became 2nd Baronet at the age of twelve, and died in 1656. Of the 1st Baronet's thirteen children only four outlived him: Anne, Countess of Rochester, d.1696; Lucy, Lady Howe, d. before 1661; Walter, 3rd Baronet, d.1708; and Henry, d.1679. (For Henry, see *Report No.2*, pp.1-8.)

Shorter Notes

The death of the first Walter St. John by drowning on 18 August, 1597. (See *Report No.3*, pp.36-38.)

The official record of the inquest held on 19 August has now been found, transcribed and translated. The present writer is very grateful to Mr R.H.Videlo, Her Majesty's Greffier (Clerk of the Royal Court), Guernsey, to Capt. G.L.C. Davis, R.N., and to Mr. John Lenfestey, for their active co-operation in the preparation of the following fuller account of the bathing fatality.

The activities of 18 August began at a very early hour – two or three hours before dawn – when Mr. William Taylor, Gentleman Porter of Castle Cornet (“Chasteau Cornet”), did as directed and called the Governor, Sir Thomas Leighton, in preparation for the hunting expedition to Herm (“Erme”). The Governor had originally intended that Peter Carey senior but not the four young people (Thomas Leighton the Governor's grandson, Walter St. John, Peter Carey junior, and Samuel Cartwright) and their tutors should be of the party, and the decision was there and then confirmed by Sir Thomas to Taylor. Nevertheless on his way to ensure that Peter Carey and the sailors were ready Taylor found that young St. John was already up and partly dressed. Taylor repeated the Governor's decision that the young people were not to go, but St. John said that on the previous

evening the Governor had consented that he and young Leighton should go. St. John and Leighton therefore went on dressing, and Taylor went back to Sir Thomas. Daubeny, the tutor (“Maitre d’Escolle”), who was at hand said he would like to go, and if the Governor consented he would take their text-books and set the young people to work.

Now the Governor’s cook was ill in bed, and the Governor would have to take the kitchen-boy with him on the expedition, leaving nobody in Castle Cornet to prepare dinner there. So the Governor consented.

It was still very early in the morning when the party reached Herm, and for an unspecified period the young people did their lessons with their tutor Daubeny. (The record calls them “enfants”, and young St. John and young Leighton referred to each other as “frere” throughout the record. The relationship between the Governor and young Leighton is stated in the words “pere” and “fils”, but the teen-age Leighton of 1597 can hardly have been the *father* of Anne Leighton – wife of 1st Baronet St. John – who died in 1628 at the age of thirty-seven. He is more likely to have been her brother and, despite the terms of the record, a grandson of the Governor. Occasionally, according to Littre, “pere” and “fils” do mean “grandfather” and “grandson”. Presumably the four young people formed a reasonably homogeneous group; Walter was probably 15 to 17.) By nine o’clock their lessons were finished, and then Mr. Nicholas Blake, their “maitre de musique”, took them in singing till about 10 o’clock. By this time the hunting was over; the Governor called on Daubeny to say Grace, and Leighton, the elder Carey, Daubeny, the four young people, and several others sat down to dinner.

After dinner the young people asked permission to go bathing. The Governor refused the request two or three times, and their tutor tried to dissuade them on the ground that the sun was giving no heat. Eventually the Governor consented, insisting, however, that three elder persons – Daubeny, Johyn Andros, and his barber John Farell – should go with them, and that the young people should not be allowed to go too far out into the sea.

Young St. John hurried on ahead of the others and was the first to enter the water. The other three followed, though young Leighton and St. John were only in shallow water. St. John shouted that he was going to go nearer to Leighton, but as he ducked to swim the sea suddenly swept him away. Andros ran towards a rock that was jutting out near St. John, but fell, hurt his foot, and could go no further. Daubeny plunged in, reached St. John, and told him to scramble on to his back, which St. John did. Daubeny then sank and was unable to regain the surface. St. John then called to Andros for help. Andros threw himself into the sea, but became entangled with weeds, sank to the bottom, and only saved himself by reaching a submerged rock. John Farell the barber also went to the rescue, but very soon came to a deep hollow, could not reach St. John, and had much difficulty in saving himself by reaching a rock. John Bowyer also went to the rescue, got into deep

water, and found the body of St. John standing up entangled in weed. He grabbed it and with great difficulty pulled it ashore.

Henry de Calleys and nine other witnesses testified to finding Daubeny's body on a spiky rock on his stomach, his feet dangling in the water on the one side and his head on the other side. They pulled him into their boat, and were afterwards given St. John's body and took them to Castle Cornet.

About an hour after the bathing party had set off, Peter Carey the elder, with the music master and another, saw Andros and young Leighton coming with the ill news. He immediately went to the Governor, who was heavily asleep in his tent – he had been up since an hour after midnight – tugged at his cloak several times, and informed him that Daubeny was drowned; and as he began to get up Andros and young Leighton added that St. John was also drowned. The Governor stood stock-still, quite at a loss and astonished. Hearing that the bodies were still in the sea, Carey ran to the spot and pressed Henry de Calleys and his crew to recover the bodies. Carey returned with others to Castle Cornet with the bodies in this boat. The Governor returned in his dinghy. The scene of the fatality was a place called Les Mouillieres.

The inquest was held on the following day before the Baliff and eight Jurats (Magistrates). The principal witnesses were Peter Carey the elder – himself a Jurat, though he did sit on the Bench on this occasion – William Talor, Blake (the music master), John Andros, John Farell (the barber), and John Bowyer. Twenty-one other witnesses confirmed or amplified the evidence of the six main witnesses.

F.T.S.

Bolingbroke Castle – a correction

In *Report No.3*, p.2, the present writer used a sentence that was true when originally written but is no longer true – “to-day only a grass-covered mound marks the site of Bolingbroke Castle.”

Since 1965 research work has been conducted by the Ministry of Public Building and Works – to whose guardianship the property was committed by the Duchy of Lancaster in 1949 – under the direction of Dr. M.W. Thompson, M.A., F.S.A., to whose help in the preparation of this note the present writer most gratefully expresses his indebtedness. Very much masonry is now visible. The ground-plan of the castle was an irregular hexagon with a maximum diameter of about 290 feet at the outside of the towers and with sides varying from 50 to 150 feet in length. At the north angle two towers guarded the gate-house, the passage of which was 8 ½ feet wide.

Single towers stood at the other angles on circular bases, but only fragments of the foundations of the one at the eastern angle survive, and the south-western tower was re-built in the 15th century on an octagonal base. The walls of the towers and the lengths of wall connecting them were 12-13 feet thick and are in places up to 15-18 feet high. The internal buildings seem to have been timber framed, and surviving evidences are scrappy; but the hall seems to have stood on the east side of the inner area with its service end at its south end. These remains of internal buildings will have to be covered up, but the main defences will eventually be open to the public.

The castle was surrounded by a moat which may eventually be cleared out and re-filled with water. To the south is a large rectangular area 200 yards square with a moated rectangular pond. To this castle yard unclaimed animals from the pounds within the Soke of Bolingbroke were brought. About a hundred yards north of the castle stands the church.

Fuller information is available in *Medieval Archaeology*, Vol.10, pp.152-8, and Vol.13, pp.216-17.

F.T.S.

Queen Elizabeth I and her Privy Council.

In *Report No.4*, p.70, it was stated that the Queen attended meetings of her Privy Council. This is a fine example of a historical statement made from supposition rather than from fact. J.J.Bagley in his *Historical Interpretation: 2*, Penguin, 1971, p.66, writes, "Unlike her father, Elizabeth never attended privy council meetings. She used her Secretary – Cecil, Smith, Walsingham, or some other – as the liaison officer, through whom she could convey her orders to the council, and from whom she could receive detailed reports of council business."

B.G.C.

Lydiard Park.

Officers of the Corporation have supplied the following information:

During the year the number of visitors enjoying the facilities of the house and grounds has been well maintained, and the use of the stable block by youth organisations for holiday and conference purposes has been much appreciated. In addition to this service to the general public, certain groups have made use of the house for conferences.

During May 1971 Ealing Technical College ran a pilot management course for members of their own staff. In June the National Unions of Railwaymen Women's Guild held a two-day conference. In November Headlands School had a pupils' Educational Conference.

In January of this year the second re-print of *Lydiard Park and Church* was made, to be sold at 20p.

Two acquisitions during the year are worthy of special note. A recent visit to the house by Mr. E.H.North, of London, led to his giving the Corporation a superb dessert service which is displayed on the dining room table. The service consists of thirty-seven pieces – a large centre piece, a pair of sweet containers, six large oval fruit dishes, four smaller fruit dishes, and twenty-four plates – and is decorated with a floral design on a white ground. The maker is not known for sure. The service may be by Copeland & Garrett, the successors to Copeland, or possibly late Rockingham. According to Mr. North the service was made about 1840.

The Corporation purchased a charcoal version of Reynold's painting of Lady Diana (Spencer) (1734-1808), wife of Frederick, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke. The drawing was made by G.F.St.John in 1830.

St. Mary's Church.

The Rector writes:

No further work has been done on the church fabric since Report No.4, since we have been concerned to raise funds to meet the costs already incurred. Happily, real progress has been made in this respect. The outstanding debt on the Nave roof has been cleared, and with a further grant from the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust we have also cleared the Architect's fees of \$200. With very little in hand, we are approaching Mr.Brakspear to put in hand the 1971 Quinquennial Essential Repairs, then estimated at \$1250. This work will include the south aisle roof.

The Church Council continue to be most grateful for the marvellous work put in by the Fete and Gymkhana Committee. The 1971 Event, the seventh to be held realised \$450. The Committee granted the Church Council \$495.61 during 1971 to clear off the last of the Nave roof account.

Now that the decision has been made to tackle the south aisle roof the Church Council have turned their attention to the vast range of work to be done to the memorials and fittings of the church. Expert advice is being sought initially from the Council for the Care of Places of Worship. We hope to have further information on this subject in the near future.

Mr.Nathaniel Hiscock.

Readers of this *Report* will no doubt have been entranced by the account by Mr.Hiscock of his early years in the district. The article reproduced here is the first part of a trilogy. His retirement memoirs continued with an account of his twenty-one years service in the Royal Marines and a further ten in the Royal Fleet Reserve. The third part dealt with his experiences as an Instructor at Haleybury.

In a letter, Mr.Hiscock wrote, "I have tried not to Bore anyone with repetition of detail, but to put down the things & events as they happened. I could have put in a lot more *Robust* things, but Mr.Nicholls [Rector Baily's grandson] said *NO*."

Mr.Hiscock died on February 22., 1969, just over a year after the death of his wife. His step-daughter, Mrs.Leete, has written to encourage the publication of part of his memoirs as a tribute to one "who was loved and respected by his family for his strength and loyalties. Truly a good man."

**The
Society**

The Officers of the Friends of Lydiard Tregoz for 1971/2 were the same as for the previous year.

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Editor of the Report: The Rev. Brian Carne

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Mrs.I.St.John,
Rev.F.R. and Mrs.St.John,
Mr.G.R.St.John, M.C.,

Died 4 Oct. 1972.

Miss Harris St.John,
Mrs.H.M.F.St.John,
+ Miss Judith St.John,
Mrs.J.M.St.John,
Mr.K.O.M.St.John,

Viscount Bolingbroke.

Sir Walter St.John Grammar School, Battersea High Street, London SW11 3JB.
Mr.R.E.Sandell, M.A., F.S.A., F.L.S., The Museum, 41 Long Street, Devizes.
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The Misses A.& P.Yeo,
Brigadier Peter Young, D.S.O., M.C., M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., F.R.G.S.,

Statement of Account for the year ending 31st May, 1972.

	£ p		£ p
Balance b/fwd.	155.85	<i>Report</i> and Research materials	21.39
Subscriptions and donations	62.97	Catering (Annual Meeting)	3.50
Bank Interest	6.14	Printing and stationery	1.47
		Postages	5.98
		Travelling expenses (Mr.Ormond)	5.00
		Gratuity – Caretaker	2.00
		Balance c/fwd.	185.62
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	224.96		224.96
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Audited and found correct – M.Sharp, 31.5.72.

POSTSCRIPT

Report No. 1 was a modest 24 pages, this year's production runs to 87! Members must be warned not to expect further progressions in the size of future *Reports!*

Warm thanks are due to Mr. Ormond for his fascinating talk at last year's Annual Meeting and for the trouble he took in correcting the transcript of his talk for publication. Thanks are also due to the Editor of *County Life* for his ready permission to reproduce the architectural descriptions from Mr. Hussey's four articles. As Editor, I must tender my personal thanks for Mr. Smallwood not only for his contributions but also for his constant and happy collaboration in continually checking and re-checking scripts.

In the production of each year's Report Swindon Corporation very generously make available to us the materials for duplicating, and Mrs. Harris each year becomes more and more an authority on Tregoziana in her monumental task as typist (except for this last paragraph!). We are very grateful to them.

Brian Carne.

The Friends of Lydiard Tregoz
June 24th, 1972
Free to members