

FRIENDS OF LYDIARD TREGOZ

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Postscript.

Wall-paintings in English churches

by E. Clive Rouse, M.B.E., M.A., F.S.A.

The address given to the 1974 Annual Meeting at Lydiard Park.

Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure and indeed a great excitement to come to this remote spot and find such a large and enthusiastic audience. First of all, I should like to say something about wall-paintings in general in this country, because people either do not know that they exist, or don't know anything, or care anything about them, if they do. It is one of the tragedies of this country that England is the only country in Europe that has no official set-up for dealing with its wall-paintings. Whether you do anything about them or not is still left to the individual whim of the local incumbent and his church council. Luckily, certain advisory boards will now prevent you from actually destroying wall-paintings, though even that is not unknown. But the situation in this country is that very little is known about them, and that, in my view, a wholly wrong approach has been adopted towards wall-paintings in the past. I am going to ask you this afternoon to take a totally different view of wall-paintings from what you have ever taken before - if, indeed you have ever had a view before.

In the past the doom of many English wall-paintings has been sealed because, in Victorian times, they were regarded simply on their artistic merit. "Is it a good picture?", they asked. Nine times out of ten, in a remote English church, it is not a good picture. It was never intended to be or, shall I say?, that was not the primary object of the exercise. And secondly they asked, "Is it complete?" Of course, it isn't complete. If you had been hanging on a wall for six hundred years and had been whitewashed, hacked about, and plastered, you would have had a few corners knocked off! So what I am going to ask you to do to-day is to approach them from the point of view from which they were painted. I will go into that in a moment.

I think it is of the first importance to realize that in the past - at least up to the Reformation - every church in this country, no matter how small or how poor or how remote, was more or less completely painted. Now that is difficult to realize, because what you find when you go into the average church is the nice, clean, neat, white-washed wall - that is all right so long as it isn't emulsion paint rather than lime wash - or a rather dirty, scruffy, tatty, half-uncovered, and entirely mis- or under- understood set of paintings such as you have in the church next door. Or - the third and most disastrous alternative - bare stone-work, where ignorant and wicked people have torn the plaster off to show the beautiful old stones that were never meant to be seen. I might just as well come into your drawing-room and say, "Look here, have all this stupid wall-paper off, tear the plaster down, and show the nice rough brickwork". You wouldn't be very pleased, would you? The rough rubble-walling of your church walls are the skeleton. They are the bare bones of the building, which were meant to be decently clothed with plaster and adorned with painting. And people who have torn the plaster off or failed to take the trouble to mend it properly have been responsible for the destruction of hundreds, literally hundreds, of wall-paintings in this country in the last

century or a little more.

You may say, I'll accept that these churches had wall-paintings, but why don't we see more of them?" The answer to that is, I think, three-fold. First of all, the mediaeval artist never intended, or at least never thought, that his paintings would last for ever. In the Middle Ages changes were constantly taking place. Perhaps the village grew, and you needed more accommodation, so an aisle was put on. Or there was additional ceremonial, so the chancel was lengthened. Continual changes resulted in mutilation or destruction of paintings and their replacement by others. This is a curious attitude. In the past they did not seem to have the antiquarian prejudice that we have to-day. I am all in favour, as an Antiquary myself, of saving everything preservable, but if in the past they had a beautiful painting of the life of St. Catherine up there and the church was rather dark and someone offered them a new window, they had no compunction whatever in getting rid of St. Catherine and letting the light in. We have to be prepared for that. So, provided what was new was good, their view was that what was new was better than what was old. So these things were constantly being destroyed or mutilated and replaced. In forty years of work on wall-paintings I think I can produce only three instances where a wall-painting was consciously restored. Fragments survive in plenty: they are to be regarded as bits of a jig-saw puzzle. The individual pieces may be meaningless, but you don't throw them away, because if you throw the bits away, you will never complete the picture. So it is with these scraps. What may be missing here at Lydiard Tregoz may be recovered somewhere down in Devonshire. Don't ignore a bit of painting because it is not understood, nor destroy it because it is rather scrappy. Right, that is the first reason why they disappear.

The second was, of course, the Reformation. You have an example of this in your church. The representation of the Virgin and of the Saints is no longer there. It was popish and superstitious, and you could not have them. They were not always destroyed, but were often obliterated by limewash, and replaced by pious texts, by Time and Death, the Royal Arms, and other things.

But the third and most shaking cause of destruction must be laid at the doors of our Victorian ancestors. Immense works of restoration went on in churches during the nineteenth century. Don't misunderstand me: I am thankful that this was so. People grumble about what Lord Grimthorpe did at St. Albans. Indeed, he did things that we might not do to-day or might do differently, but if he hadn't done them we should probably not have half St. Albans to-day. But with wall-paintings it was a different thing - they were popish. I don't know what your religious views are. Some may be C. of E., some of you may be R.C. I hope some of you are Quakers, Non-Conformists. It doesn't matter. I happen, by persuasion, to be an extreme Low Churchman, and I have spent my working life revealing popish pictures! I hope that the Saints will put in a good word for me! The Victorians were prejudiced. They had a complete lack of understanding. Their basis of assessment, as I have said earlier on, was simply, "Is it a good picture?" And consequently endless paintings were destroyed. There is a book, rather disgracefully the only one that has ever been published in this country, purporting to list the wall-paintings then existing. It was published in 1883, by Charles Edward Keyser, of Aldermaston, Berks., and has never been brought up to date. People say to me, "Why don't you do it?" This would be a life-time's task. Whether it will ever get done, I don't know, but probably half the paintings listed by Keyser in that book have now gone. It is also true that almost as many again have been added. That is the situation.

But why should churches have been painted? You say, "Don't be ridiculous, surely you hang a picture on your wall to decorate your room". That was not the main purpose of the mediaeval artist painting Lydiard Tregoz church. He was there for two purposes. He was there, first and foremost, to stimulate devotion. And, secondly, he was there to teach. In those days there was only one religion, and everyone knew all about it - in contrast to the present day. The second aspect - that of teaching by pictures - requires to be much better understood. But you may say, "Why should it be necessary to teach by these means?" Think back for a moment, and you will realize that up to 1500 or thereabouts there were no printed books. And if there had been, nobody in Lydiard Tregoz except the parish priest and the people who lived in this house or its predecessor would have been able to read them. What, then, was the poor harassed parish priest to do in order to get the Bible stories, the lives of the Saints, and the moral principles of Christianity widely understood? He did it by pictures round the church wall. That is why they have sometimes been called the Biblia Pauperum, the Bible of the poor. That is exactly what they were. The artist was not concerned with painting a grand and glorious picture. He painted, of course, as any artist would, the best picture of which he was capable. His point was to go to the heart of the story, so that anybody looking at his work would be able to gather from its pictorial content alone what it was all about. Now I hope that you won't say that I'm flippant if I venture to make a comparison with a feature that they tell me, Sir, appears in certain daily newspapers - the strip cartoon, prepared for an audience, one might think, as illiterate as the mediaeval one. It is intended for quick assimilation and not for serious digestion. And in those drawings, so they tell me, Sir, there are certain conventions. If, for example, you want to represent a man having a gloomy thought he has a little black cloud above his head. What he says comes out on a kind of balloon. But, if he is only thinking it, it comes out in little puffs. We know what all this means. Exactly the same thing, by a set of conventions, was adopted in these wall-paintings. There is a complete language: in gestures of the hands and attitudes of the body. You are all familiar, of course, with the gesture of the Blessing - which is itself symbolic of the three Persons of the Trinity. But perhaps you do not know that the open palm represented Judgement; and the pointing finger Condemnation; a curved finger indicated Speech; hands above the head Argument or Expostulation; hands lower down Adoration or Polite Listening. The crossing of the arms meant another form of Blessing. The crossing of the legs was very important. Of course, you will all have been stuffed up with the nonsense that a knight lying on his tomb with his legs crossed went on the Crusades once and that if they are crossed above the knee he went on the Crusades twice. I dare say he did: I am not in a position to say. The point is that he might equally well have fallen off his horse in the back yard, because the crossing of the legs in mediaeval times was held to be an interruption of the normal flow of life, and only frightfully important people could do it and get away with it. You find constantly pictures of wicked emperors sitting on their thrones in that posture - "See what a grand chap I am; I can do this and get away with it!"

There is also deliberate exaggeration; torturers, wicked emperors, executioners, are deliberately caricatured, made grotesque with hooked noses and humped backs and funny hats. Like the hero of the Western who rides a white horse and wears a ten-gallon hat: you can see him miles off. This is simply identification. So with the symbols of the saints. Poor St. Peter isn't really condemned to go round Heaven with a great pair of keys on his shoulder. This is simply for purposes of identification.

It is with wall-paintings as John Brooke-Little told you last year about Heraldry. The devices of Heraldry were originally for purposes of recognition and identification. You must approach wall-paintings with this in mind.

What sort of things will you find on your church walls? Well, you might think at first sight that the range of subjects is almost unlimited, but, in fact, if you think about it, it is not so. You can classify English wall-paintings in five main categories of subject matter.

There is, first of all, the purely decorative painting. And let me say here that in your church next door you have a complete and perfect example of this. You have a great brocade pattern in the south aisle. You have also masonry patterns in the nave. People couldn't always afford, or hadn't room for, or didn't want figures, but the bare wall was unworthy. They had to do something with it. They painted diapers, which turned into great brocade patterns. They had scroll bands which are very useful, for the development of the scroll is invaluable in dating detail.

The second type of subject matter illustrates the Bible - the Old and New Testaments, Lives of Christ, the Passion series, and so on.

Then come single figures of saints, for in the old days the saints meant a lot. People knew all about the saints, and what they represented. Unfortunately the Pope has thrown some of the best out now - George, Margaret, Catherine, Christopher, and Nicholas. They no longer have the same standing as they had. I should like to put in as a substitute for them a great hero of mine:

Master John Shorne,
That blessed man born
Who conjured the Devil into a boot.

He was vicar of North Marston, in the County of Buckingham, and there was great resort to his shrine and his holy well. So much so that he was dug up in 1480 and taken to Windsor and given a beautiful chantry there and a tower still known as John Shorne's tower, which was all broken up, of course, at the Reformation. Now he was a flesh-and-blood person; an ordinary devoted parish priest. He was never canonized; he was not even beatified, but they knew what a good chap he was, and you find him with a halo on fifteenth-century rood screens as far apart as Norfolk and Devonshire. I want to put him in. The saints meant a lot to people. I don't care that St. George may not have existed. It doesn't matter that some of the things associated with the saints did not take place. The point about St. George is that he was a type of manly Christian virtue and chivalry. When you saw a picture of St. George-and-the-dragon on your church walls you were reminded of your son who was fighting in the Crusades or of a father or husband who was fighting in the French wars. And you said your prayers through him that they might behave themselves in a Christian and chivalrous manner, and that they might be brought home safely. That was the point of St. George and of many other saints. St. Christopher is regarded nowadays as a sort of free insurance for motorists. But if you take the trouble to read the legend of St. Christopher in the Golden Legend you will find that, amongst other things, it teaches salvation through service - very necessary and just as essential to-day as it was in 1300. So, the third category, single figures of saints.

The fourth type grows out of this - the Lives of the Saints, treated almost in the strip-cartoon manner and taken from the Golden Legend, the

Legenda Aurea of Jacobus de Voragine, or the Speculum Historiale of Vincent de Beauvais, and other contemporary sources.

Finally, the fifth type is to me the most interesting, the most fascinating - the Morality or moral story. Christianity was brought down to earth, brought up to date. Most of these take the form of the most frightful warnings - the Three Living and the Three Dead - warning you of the emptiness of earthly rank and riches; the Seven Deadly Sins; the Great Doom above the chancel arch - warning you of what may happen. Life was short, uncertain, and crude, and you had to be prepared. There is the austere figure of Christ sitting as Judge, the saved entering Heaven on his right hand, and the damned going off to Hell, with demons and pitchforks and cauldrons and everything horrible. This must have had a profound effect on the primitive congregation. François Villon has an old lady in one of his poems, addressing our Lady and invoking her protection:

A poor woman shrunk and old I am
And nothing learned in letter lore,
Yet in my parish cloister I behold
A painted Heaven where lutes and harps adore,
And eke an Hell where Damned Souls see the full sore;
One bringeth joy, the other fear to me.

This is the burden of the whole of mediaeval religious painting - life and death, joy and fear, good and evil, and the eternal battle between them. It is reflected in every church where there are such paintings.

You have Biblical scenes, you have historical scenes, you have decorative paintings, you have moralities, you have the single saint - all over the country. I must not go on, but that is the kind of background against which I would ask you to consider English painting in general.

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[Mr. Rouse then turned to the illustrative slides that he had brought. They were not intended to illustrate every aspect of his talk, but to underline the necessity of looking after paintings and to show some of the interesting things to be discovered if you do it correctly. Pictures were shown of wall paintings in Aldermaston - St. Christopher standing in a stream with an eel spear in his hand, a mermaid, the symbol of temptation to the saint, being also included in the picture; - the conversion of St. Martin; - scenes from the life of St. Nicholas: the story of the wicked inn-keeper and the three boys in the pickle tub who were rescued by the bishop, and the three purses of gold thrown through the window of an impoverished nobleman to provide dowries for his three daughters The projector failed to work just as Mr. Rouse came to St. Gabriel's Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral, so he turned to comment on slides made of the paintings in Lydiard Tregoz church.]

Now I pass on to your own church here, and may I say what a splendid thing you would be doing if you tried to save the paintings? I first came here in 1965, and I did a long report on the paintings. I hope that one day you will deal with it. I did say in the report that the structural work must be done first. You must get your roofs right, your exterior pointing right, and see to rainwater disposal. And, don't overheat the building! A lot of the trouble that has been engendered in churches to-day is due to excessive heating. People won't go to church nowadays unless they are nice and warm and cosy. So, at week-ends your church is up to 70°, and in mid-week it is down to 40° - and this is death to a lot

of things. Wall paintings need an even temperature between 50° and 60°, though this can't always be done. But don't overdo it, because you are drawing inwards the moisture that is bound to be present in any church wall - and that is death to anything on it, particularly if it has any impervious fixatives put on the surface of the painting. Professor Tristram did it, and I have done it as one of his pupils, but it is wrong to wax paintings and so seal the surface. The lime salts can't get out.

As you enter the church through the west door, the first thing that you see on the left-hand side is a fragmentary painting which is difficult to interpret. It is probably a Martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury. He became almost a national saint. Like St. George and St. Edmund, St. Thomas à Becket turns up all over the place.

Next, wrecked by a great monument, is a very strange subject consisting of three trees, a figure, a niche, and a mediaeval town on the right-hand side. I think that it is possibly an unusual interpretation of St. Christopher, the hermit by his cell holding the lantern to guide the saint across the stream.

Then you come to the great east wall, above the chancel arch. Above that you have something that is in my experience quite unique. You have the silhouette of the great rood, the cross, which must have been for a carved figure, flanked probably by the figures of Mary and John. But alongside the cross are four busts on either side looking up at the (missing) central figure. I cannot explain this. I have never seen anything like it elsewhere. I don't know what it represents, but it does require serious attention. Below that you have the remains of post-Reformation texts or 'Sentences'. One can still see part of the Ten Commandments. Lower down is the text 'Fear God, Honour the King'. There is a very nice seventeenth-century visitation account for a church in Buckinghamshire that I remember reading about. It said 'Ye body of the church is sound, but the chancel wants sentencing'.

When I was here I did some tests of the north aisle wall, and found evidence of painting almost throughout its length. Little bits were showing through. In the last few years, perhaps owing to climatic conditions, two figures have emerged - the one a face with a strange kind of head-dress, the other, further to the east, has a halo - proving my point that if only one could get at that aisle, one would find that it was painted almost from end to end. There are most wonderful possibilities there, anything might turn up.

The spandrel of the arcade east of the St. Christopher has the only bit of early decoration in the church. This scroll-work and masonry pattern round the arcade, and the masonry pattern with flower-like subjects in it are probably of the fourteenth century. In the south aisle there is an enormous decorative design with crossed features like reeds with foliage in between. This one is very late, possibly after 1500.

In the spandrel of the arcade in the south aisle, opposite to the south door is the figure of our Lord, nude except for a loin cloth. The body is actually banded, representing blood, and he is surrounded by and often touched by implements of various trades. It has been called the Consecration of Labour, the Christ of the Trades, or Christ as Piers Plowman. It is none of these things. It is a warning to Sabbath breakers. If you use the tools of your trade on Sunday you are inflicting injury on the Body of Christ. Properly treated this painting could be an extremely interesting subject. It was a very popular theme, found literally from end to end of England. There were seven in Cornwall alone.

There are many in East Anglia. I long to get at this one.

The little post-Resurrection scene of Christ is on the pillar of the south arcade, just by the south door. The glass is not necessary. It needs proper treatment. It is fairly crude, and obviously fairly late.

Another extremely unusual one, and in a very unusual position, appears over the inside of the south door of the south porch. Mediaeval paintings in porches are very rare. This would undoubtedly clean up in a spectacular way. It is covered with lime salts, and there is need for repair to the plaster. It is a treatment of a subject that I have never seen elsewhere. It is identified as Christ by the crossed nimbus.

I hope that I have proved to you that there are wall-paintings in this country, of interest and value and importance. If we neglect them we are impoverishing our heritage. I hope very much that one day you will be able to tackle this aspect of the many treasures that you have in this church. You should not have any difficulty in getting grants, because it is of such significance. I hope that it won't be delayed too long, so that I can be associated with it.

[In reply to questions Mr. Rouse made the following points:]

1. Concerning the pigments that were used, the average village painter had an extremely limited range, confined almost entirely to the oxides of iron, red and yellow ochre, lime white, lamp or charcoal black. If you mix these colours you get quite a large range of colours. Blue was a difficult and expensive colour. Green is occasionally found. In the Royal Household accounts for the great royal school at Westminster there are bills for pigments including, in Henry III's time, for he had a thing about green, "Vert de greece" - a green made from a copper salt. These accounts also include squirrels' tails for the painters' pencils. We even know what they painted with. Hog's bristles were used for white-wash brushes. Vermilion was occasionally used - a deadly material to manufacture because it is a mercury salt.
2. These are not frescoes. I can only show you three or four fresco buono paintings in this country. It is a technique that was not used here. I don't quite know why. The material must have been against it. You can do a fresco rather more easily inside a nice marble frontage in Italy than on the rough rubble wall of a church in this country. Our technique here was secco painting. The whole wall was completely plastered; it then received a coating of lime putty. On this surface, dampened, the painting was applied with a skimmed-milk or a size fixative, the vehicle being probably a clear and concentrated lime-water. If you are applying lime to lime it crystallizes together and fixes well.
3. There were great schools and centres of art in this country in the Middle Ages, just as there were in Italy, but nobody knows much about them - Canterbury, St. Albans, Westminster, Norwich, Peterborough, Bury, Winchester - all were great centres with 'scriptoria where the service books were prepared and where potential artists and illuminators would be trained, though not necessarily becoming monks or priests.

Additional editorial note on the martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket:

Tancred Borenius contributed three articles to Archaeologia on this subject. They are to be found in Vol. 79, pp.29-54; Vol. 81,

pp.19-32; and Vol. 83, pp.171-86. Thomas was canonized in 1173. The earliest known representation of the saint is in Monreale Cathedral in Sicily. It can be dated between 1174 and 1182. The builder of Monreale, William the Good, of Sicily, married, in 1177, Joan, daughter of King Henry II, of England. Another daughter married Alfonso III, of Castile. In 1174 a chapel was dedicated to St.Thomas in Toledo Cathedral, in 1186 an altar was dedicated to him in Barcelona Cathedral, and, in c. 1200 a series of wall paintings was executed in Tarrasa in Catalonia to his memory. Another daughter of King Henry married the ruler of Brunswick.

"The imagination not only of England, but of the whole of Europe, was struck by the tragedy of St.Thomas Becket. It is the event in the twelfth century which stirred people's minds much as the humiliation and penance of Henry IV at Canossa did in the previous century; only the opportunities which the story of St.Thomas Becket offered for artistic treatment were immeasurably greater. It was through Becket that England made her principal contribution to the iconography of the Middle Ages. It is not a matter of hagiology alone, but of the allied historical tradition and folklore surrounding the figure of the proud Norman, in whom the knight was but insufficiently merged in the archbishop, and whose personality comes out with such extraordinary vividness, in the pages of the chroniclers.

"The list of the categories into which the representations of the martyrdom fall is itself a lengthy one. We have to deal with pilgrim's signs in lead and pewter, seals and other metalwork, sculptures in stone, wood-carvings, ivories, stained glass, embroideries, illuminations, enamels, easel paintings, and wall-paintings."

The writer states that there are between twenty and thirty wall-paintings in England which depict the martyrdom. These are all that survive of the vastly greater number that existed before the de-canonization of the saint by King Henry VIII in 1538. The wall-painting at Lydiard Tregoz is noted as "now very much faded", the mitre of St.Thomas being seen on the floor as at Burlingham St.Edmund, Norfolk, and Eaton, Norfolk.

"As regards English mediaeval wall-paintings, representing solely the murder most important of all [is] the wall-painting in South Newington, Oxon."

Professor Tristram restored this wall-painting. The water-colour copy that he made of it is reproduced as plate xxiii, fig.1, in Archaeologia, volume lxxxix.

"The upper part of the composition is unfortunately gone; but what is left is very well preserved, and we can make out from right to left, Grim, St.Thomas kneeling before the altar, and four knights, of whom the third from the right - Richard Le Bret - is plunging his sword into St.Thomas's skull. The knights carry no visible shields; but the tabards over their armour are prominently blazoned with heraldic charges, viz. first knight: a bear statant (Fitzurse); second knight: a bend possibly accompanied by crescents (Le Bret); third knight: nothing visible; fourth knight: several dogs heads erased. The whole is a splendid example of English mid-fourteenth century painting; and we are particularly fortunate in having the head of St.Thomas extremely well preserved The village of South Newington was one in which a large number of miracles worked by St.Thomas occurred, so little wonder that a particularly elaborate painting of the Martyrdom was done for the church.

Viscount Bolingbroke.

Three days before our Annual Meeting last year, Lord Bolingbroke died at his home in Ringwood, Hampshire, aged seventy-eight. His ashes were buried in Lydiard Tregoz churchyard beside those of his two brothers. This edition of Report wishes to pay tribute to his memory by reproducing, firstly, an appreciation of him written by his companion and housekeeper, Miss Catherine McLean; secondly, the address given by the Rev. Brian Carne at the funeral service on May 7; and, thirdly, the first section of an unpublished work, written by Lord Bolingbroke, called "Cycling Through Nature". Further sections of this work will appear in succeeding editions of this magazine.

Vernon Henry St. John, was born on the 15th March, 1896, at 26, Gay Street, Bath, the only son of the 5th Viscount and of Mary Emily Elizabeth (Howard). On the death of his father in 1899, he succeeded to the styles and titles of the St. John family as 6th Viscount Bolingbroke, 7th Viscount St. John, Baron St. John of Lydiard Tregoz, Wilts, Baron St. John of Battersea, Surrey, and 10th Baronet.

Though born in Gay Street, his early life was divided between Alfred Street, Bath, and Lydiard Park. From all accounts he had a happy childhood, and most of all he remembered Lydiard as a place where he was able to explore the Park and woods with his governess Miss Doughty, who died in 1963 at the age of 94.

At an early age Vernon showed an interest in music, and attended a Dr. MacFarlane of The Circle, Bath, for lessons on piano, organ, and violin. By the time he was thirteen, Mac tells us "he played with confidence and without any signs of nervousness even though there were three other gentlemen present".

Like most members of the nobility Vernon was a good shot and a keen fisherman. An entry in one of his diaries describes his first shoot. He wrote, "My career as a shooter started on the 11th December (1914). My first gun is a double barrel hammer. A good strong sound gun. Am well satisfied with it" - In those days clergymen were expected to be able to take part in country pursuits, and the rectors of Tregoze and Millicent were often out with the guns. On one occasion the Rector of Tregoze nearly succeeded in dispatching the Rector of Millicent and his Lordship to a higher land, having seen movement behind a high hedge and, thinking it was a rabbit, promptly fired. The "rabbits" were amazed to find the ground round their feet peppered with shot. There was a twinkle in Vernon's eye when he retold the story in later years, adding, "Herbert wasn't a very good shot".

When the Great War started he enlisted in the 3rd Dorsetshire Regiment as a private, and during his training played in the string section of the regimental orchestra. After training, he saw active service in France. He was shell-shocked, repatriated to a Canadian hospital in Brighton, and, after a time, was discharged from the armed forces.

His coming of age was celebrated by a Garden Party during which he was presented with a rose bowl and an illuminated book containing the names of ninety-one subscribers. An unexpected and much-treasured

present was a watch chain fob given by the old lady who did the rough work in the house. From a newspaper report of the celebrations it is hard to believe the reporter was really there: he describes the young Viscount as having dark eyes when in fact he had very light blue eyes.

His great passion in life was entomology. He had a large collection of Butterflies and Moths, and was indeed an expert on the subject. The collection is now housed in the National Museum of Wales. The late Revd. Percy Harrison was instrumental in introducing Vernon to insect collecting, and there are many entries in diaries of their various expeditions.

During the 1920s St. John's Music Stores was opened in Tetbury, Gloucestershire. The 6th Viscount had joined the nation of shopkeepers as he put it. He sold sheet music, gramophones, gramophone records, and undertook repairs. When wireless sets became fashionable he closed this enterprise down.

One highlight of the year at Lydiard Park was the Men's Supper. This was held in the library, and there was much jollification. Lady Bolingbroke sang one or two songs. She had a fine voice and in her younger days sang in Tregoz Choir, his Lordship played, and the men rendered their "versions" of various songs.

In 1939, when the Second World War started, Vernon joined the Tregoz Home Guard and, though ill-equipped, they all took their duties seriously; even so, many funny incidents occurred similar to those in the T.V. "Dad's Army".

Then, in 1940, Lady Bolingbroke died, and it soon became obvious that the Estate could not be kept going. For a time Vernon lived at Brook Cottage, the game-keeper's cottage. When the house and farm were sold, he moved, in 1943, to Brownsover Hall. It was there that Sir Frank Whittle carried out experiments with jet-propulsion, and Vernon was pleased to have lived where contemporary history had been made.

After the war he moved to Gorlay Vale Farm, near Fordingbridge, in Hampshire, and, four years later, in 1949, moved to Crow Hill, near Ringwood, on the edge of the New Forest, a hunting ground for insects, where he lived the last twenty-five years of his life, enjoying his hobby, writing articles for the local paper and also for various journals. He had two business interests, for a time he was a director of a small local company, and he was a director of a building society.

In spite of six years of increasingly failing health his strength of character enabled him to remain alert. This same indomitable spirit helped him adapt to each new set of circumstances, many of which would have made a lesser man bitter.

Though of noble birth he enjoyed the simple things in life, and he never sought publicity. He had a great sympathy for the under-dog, compassion for ex-servicemen, and a great love for children, who in turn loved and respected him. He was always prepared to listen to and answer the questions of children. He was a shy retiring man in spite of his height and build. One often finds large people overbearing, he was nothing of the sort; though at times he was determined to a point of obstinacy.

He had many talents: music, natural history, drawing and writing. He enjoyed giving talks to various groups of interested people. Like the celebrated statesman, the 1st Bolingbroke, he was a fine orator. It seemed that fate knew he would be the last peer to live at Lydiard, and

had given him all the various talents of his ancestors.

On the gate of our house on Crowe Hill was a butterfly, a Swallowtail, which he made himself. This butterfly was described by a poet as "Lord of the butterflies". It is a most fitting epitaph for the sixth Viscount.

Catherine McLean.

May 7, 1974.

Last night the body of the Rt.Honourable Vernon Henry, 6th Viscount Bolingbroke, 7th Viscount St.John, Baron St.John of Lydiard Tregoz, Baron St.John of Battersea, and 10th Baronet, lay in church here amid the heraldic splendour and monumental glories of his ancestors. His body is surrounded by the badges of the families from whom he was descended - the falcon of the St.Johns, the monkey of the de Ports, the eagle of the Grandisons, the martlet of the Beauchamps. Here the story of his ancestry is taken back heraldically and genealogically to Saxon days. He was brought here yesterday - back to the one place continually associated with the Wiltshire St.Johns for the last five hundred years.

Vernon would not have denied all this, but the honours that descended to him at the age of three sat lightly on him. I suspect that the one thing that would have really gladdened his heart most in being here was the dawn chorus of the birds of Lydiard Park. As a very willing pupil of the late Rev. Percy Harrison, he developed his interests and considerable ability as a naturalist. He became a regular contributor to the natural history notes that appeared annually in the Wilts. Arch. Society magazine. In later years he wrote charming and perceptive articles for the Ringwood and Fordingbridge Journal. I quote from one of them:

"A vision of the countryside is inseparable from the spirit of Christmas: the holly and the ivy, the robin and his pincushion; the leafless tracery, giving a gaunt beauty to the naked trees; the gorse blooming bravely, its little yellow flowers glowing like lamps through the wintry gloom; and the starlings chatter, whistle, and chuckle from cottage gables.

All these turn our thoughts to the byways and hedges, and beneath the leafless trees where beauty has been lavished so generously, the still silence creates feelings of awe; you feel transfigured by the peace, the peace that passes understanding like the mystic benison that rests over the venerable yews in the village churchyard".

His collection of butterflies and moths is deservedly well-known.

We meet here today as a company of his family and friends to commit and commend him as a person-who-is to the care and keeping, to the mercy and forgiveness of God. We do this with the deep personal sense of loss that his death has created, but with thanksgiving for what God was able to do in and through his life.

Vernon, we are glad to have known you.

Go forth on your journey from this world, O Christian soul, in the name of God the Father who created you, in the name of Jesus Christ who

suffered and died for you, in the name of the Holy Spirit who strengthens you. May your portion be peace and your dwelling be in the new Jerusalem.

And to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be all praise, dominion, glory and majesty, now and for ever. Amen.

Brian Carne

Cycling through Nature

by the late Viscount Bolingbroke.

Dedication

To the memory of a man withered by age yet young in mind and spirit. For I heard his voice from afar, and wondered whence it came on that still autumn day. Then, as I turned a bend where the Lynt Brook ripples under the quiet road and away through the meads, there he was, seated on a fallen log by the wayside, spare of build to the point of fragility, white haired, collarless, unkempt, his blue eyes twinkling from lined, intelligent features, a mere nonentity to the passer by, singing as his kettle boiled on the crossed-stick fire - singing gloriously. His voice, as it floated a simple ditty on the keen Cotswold air, I shall never forget, for it was a natural, clear-pitched alto, among the loveliest I have ever heard.

Introduction

The writing of this little book is prompted by the belief that the interest shown in Natural History in recent years, particularly Nature in the field, has led to a growing appreciation of wild life in the countryside.

As a roving naturalist, I have endeavoured whenever the opportunity has occurred, to watch the ways and habits of a variety of creatures with which, as time went on, I was to become the better acquainted, and then to note down the more interesting, often intriguing, revelations I was privileged to see.

These experiences, modest though they be, are the outcome of observations over a long period of time. In putting them on record, I have avoided all scientific nomenclature and have paid no heed to systematic arrangement, since the behaviour of, say, a beetle may well have proved to be of greater interest than that of a badger, if the former crossed my path in more exciting circumstances than the latter, and by so doing qualified, at any rate for the purpose of these notes, for more detailed mention!

To my evergreen bicycle, now so old that it has outlasted its worthy makers - a company whose name has long since receded into honourable oblivion - I owe a debt of gratitude. Its many afflictions include being lost in a forest, rammed by a motorist, and ridden away by a mooncalf, but it has never let its owner down in the course of its long career.

While the seasoned naturalist may find little or nothing in this book that is new, I hope that the perusal of its pages will serve to encourage those who, being on the threshold of nature study, wish to become more intimate with the creatures I have watched in their native haunts. Then, indeed, my purpose will have been achieved.

Cycling into Nature

Much as I am indebted to my veteran cycle, I little thought that among its qualities would be that of a bird decoy. I was riding one May morning to a Home Guard Exercise, when a familiar sound fell on my ears. It was the reeling of a grasshopper warbler. Hitherto I had associated this secretive, mousy-hued little bird's vocal efforts with twilight and the later hours, yet it was now in full reel, and the time was 10 a.m. On my return shortly after noon, the reeling was still in progress, though rather nearer the road than before, and seemed to be coming from a thorn-belt over the hedge, though it is often hard to decide the bird's exact position, for an illusion is created by the bird's turning its head while singing. As I dismounted and laid the machine on the grass verge, the back wheel continued to revolve, producing a regular ticking, which was to some extent not unlike a subdued "reel". Suddenly, the reeling stopped, and I saw the slim form of a grasshopper warbler threading its way along the more horizontal twigs of the hedge. Having arrived at a point near to where the cycle lay, the reeler slipped into a patch of scrub at the foot of the hedge within a yard of the wheel. Once or twice I saw the bird creep among the stunted thorns, stopping momentarily as if listening. The striated effect produced by the darker centres of its greenish-brown upper plumage and its pale brown feet was at once unmistakable.

The only example of the elusive nest of the reeler I ever came across was appropriately concealed under a tangle of coarse grass and low trailing bramble situated near the edge of a wood. I have heard the reeler in various localities, widely spaced in the southern half of England, so it would seem to be a very local migrant. Indeed, the bird appears to have entirely deserted several places in which I once knew it, and that without any visible reason.

I remember that when, years ago, I was given one of the original copies of John's British Birds in their haunts, I was interested in the author's charming and intimate descriptions of this little warbler. It came therefore, as a shock, when, some time later, an old-time sportsman-naturalist told me of how he had once obtained for a museum a nest and eggs of this species together with the old birds, which he declared he had killed with a twelve-bore cartridge filled with water instead of shot from a few yards range!

In those days rarities were eagerly sought for the glass case, the stuffed specimens in all conditions of homes, from glass-domed owl, kestrel, or kingfisher, reposing in a corner of a cottage living room to the array of exhibits adorning the "Hall" - the results of bygone shoots over the Estate. I recall one example of the former, though in this instance a novelty. It was a glass case containing a cock bantam, and its claim to perpetuity was that it was originally a hen.

The cock having died, its mate gradually began to assume her husband's plumage, even to the comb and tail, finally crowning the achievement by assuming his full vocal powers.

My most memorable sight of any colourful species of bird visitors to this country occurred when I had the great joy of coming upon a pair of golden orioles. They were moving with dipping flight along a line of young elm trees, alighting on the cradles with which the trees were protected. On reaching the end cradle of the row they flew into an old mixed wood and out of sight, apparently for good, for I never saw them again, nor did I hear of their appearance elsewhere in the neighbourhood. This was in North Wiltshire, on the 12th of May, and, appropriately enough, the golden sun of a perfect spring morning lit up the brilliant buttercup-yellow of the cock's plumage to an unforgettable degree.

This male oriole, resembling, as it did, a huge golden canary with black wings and yellow-tipped black tail, was indeed, a strikingly beautiful bird compared with the female, which although colourful, carried much less contrast in plumage; the yellow colouring in her case was noticeably less vivid, being suffused with greenish, the wings brownish, and the underparts striated greyish-brown with yellowish flanks.

A very much rarer bird - in fact, a vagrant to this country - is White's thrush, a specimen of which I once had the good fortune to see in a wild state. About the size of a mistle thrush, the bird, as it rose unexpectedly from a tangle of undergrowth in a woodland of chestnut and elm and flew away from me with low undulating flight across some open parkland, gave me no more than a few seconds in which to view the bold markings of its upper parts. During these fleeting moments of, I trust, acute observation, I noted a conspicuous pattern formed by every yellowish-brown feather of the back having a black crescentic tip; the wings were chocolate-brown with white patches or bars. My impression at once was of a highly coloured mistle thrush, as it disappeared into the cover of a similar woodland beyond. This occurrence was in mid-winter, and in the hope of tracking the bird down in its new-found seclusion, I lost no time in going in search of it but like the oriole in spring, it had gone and was not seen again. Hand in hand with the pleasure it gave me of coming upon such a rare and interesting bird was a feeling of wistful incongruity that, while the great revealer of Selborne had never, as far as I know, set eyes on the thrush named after him, it should have given me the privilege which I hardly deserved, and that from the saddle of a push bike!

When talking of members of the thrush family, one usually describes the mistle thrush as a bird of the high trees, except, of course, when its upright figure is seen ranging the fields with majestic hops along the ground in search of food. Recently, however, a mistle in song provided a new and interesting picture as I cycled round a bend on a main road. Running parallel with the road was a bank upon which, at intervals, were posts supporting a wire fence. The posts were three feet six inches high, which when added to the height of the bank made the distance from the top of a post to the road itself rather less than seven feet. On one of these posts beside the road with its constant rush of traffic there was perched in full song a mistle thrush. A chain or so from the songster a bus pulled up at its stop, and had I been a passenger on the side of the upper deck nearest the bird I should have been able to look down-or at any rate aslant - according to the exact position of my seat - on a singing roadside mistle thrush.

I have mentioned this incident first because of the unusually low station as well as the close proximity to a main noisy road at which the bird chose to sing, and secondly for its utter indifference to the bus,

which, by the way, was coloured red, and the opportunity it gave to the passengers of witnessing such an uncommon occurrence.

For sheer triumph of song in the teeth of a late-winter gale the mistle, perched high on the swaying bough of a lofty elm, and singing dauntlessly into the wind, is to me a clarion call of optimism amid the elements of nature's more boisterous phases. But yesterday's tempest, which one likes to think spurred on the song of the mistle, has spent itself in the night hours, and to-day there is hardly a ripple of wind, and the sun from a clear blue sky glows upon the winter landscape. Here on this glistening day I rode slowly along the lane, keeping a watchful eye on the far side of the field. There, where a long line of birches, their limbs touched by the sun into shining purple, appeared to form the farside boundary, a number of "song thrushes" were hopping pertly about. At first sight they did indeed look like thrushes; yet they were more agile on the ground, quicker in their movement when rising and liting, and less tolerant of enquiring humanity than could have been true of song thrushes. Of course, they were redwings, and, to my mind, redwings seen at their best in this country, as, at intervals, individuals leaving the flock would fly up to the birches, the rich chestnut-red of their flanks conspicuous, if only momentarily, under the flickering wings and in the brightest of winter lights.

Buzzards and butterflies in a snow-clad countryside are not every cyclist's joy to behold. It is true that in the instance under notice only one of each creature appeared, yet the setting was so unusual that I am prompted to record it. It was on the last day of February that with a companion I was pushing the iron slowly up one of those long climbs to the top of a Devonshire beacon. The day was beautifully fine, and the sun shone from a cloudless sky. But the air was crisp and keen, for the entire countryside was enwrapped in a mantle of snow, the result of a blizzard the previous day. When walking or riding a country road the naturalist is ever on the look out for what the next step may reveal. On this occasion, when about half-way up the hill, I noticed the clear-cut, lemon-yellow wings of a male brimstone butterfly as, perched on a snow-covered twig in a thin part of the roadside hedge, the sun sparkled full upon its person in a white, desolate world. High overhead, in circular sweeps, with all the majesty of a soaring eagle, a buzzard looked on this same white expanse.

A cycle run on a sparkling February afternoon offers much to the keen observer. There go a flock of lapwing, high up, winging steadily on, harbingers of the general exodus from the uplands to the valleys, and here is a foraging jay rising from the bank and flying up into the tall blackthorn hedge, a conspicuous figure as the sun irradiates its plumage among the stark, bleak masses of twigs.

There is a very deep and wide ditch running parallel with a road along which I often pedal. For some two-thirds of the year the ditch more nearly resembles a flowing stream. A right-handed turn takes me into this stream-skirted road, when quite frequently a kingfisher appears ahead. It would seem to have just started its flight upstream as I come to the bend, very much as if it intended to race me along the straight stretch of road, and it is curious that at this very spot we should seem to start on our journey together. There is no overhanging branch or other perching place thereabouts, which seems to rule out the possibility of the bird seeing my sudden approach and then darting away. No, we always contrive to synchronise in motion at this familiar spot and travel together in the same direction. The halcyon, however, draws away from the start. He is a rapid flyer; my steady nine miles an hour is not swift enough to enable me to keep him in sight for more than four or five seconds, as he buzzes ahead just above the stream's surface before becoming lost to view. But not for long. He has settled unseen on a small overhanging branch, where

he awaits my close approach - or so I like to think when I see again the azure flash as he darts away upstream.

Although I have stood motionless for long periods when float fishing under lake-side trees, no halcyon has ever mistakenly lit on my rod, as I seem to remember has happened to anglers on rare occasions. But kingfishers have perched within a few yards of where I have been standing before now, so that I have been enabled to watch every movement. The sharp up-and-down movement of the head, as if the owner were keyed up into a state of agitation; the fish brought up to the watching post after the successful plunge, when, being too large for instant consumption from the broadside angle in which it is held in the bird's bill, it is promptly given a somewhat violent battering against the top of the post, brought into position, and swallowed head first.

But I would rather glimpse the halcyon on some hot August day in another setting. Then perhaps, when least expected and at some distance from any water, he decides to cut a corner, topping the road hedge to whirr away over a field of ripe corn. I would rather see the warm chestnut-coloured under-plumage against a blue sky and the cobalt upper against the full richness of the grain than in any kind of setting that water can provide.

March comes in to a medley of winter and spring. The north wind is persistent, with flurries of mingled sleet and snow and heavy grey horizons. Though the sun never prevails, the more tranquil periods between the falls bring the thrushes' song of spring tidings. The lapwing cries from the valley; the jackdaw pairs search the old ivy-clad nesting holes, while a meandering crow lingers for some possibly dark reason on the fringe of the rookery, his strident 'Kraw' uttered with seemingly all the vocal powers at his command, dominating the united caws of the rookery. Each 'kraw' is accompanied by a comic upward sway of the bird, followed by a curious wheezing sound, as if an entire exhalation of breath must be expended ere the next 'kraw' begins. Having expressed his sentiments to the full he flaps lazily round to the other side of the wood, where he repeats his opinion in no less shattering terms.

The snow clouds come thick to darken the day, but the threatened fall does not come, and the grey gloom gives way to a lighter-tinged horizon. The lambs, now a week-or-so old, are dotted about in the downland meadows calmly at ease, while lightness and darkness counter each other the day through.

A pied wagtail runs along the top of the old farmyard wall, which adds its share to the spreading greenery, for the shiny 'penny pie' leaves of the wall pennywort are pushing forth in bright green clusters from its many crevices. The dishwasher stops at the end of the wall, but its restlessness impels it to move, whether it be the forward and backward movement of the head, the upward-and-downward one of the tail, or, finding further progress along the wall barred by a corner stone as this one did, to bound away on its wavy flight to the roof of a cowstall at the rear.

It would seem that the ancient name of 'dishwasher' has an intriguing origin. In some parts of England, local names such as 'polly washer', 'wash dish', etc. are given to this bird, but, as might at first seem, without reason. In those times, we are told, anyone who stood on a bridge across a stream would see on a Sunday afternoon women, white-aproned over their habitual, Sunday-black frock, emerge from their cottages on the bank, and go to the water's edge to wash up the Sunday meal's dishes one after another. As each dish was washed, they would bob down repeatedly in order to immerse the next, much in the same manner as the black-and-white wagtails bobbed when catching insects by the stream for their young in

the almost invisible nest built into the ivy-clad walls of the cottages.

Everywhere in the country youth and freshness abound with the joyous, gentle warmth of the first touch of spring. The early morning mists clear and reveal downland and valley teeming with new life, heartening those whose interests and husbandry are linked with nature. Two of our earliest migrant birds, the dapper little wheatear and the curious stone curlew, are back again, the former, small though conspicuous, perched upon sheep wire and mounds about the downland heights, the latter, long-legged and much larger, but secretive, till the night hours stir him into activity, when his whistling cry, particularly on moonlight nights, may be heard from afar. They and their kind have winged hundred of miles to the locality where they were reared.

Down in the valley, the little celandine stars are dotted about the deepening greenery of the lush meadows. Under an azure sky, the brimstone butterfly seeks the openings in the snowy-blossomed blackthorn brake where primrose, violet, and dandelion unite to weave Spring's first colourful carpet. The thickening, more tangled end of the brake leads into the woodland where, disturbed by human footfall, a frightened rabbit dashes across a ride, tearing its way through a dainty bed of moschatel to vanish down its burrow, but a nearby colony of frail anemones has so far been spared by the hunters and the hunted. By the time the sow badger steals forth with her family, in nightly search for a meal, the windflower's pale beauty will have been engulfed by the bluebell's brilliant masses.

By the brookside, a pair of kingfishers already have hungry mouths to feed. Their nest - if one may so call it - is a layer of fishbones in a dark, hollowed-out chamber situated at the end of a tunnel bored into the side of a muddy bank. In March it contained its first white egg. Now the old birds, flashing constantly past the windows of the cottages on the bank, are carrying aquatic morsels, perhaps gleaming minnows, for half-a-dozen clamorous young perched in a row under the waterfall a hundred yards upstream.

In March, also, a party of siskins on their way back to their northern breeding haunts lingered for days beside the stream. The attraction of them was the fallen seeds from the alder cones, of which there were still enough left to keep these charming little finches busily employed searching the grass around the base of the trees. As I write, the alder is harbouring another interest, for a water vole appears to have taken up residence amongst its roots on the bank. Every day his quaint chubby head is visible above water, as he swims steadily across the stream to land on a favourable mud patch, and thread his way through a belt of golden kingcups to the bank, where he pauses to nibble the leaves of the overhanging ivy.

The chiff chaff, though not the first home-coming migrant to reach our shores in early spring, is usually the first little voice in our woodlands and plantations. I mention 'voice' and not 'song': the reader may call it what he pleases, so long as he is in tune with the optimism that this welcome little utterance radiates for us.

Another of our two-note spring immigrants, though sometimes with a stutter, is the cuckoo; that bird of weird character and human voice, whose habits have been the cause of such startling observations, unbridled correspondence, and conflicting theories, since the interest in, and study of, birds first occupied the mind of men. Very occasionally in April I have heard the cuckoo's first notes at night 10 o'clock or so - as it passed overhead 'cuckoo-ing' at intervals, until the notes became inaudible as the bird flew on in its quest for journey's end. There is something appropriate about hearing in the dark the first notes of a bird with such parasitic intentions!

On occasions when the weather has turned wintry and the earth frosted hard immediately after their arrival, I have seen as many as four or five cuckoos diving and flapping among thick rushes and other vegetation of inland reed beds in search of what appeared to be some kind of food among the unfrozen ooze.

'Cuck-cuckoo', 'cuck-oo-oo', 'cuck' are some of the variants uttered, though what has always to me been of more interest is the variation of pitch between the usual notes 'cuck' and 'oo'. Taking into consideration the incidence of distance, locality, and weather at the time of utterance, I have heard the 'oo' uttered from the 'cuck' at every interval from a minor second to a perfect fourth. I wonder whether some of my more musical readers have found pleasure in listening for these varying intervals in the cuckoo's call. When, however, two cuckoos within earshot are calling at the same moment, and the voices conflict by a semitone, as sometimes happens, the effect of the resulting cacophonous 'cucks' is intolerable.

As long as birds are allowed to populate these islands, bird lovers will, no doubt, continue to discuss the rival merits of the songsters among them. The ethereal rhapsody of the skylark; the April flutings of the fruitarian ousel, the unique philomel of the night hours - all have their ardent enthusiasts, as well they may. Yet I would travel furthest to hear the musical voice of the woodlark, as, soaring slowly and at a great height, it floods the sun-lit valley with continuous sweetness, a mere speck passing steadily along the valley until lost from sight, then from hearing, and you realize that the outpourings for you have finished. The blue sky is muted of melody; and the valley is stilled of its echo.

True, the woodlark's song has not the vehemence of the skylark's, but it is sweeter, and its powers of sustained, rapturous song, as well as its captivating quality of timbre are to me beyond anything the other can do. Starting its carolling as it does in late winter, and resuming after the moult, and, if the weather is genial, through the autumn months, the woodlark is generous indeed. I have heard nightingales singing at all hours and in many localities, but to hear the far-flung, consummate notes of the woodlark above the wild, heather-clad moorlands, or even to stand on a busy traffic road and listen to one perched on an electric wire strung across a field over the road hedge, as I was fortunate enough to do one recent autumn day, was an experience more satisfying than the efforts of any nightingale in May. Yet the woodlark is not my favourite bird, that is to say, not my favourite all-round British bird. For, like Queen Victoria, whose favourite preacher, it has been said, was not quite her favourite parson, I choose that remarkable all-rounder the goldfinch, the distinctive little finch with the scarlet blaze and golden-banded wings.

The goldfinch was a prized cage-bird in the day of the call-bird and clapnets. A man who was not without blame himself in the trading of these sought-after little finches once told me of the method employed by some dealers in order to sidestep the close-ringing laws of the Wild Birds' Protection Act. After the birds were caught, he said, they were taken to a darkened room or basement, and at once put into a large cage, which was entirely stripped of its perches. On the floor of the cage was placed a shallow dish containing methylated spirit. In this receptacle the newly-caught birds, because of the lack of perches and absence of light, were compelled to stand for some time. The continuous immersion of the birds' feet in the spirit, the man went on, caused them to soften to a sufficient degree to allow the closed rings to be slipped over the feet. The goldfinches were then, in the eyes of the law, "close rung", thus becoming ostensibly birds "bred in captivity" beyond the dispute of any visiting inspector or other interested party who might set eyes on them. Whether this nefarious business is still carried on I know not, but it was a loop-hole - perhaps not the only one - that rendered the law impotent between

the two wars.

Happily this nimble, quick-witted, and brilliantly-coloured songster has increased so steadily in recent years, that a cycle ride past orchards or gardens in favourable districts of southern England can scarcely fail to bring them to one's notice, by sight or by song. And should a party of twenty or so be seen, examining dexterously the heads of a clump of thistles or teasles, with their golden bands touched by the autumn sun into little gleaming flashes, then the old noun of assembly "a charm of goldfinches" could hardly be bettered.

The May night had been sultry and oppressive, but though desultory lightning had lit up the skies, the expected storm kept off. So had the songs and calls of the night birds. The dawn, however, was heralded by the first sweet notes of the avian chorus, but with a background of ominous rumbling. On the horizon thick, forbidding clouds were enveloping a coppery sky. The chorus began to swell, as bird after bird joined in, while the distant rumblings grew louder as the storm approached. By 4 a.m., when the thunder peal cracked and the storm was nearing its peak (though no rain had fallen), the chorus had reached its full-throated glory: cuckoo, blackbird, skylark, robin, song thrush, hedge sparrow, willow warbler, wren, whitethroat, yellow hammer, blackcap, and chiff-chaff, more or less in that order, interspersed with the raucous contributions of the crow family. Then the first rainspots began to fall with a 'spat' here and there, followed almost at once by a deluge. Whereupon the chorus ceased; not a single bird could be heard. A quarter of an hour, and the downpour suddenly stopped, though the thunder and lightning continued unabated. The cessation of rain, however, apparently had the effect of re-starting the singers (except the smaller birds) in spite of the thunder claps. Blackbird and thrush were now prominent in their sustained effort to keep going, but, alas, by 4.30 a.m. it again began to rain and soon developed into a fierce hailstorm, which swept along in relentless sheets. The vocalists were put to silence, though not quite, for away in the security of some leafy retreat a thrush and two blackbirds could be heard in sheltered defiance, as the storm passed on its way, and the hunt for provender began in the feathered world.

To be interested in nature is one thing; to be regarded as an information bureau is quite another. And as various friends, acquaintances, and indeed total strangers, asked me to identify, from time to time, some creature of whose classical order I knew little, I came to the conclusion years ago that a fair knowledge of Natural History in as many branches as possible was a far more satisfying pursuit than that of confining one's attention to any one branch. For example, when first beginning the study of birds I remember being called upon to identify the bleached skull of a quadruped which a puzzled neighbour had dug up in his garden! Then there was the case of the gardener who hurried to the door with the exciting information that he had just seen two of "they little humming birds", which he hadn't seen since he was a boy of thirteen. Humming birds in the garden! Well, investigation proved, as any lepidopterist might have suspected, that the cause of the excitement was not birds at all, but specimens of the humming-bird hawk moth, that aerial dainty that darts from flower to flower with a rapidity that the human eye can scarcely follow, especially at the twilight hour, which is a favourite time of its appearance in the garden. Then, at a considerably later date, having begun to interest myself in butterflies, I became the regular recipient of numbers of caterpillars in the match-boxes, not of butterflies at all, but, tiresome to relate, of moths. So there was nothing for it but to embrace the realm of moths, which apparently qualifies one to provide the answers to queries about anything on earth with wings! There was, for instance, the arrival for identification - in a match box, of course - of a species of ladybird, which had caused a scare to the local allotment holders, who envisaged a colorado beetle, which

in some respects it resembles. I remember also the man who was positive he had seen a coal-black dragonfly "wings and all", and the villager who declared she had seen a navy-blue butterfly with cornflower-blue edges to its wings sunning itself on the lower branch of an apple tree in June. It was so lovely with the sun on it that she's never seen anything like it before. Ah! those peerless varieties that vanish incognito!

One evening last year a party of small boys arrived at my gate keyed up with the excitement of possession. "Are you the man who's interested in moths?" asked the spokesman, at the same time opening a grubby hand to reveal a solid-looking, glossy-brown pupa, some $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. "Please, can you tell us what it is?" he went on expectantly. "Where did you get it?" I asked. "It was dug up with the potatoes" said he. The others crowded round. "How much is it worth?" he asked hopefully. "If you regard it from that standpoint" I said, "the moth when it appears would probably be worth a few shillings, perhaps five or six. But, in any case" I explained, "you ought not to handle it, because if you do, it will come out a cripple even if it comes out at all". They looked at one another, not without, I discerned, a degree of guilt on their faces. "What are you going to do with it?" I queried. Two of the bunch spoke together. "We shall breed from the moth, and start a hawk-moth farm", they said, with juvenile fervour. So their pupa, which had doubtless been handed round the family circle and otherwise bandied about was to be the forerunner of an assuredly prosperous hawk-moth farm! How like a boy!

Then the day dawned, when, looking out of a window, I beheld a couple of postmen approaching my house at the time of the morning delivery. Two of them! Never in all my life could I remember being the recipient of such an overwhelming mail. As they came to the door, I noticed that one was carrying very carefully under his arm, a largish square-looking box. It was just at the time of the ticking-bomb and, good heavens!, I thought, could this thing he was nursing be the latest modus operandi for the total obliteration of one homo sapiens by another? Or, had the Post Office pluckily saved my life by nipping this nefarious thing in the bud? I opened the door. The postman held the box in front of him. "I have something here that I think will interest you" he began. "Come in" I said. He placed the box carefully on the table. "It's a hawk-moth" he announced, lifting the lid, but we're not sure which kind it is. And there in the box, which was large enough to hold a Dundee cake, was a rubbed and ragged example of the poplar hawk-moth.

Flicking something from the back of my neck on to a table indoors, one day, I discovered the interloper to be that fine-looking creature, the musk-beetle. Thirty millimetres in length, exclusive of the antennae, which are as long again, this beautiful beetle with its wing-cases lying neatly together along its body was from the front of its head to the top of its wing-cases a rich dark glossy green. So intense was the sheen that glorified its entire length that when exposed to artificial light its whole body and particularly the thorax, which seemed to be of a somewhat rougher texture, sparkled like a jewel. While holding the beetle for a few moments in order to examine it, for it is quite harmless, I was intrigued by a thin squeaking sound which it produced by rubbing the head and thorax together. Unlike many small creatures it has a scent that is not unpleasant. In fact, it can be recommended to anyone with a liking for musk odour, and the longer you keep it in your hand or handkerchief, the stronger and more pleasant the scent becomes.

Moving unconcernedly across the hearth one night, as I sat by the fire-side, was a beetle of a vastly different character. Possessed of no beguiling scent and, as far as I am aware, bereft of any kind of voice, this dark creature, aptly named the devil's coachhorse, is the personification of fearlessness among its fellows. When I interrupted its journey by

putting a pencil across its path, it at once prepared for action. Raising its tail and opening its considerable jaws, it seized the pencil, hanging on grimly in spite of being tossed about in mid-air. So relentless in its make-up is the devil's coachhorse that even the larvae are known to engage in battle. Yet its existence is a power for good, for it destroys untold numbers of insects injurious to garden produce, and for that reason should be protected rather than destroyed.

Besides the brimstone, there are six species of British butterflies that spend the winter in hibernation, though apparently only a few red admirals survive our winter in the milder west country. Of these the one most likely to be seen in actual hibernation by the average person is the small tortoiseshell, when found indoors ensconced on a curtain pole or some other place of repose for the winter. Should the room in which the insect has hibernated be heated to a summer-like temperature, your tortoiseshell will awaken and, as likely as not, proceed to encircle the room at night, especially the electric-light bulb as do many moths. Such interrupted hibernation is bad for its health and for its prospects of surviving the winter and pairing successfully in the following Spring. On one occasion, during a prolific red-admiral season, I caught and marked for identification forty-seven admirals in the garden during October and early November, with a view to recognizing any survivors in the following Spring. When, however, the Spring came not one single admiral did I see. On the other hand, years before that I had found proof positive that the red admiral does hibernate successfully, at any rate up to mid-winter, and this in north Wiltshire, for on a day in mid-January, while I was demolishing a wood pile, two red admirals in hibernation came to view. Also hibernating in the same wood pile were twelve peacocks and over thirty small tortoiseshells. I had never before seen so many vanessidae gathered together for their winter sleep.

As for the comma butterfly, another of the hibernators, I have not so far had the good fortune to come across it hibernating on exposed branches of trees or among dead leaves, as so many writers on lepidoptera indicate, though there seems no reason why it should not. Doubtless examples have before now been noticed thus hibernating, and this might, on occasion, apply also to the lighter coloured form known as var. *hutchinsoni*. Yet I should not be surprised to find it secreted within the depths of some wood pile similar to that mentioned above, for there is no doubt that the comma does hibernate and successfully, appearing on the wing again in March and even the latter half of a mild and sunny February. It is not, however, so easy to agree with a writer on country topics who surprisingly includes the comma in his list of migratory creatures. When the first spring-like day of the New Year tempts those hibernating insects to come out, there is always the hope that one will chance to come across an example of one of the rarer species. The large tortoiseshell, a hibernating butterfly that was once a more common species than is the case nowadays, provided me with an unexpected thrill a year or so ago. During a brief spell of almost summer-like warmth at the end of March, I noticed two of these fine butterflies motionless on the side of one of the many shallow gutters which run through the bogs of the New Forest. Basking under a clear blue sky, they were probably as content with the moisture oozing from the turf about them as they were with the exceptional heat of the March sun.

The habits of foxes are well worth the protracted time they often take to observe, for example, the vixen's quest for the right kind of earth in which to produce her cubs. I have been lucky enough to watch her engaged on her rounds of inspection, in which the dog fox has always accompanied her, though never in my experience has he actually approached the possible site, being content to keep at a distance of twenty or thirty yards, while watching the vixen keenly as she sniffs down the holes. The inspection over, which is apparently a matter of seconds - for a sniff or two at the

main hole seems to be all that is needed - she rejoins her mate, when they lope away together to continue the quest. When the cubs, a few weeks old, come to the surface in order to play about the earth, the vixen's behaviour to them is an exhibition of mothercraft which is worth every moment of the long vigil it often entails. The cubs frolic and tumble about like so many kittens, jumping upon their mother and rolling over, a game into which she enters heartily. Then, when she considers they have had all the exercise they need and the time has come for her to leave them and sally forth on her wanderings, they are told quite plainly to go under, an order which they are loath to obey.

Indeed one youngster, more venturesome than the rest, may seek - but with faltering gait - to follow her, when she suddenly turns round to face him with a "back you go at once". Such admonition may still be not enough; the disobedient cub, as its mother walks away again, follows hesitantly, when the vixen, swinging round sharply, gives the precocious one a hearty smack with a swift stroke of her fore paw. This, as I have witnessed it, is a just and effective punishment; the recalcitrant cub turns tail, and slinking back to the earth, disappears in the tracks of its more heedful brothers and sisters.

It is curious how creatures of the wild will frequent the haunts of their parents and ancestors, even when such haunts have long since become built-up areas. The suburban housewife, dust-cap on head, emerges of a sunny morning to belabour the front door-mat, when her astonished gaze is equally shared by a handsome cock-pheasant. The spring sunshine lights up his burnished coppery plumage as, interrupted in his leisurely progress along the edge of the shrubbery on the far side, he stands, statuesque, at the appearance of this interloper, exactly as his forebears had stood in those far-off times when, remote from the advance of bricks and mortar, the site was the sanctuary of a coppice, and the interrupter was perhaps a fox passing through, or a playful stoat, leaping and sallying, or some other disturber of the hallowed woodland haunts. Dropping her mat, the good housewife hurries to tell her neighbour of this attractive bird's presence, to be told in turn of the escapades of some other wild creatures, not so harmless, whose advent had brought ruin to the spring cabbages or the bed of Sweet William she knew not when.

While following their long-established flight lines, both woodcock and snipe have been known to drop into temporary cover of the kind that neatly adorns the precincts of the "Belle Vistas" and "Dunroamins" of modern suburbia.

A pair of goldcrests had built their nest in a cypress tree, only a few yards from my house. Actually the cypress was the nearest evergreen, and indeed, the nearest tree to the house. There was a choice of firs and cedars around, but for some reason these were ignored, and so it was under the lip of a lower branch of the cypress that the nest was suspended. Seven minute eggs were almost buried in the feather-lined deeply cupped nest of moss and lichens woven and felted securely with spiders' webs. By the middle of June the young ones had left the nest. They were accompanying their parents on the ceaseless hunt for insect life, and were strong on the wing - the prettiest little creatures imaginable. But although by that date (13 June) they equalled their parents in size, they were paler in dress and lacked their crests. As I stood watching them flitting in and about various fruit trees in the adjacent garden, the parent goldcrests were indefatigable in working some large rose bushes for aphides. In spite of the seven eggs, there appeared to be only five chicks. The youngster was fed every few seconds from the resources of the bush, which indeed seemed to be endless. In between being fed by the old birds, the young were more or less seeking for themselves, though not, of course, with the speed or agility of their parents.

(To be continued)

Lydiard Tregoze.

from E.V.Lucas: Traveller's Luck,
1930, by arrangement with Methuen & Co.
Ltd., and with editorial notes.

Visitors to England who want to vary the spaciousness and grandeur of our cathedrals with ecclesiastical architecture in a very modest mood, yet beautiful withal, should see the church of Lydiard Tregoze, in Wiltshire, three or four miles west of Swindon, which is one of the nicest towns to leave that I know. For the church of Lydiard Tregoze is a gem, behaving just as an essentially English church should do; that is to say, getting as close to the big house as it can, reposing upon the grass like a sitting hen or sleepy cow, and possessing a square tower with crockety spires and pierced stone shutters (such as you see in the cupolas of the National Gallery, but less regular), and, inside, old oak, and high-sided enclosed pews, and Renaissance ironwork, and ancient glass, and noble tombs. There is hardly a sign of modernity; time stopped here nearly three centuries ago.

I found the church, all unaided, merely by looking at a map of Wiltshire and chancing on the word Tregoze. For Tregoze or Tregooze - an unusual name - brought back to my mind an uncle whom I adored, and who, when I was seven or eight, offered me no mean guerdon if I would learn by heart the Ingoldsby Legend called 'The Execution', which tells how a little company of men-about-town arranged to sit up all night at the Magpie and Stump opposite Newgate in order to see a man hanged the next morning; and how the hanging was over and done before they woke up. Its mixture of roystering and grimness gives this poem a quality apart from the general run of the book. I can remember now little beyond the opening, in which Lord Tommoddy sends Tiger Tim to rally his rakehell companions:

Send for MacFuse
And Lieutenant Tregooze,
And send for Sir Carnaby Jinks of the Blues.

Tregooze! I had not thought of that gallant officer for many, many, years; I would go and see his church.(1)

On turning to the authorities I find that Lydiard Tregoze is the seat of the St.John family, the head of which is Lord Bolingbroke. To-day that name is seldom heard, but two hundred years ago no public man was more prominent than the Lord Bolingbroke of his time - Henry St.John, the libertine, the satirist, the administrator, the friend of Swift, and, after the death of Queen Anne, an exile in disgrace and counsellor to the Pretender. This, the greatest of the St.Johns, although he took his title of Viscount Bolingbroke and Baron St.John of Lydiard Tregoze from this estate, did not, however, live here. (2) He preferred Bucklebury Manor, the property of his wife, Frances Winchcombe, a descendant of 'Jack of Newbury' who gives his name to a hospitable tavern in the Berkshire town. Whenever statesmanship or dissipation palled, it was to Bucklebury that Bolingbroke hastened, and the larger of the trees in the famous double avenue on Bucklebury Common are said to have been planted there by him in 1704 to commemorate the victory of Blenheim. (The smaller line dates from 1815 to commemorate Waterloo). The house was burned down in the last century, but the kitchens remain, and you may stand there, as I have done, and attempt to reconstruct

Swift and the cook exchanging pleasantries. Lady Bolingbroke's ghost, as any intrepid observer can see for himself, still rides about the countryside at night in a chariot drawn by black horses.

But let us return to the earlier St. Johns to whom Lydiard Tregoze was dear. The tomb with the painted kneeling effigies dates from 1589, celebrating Nicholas St. John and his wife Elizabeth, Nicholas having spurs with movable rowels which generations of children must have spun. (3) These were the parents of Oliver St. John, first Baron Tregoze and Viscount Grandison of Limerick. (4) who, after a career as a fighting free-lance abroad, was sent to Ireland to assist in quelling Tyrone's rebellions, and in 1616 became Lord Deputy for that distressful isle, and as such, although Bacon called him 'a man ordained of God to do good', was naturally intensely unpopular. At his death in 1630 the barony of Tregoze became extinct, and it was because the first line of Bolingbrokes had also died out that Henry St. John chose the title when he was ennobled in 1712. (5) The family tree of the St. Johns is a plant of very complicated growth, but for those who have time, and an electric torch, there is in the chancel of this church a most remarkable representation of it, painted by a member of the family, which may elucidate all. (6) Debrett will also assist. The rhymes explaining the amateur genealogist's purpose you need not attempt to decipher, for the friendly gardener who carries the keys will recite them to you.

Of these sons John was killed in the Royalist Army at Howth; William fell at Cirencester; and Edward, who has a separate and splendid monument close by, where you see him in golden armour, died of wounds received in a skirmish in 1645. (7) Walter, also a soldier for the King, (8) gave his father Sir John such an elaborate lying-in-state, when the escutcheons were more numerous than at the interment of a duke, that he was prosecuted by the College of Arms. (9) Upon the second Sir John's death in 1656, (10) Walter became the third baronet and took to good works, among his benefactions being the foundation of a school in the Battersea High Street which still flourishes - Battersea Manor having belonged to the Tregoze family since 1627. (11) In the parish church of St. Mary is a Tregoze window, a full account of which and other matters relating to the Tregozes will be found in a book by the headmaster of the school entitled 'Our Lady of Batersey'.

The tomb with the recumbent figures is that of Sir John St. John who, in dignity and peace, with his pointed beard, his ruff and his sword, lies between his two wives - one on his left, a pretty woman with her dead baby in her arms, (12) and the second lady, on his right, far less complaisant in countenance. Sir John had thirteen children, eight of whom grew up. The first to die was the one in its mother's embrace; four others are depicted on the north side of the tomb, each toying with a skull; the eight survivors kneel at the heads and feet of their parents. The names in full were Oliver, Anne, John, William, Edward, Barbara, Nicholas, Lucy, Walter, Francis, Elizabeth, Thomas, and Henry: one name apiece, like professional cricketers.

More recent warriors from Lydiard Tregoze are celebrated in the vellum Roll of Honour of the Great War in a glass case between the west door and the pillar on which a painted figure of Christ, surviving from the Middle Ages, has been preserved. All the walls are, as a matter of fact, painted, but the colours have faded away. Some of the very old glass is beautiful in hue, notably three figures in a north window, but the show piece is the east window to the glory and greatness not only of the Four Evangelists but to the St. John family too. (13) One of the Van Eycks is claimed to have had a hand in this design.

- (1) When Barham wrote the Ingoldsby Legends the Tregoze family had been extinct for five centuries, but the fictitious lieutenant's ancestors had held the manor that has been variously named South Lydiard, Lydiard Ewyas, and Lydiard Tregoze, though little of the present church dates from their time. The family adopted as its surname the name of its old home in Normandy - the village of Troisgots. (The same is true of St.John, Beauchamp, and many others.)
- (2) But there is strong evidence that he was born at Lydiard Tregoze.
- (3) Nicholas died in 1589 and was doubtless placed in the family vault beneath the south aisle. The monument itself is dated 1592.
- (4) Oliver St.John was made Viscount Grandison of Limerick in the peerage of Ireland on 3 January, 1620/1, and Baron Tregoze of Highworth in the peerage of England on 21 May, 1626.
- (5) The Henry St.John who became Viscount Bolingbroke in 1712 belonged to the fourth generation of Wiltshire St.Johns after his forebear, but not ancestor, Oliver, Viscount Grandison and Baron Tregoze.
- (6) The "most remarkable representation of it" is, of course, the triptych. The parts that date from 1615 were designed by Sir Richard St.George, a relative of the St.Johns, but the artists who executed the early work and that of 1683-99 are unknown.
- (7) The three St.Johns who fell on the Royalist side in the Civil War were sons of Sir John St.John, 1st Baronet, who commissioned the early parts of the triptych in 1615 and erected his own monument near by in 1634. John was mortally wounded in the Royalist defence of Newark. Edward was wounded in the second Battle of Newbury, 27 October, 1644, and died at Lydiard Tregoze on 12 April, 1645.
- (8) Walter, on the other hand, was commissioned as captain of the troop of horse when the Surrey Militia was called out by Parliament to march against Charles II at Worcester in 1651.
- (9) Sir John, 1st Baronet, died at Battersea in 1648, and his elder surviving son, Walter, was responsible for the lying-in-state there for which he was prosecuted in the Court of Chivalry.
- (10) The first Baronet was succeeded in the title by his grandson, another Sir John, who died unmarried in 1656. The title then passed to the first Baronet's elder surviving son Walter.
- (11) Oliver St.John, Viscount Grandison and Baron Tregoze, bought the manor of Battersea and Wandsworth in 1627, having been the leading parishioner since 1593. On his death late in December 1630, the property passed to his nephew, Sir John, 1st Baronet, who forthwith commissioned a remarkable - perhaps unique - east window in the church at Battersea. By means of portraits and an abundance of heraldic details the window tells the St.John family story from 1430 and earlier, with emphasis on its connection with royalty and on the Viscount and the first Baronet. The window has recently (1975) been cleaned and restroed.
- (12) The child - Henry - lived, but the mother died - as the inscription indicates - about two months after the son's birth. Nine of Sir John's children grew up; but the four who died in childhood and who appear in effigy on the side of the monument all outlived their mother.
- (13) The main figures in the window represent (left) St.John the Baptist and (right) St.John the Evangelist. All the Van Eycks died about two centuries before the window was executed. There are now good reasons for believing that Abraham van Linge was the artist.

An Imaginary Tour.

By the late George Rose.

[Mr. Rose was caretaker and guide at Lydiard Park for twelve years. He succeeded Mr. Lancaster, who was caretaker for a short while after Mr. Gough left in February 1956. He moved from Lydiard in 1968, and lived with his devoted wife at 28 Milverton Court, Park North, Swindon, until his death on December 1, 1974.

Mr. Rose's time at Lydiard was a most interesting one. The house was opened to visitors by Lord Lansdowne in May, 1955, the minimum of work having been done to make the place fit for public view. Lord Lansdowne had lent articles of furniture and a number of valuable pictures on a temporary basis while restoration work at Bowood House was in progress.

In 1956 the six main downstairs rooms were fit to be seen, but the rest of the house certainly was not. Apart from the caretaker's flat there were no floorboards upstairs, walls and ceilings upstairs had been stripped of plaster: Swindon Corporation had undertaken a complete restoration. Great steel girders were inserted into the roof trusses to strengthen them - that is, after the roofs themselves had been relaid! Mr. Rose lived with this work year after year, and knew every inch of the place. The Corporation bought the great chandelier in the entrance hall from Hungerford Park. It arrived in boxes, each piece of glass neatly wrapped in tissue paper, but without any plan for re-assembly. By a process of trial and error, it was eventually assembled and hung.

The Bowood furniture and pictures went back home. In their place came pictures from Hampton Court, on loan from Col. R. ff. Willis, whom Mr. Rose first met about 1959. A visit to Col. E.G.R. St. John, of Lockburn, near Fordingbridge, by Mr. Rose resulted in the gift of six pictures. The model of the church was entrusted to his care by Lord Bolingbroke. It was during that time that the modern flock paper was made by a firm in London to match the existing eighteenth-century paper in the downstairs rooms. Again, it was during his time that extensive repair to the ceilings downstairs was made by the application to their upper surfaces of copper mesh and liquid plaster. The south-east corner of the Drawing Room ceiling and about half of the 'Ball-room' ceiling were completely renewed.

Mr. and Mrs. Rose enjoyed their retirement to the full until May, 1970, when, quite without warning, George had a massive stroke which left him completely paralysed down the right side and, for many months, without any speech. This attack was followed by repeated bouts of pneumonia. Although he lost his independence completely, he retained two superb things - the devotion of his wife and his own fighting spirit. After some time he recovered some slight use in his right hand, and he set about typing, amongst many other things, all that he knew about Lydiard Park - with one finger. Just before he died, he gave permission for extracts from these writings to be included in this Report. It is characteristic of his affection for Lydiard that he requested that his ashes should be scattered in Lydiard Park, a request which the Corporation gladly granted.]

When I was first appointed as caretaker and guide in February 1956,

the restoration of the house had already started. A great deal more was done during my twelve years at Lydiard Park, but what may interest you more than to have an account of the restoration work is to come with me on an imaginary tour of the out-buildings and service wing as I first knew them. It is in those parts of the house that the biggest changes have taken place.

We start our tour at the pair of heavy wooden gates at the end of the drive-way, just beyond the church, and enter through the little wicket door that is let into one of these gates. On our right we see the L-shaped coach house and the two-storied stable block. (These are now used as short-stay hostel accommodation for youth organizations.) The ground floor of the stable block is taken up by six loose boxes, craftsman-built and well-ventilated, each with its own manger and soak away, together with a harness room. The latter has a fireplace - not to keep the stable hands warm but to keep the harness pliable! Rickety stairs take us to the huge upstairs room, also with a fireplace, but with a strange part of the floor at one end some 12" lower than the rest. The only possible use that I can think of for this large room was as sleeping quarters for the stable lads.

Retracing our steps from this building we pass the entrance gates, and are faced with another pair of heavy wooden gates. (Both pairs of gates and almost all that I am now going to describe have now gone - the final demolition of the out-buildings being occasioned by the erection of that monstrosity, more suited to a concrete jungle than a Georgian building - the accommodation block for the new Management Centre).

Passing through this second pair of gates we find ourselves in a cobbled court-yard - the normal way-in for tradesmen. On our right is a manual pump. There was no shortage of rain water. All the water from the roofs was trapped and fed underground to a huge tank. The pump was conveniently close to the stables. This court yard was used for a variety of purposes: on the right was a large barn for storing hay, slated, but with no front. At the end of the barn were two or three separate buildings, each with slated roofs and with doors that could be fastened. One of these was used for rearing pheasants, another was a pig sty. One small stone building seems to have been used for farrowing. There were remains of other buildings, showing that the court yard had been put to good use. There were even the remains of an out-door boiler, probably used for boiling up linseed for the horses.

From this court yard we enter a small gate opening on to a paved yard which is enclosed with a stone wall. From this yard there are three door ways. The door on the left leads into the washhouse with its huge iron boiler set in bricks and with a large opening under it for feeding in the logs of wood. This room was also used by out-door workers to take shelter in bad weather. The door on the right leads into a room with a very high ceiling. This was the drying room. There was a hand winch and pulleys on the wall. Leading on from this room is another one. This latter has no windows at all, but has huge tiers - perhaps for storing fruit, and, in the centre, there is a large boiler and vat - probably for brewing. Retracing our steps to the paved yard, we enter the third door. This one leads directly into the main quarters and into the bake house. In this room, against the wall and supported by brick piers, is a large stone trough, about 4' wide, 2' deep, and 6" deep, fed by rain water from a tap. Opposite the trough is the oven - a great big structure, something from another world. It occupies the space from floor to ceiling, and is completely encased - with the exception of the oven and fuel doors - with plaster anything up to 2' thick to retain the heat. The oven itself is large and brick-lined, and the fuel space is capable of taking bundles of faggots. Strangely, there is no flue for the wood smoke.

From the bake house we enter the kitchen, a very large room, about 30' by 30', by 30' high. One of its walls is dominated by a great wooden dresser, occupying the whole wall and intended to contain kitchen utensils and crockery. Against another wall are three large brick-built charcoal burners set in line, about eighteen inches apart. They are just large enough to take a small metal container filled with charcoal. Food would be put on these chafing dishes in preparation for the sixty - to seventy -yard walk to the dining room. High up on one wall are three narrow windows - to let light in, but not to allow the servants to see out. The wall opposite the large dresser accommodates the cooking arrangements: on the left is a tall iron cooking range fired with wood, with compartments one above the other and used for cakes; in the centre is a large recess, backed with a cast-iron plate, formerly for an open fire and spit, but now containing an open solid-fuel fire between two 'modern' ovens, and complete with an impressive array of dampers to control the heat. In the centre of the room is the huge wooden preparation table, with its scrubbed deal top. Hooks for hanging game and other meats project from the ceiling, and there are another thirty or forty such hooks on the wall for similar purposes.

A doorway from the kitchen leads us into two other rooms, one larger than the other, and divided by a partition, used for preparing food. The smaller one has a one-foot wide bench going round three sides of the room, just high enough to work at in comfort. Here again is a high window - this time overlooking the church. The larger room has a lower window looking out on to the servants' yard. It contains a much wider bench around three walls, and, hanging from the ceiling so that vermin could be kept out, a three-foot-square food safe. A ladder or steps were used to get at the food in the safe.

We retrace our steps through the kitchen and enter the corridor. On our left is a room, divided by breeze blocks, that housed the electric generator. The first part of the room contained a paraffin-powered engine which ran a dynamo; the other half of the room was used for the thirty-or-so 25-watt low-voltage batteries that supplied electricity for the lights in the west wing of the house. (This engine was later removed by Swindon Corporation and sent to Latton). Beyond this room is a stairway for the servants. On the first landing is the chain to ring the bell situated high up on the roof. The bell was used to call outside workers in for meals. (I think that the bell came from the small sanctus-bell cote on the church originally.) We now reach the first floor; some of these rooms were used by me as living quarters. Continuing up the stairs we come to the attics. A cat walk takes us across the joists until we come to the stone commemorating the re-building of the house and a number of small low-ceilinged rooms, set right under the roof tiles, and used by servants of less importance.

Descending the stairs we come to my flat again and, in particular, to the two rooms formerly occupied by the housekeeper. The larger room - and it is a large room - is well supplied with cupboards, each one with its own lock. The enormous iron fire-place, I swear, takes half-a-hundred-weight of coal! The smaller one, at first used by caretakers as a kitchen, had a Triplex grate in it - installed during my predecessor's time. This grate caused some excitement one day after I had moved into my new lounge. I had occasion to go downstairs, and was met with dense smoke. I could not make this out, for the only fire was in the Triplex grate. I rang the Fire Brigade and, before I knew what was happening, the place was alive with Fire Engines - from Swindon, from Wootton Bassett, even from Cricklade. The firemen soon found the cause of the trouble. The flue from the grate only went to ceiling height. Like the other chimneys, the flue from this one went off in an unknown direction. The smoke itself was coming from a vent in the former Butler's room - now the Gents' Toilet. The real

trouble was a massive build-up of soot. In the attic the firemen found a large stone slab which covered a large soot-box. Sacks and sacks of soot were removed by workmen, and the slab was replaced. The slab was obviously warm whenever there were fires in the house. Consequently it had become a favourite haunt for bats - their droppings made a further lengthy job for the workmen!

We return now to the ground floor, noticing the long row of bells each wired to the different rooms in the house, and continue along the corridor as it turns right. On our left is a room, divided into a larger area containing two large store cupboards, and a smaller one just large enough to be used as a bedroom. The windows in both parts are heavily barred - presumably to keep safe the goods in what was undoubtedly the butler's partry.

Continuing along the corridor, the next door we meet takes us into the cellars. The floor is of brick, and there is good ventilation - though where it comes from I can't tell. The first room we enter is bare, except for various hooks suspended from the ceiling, but we go on into a second, rather smaller room, eight feet wide by nine feet long, lined with wine storage bins - slate shelving under arched brick-work. Broken glass was found in this cellar - all of a dark colour.

We now return to the corridor, and take a left turn. On our left we have the Gents' toilet, formerly part of the butler's domain. Ahead of us is a secondary stairway leading to my flat. If we go up the stairs the first room we shall enter, with windows overlooking the church, was the one that Lady Bolingbroke used in her later years.

I realise that I have said nothing about sanitation in the house. As far as the House is concerned, when I came, there was no sign of sanitation or even of water laid on. Before the place was opened to the public, toilets were installed, and a septic tank was built in the grounds to the east. Later, when the stables were made into the hostel, a new septic tank was constructed to serve the hostel and the west wing. (The waste from the west wing had, for quite some time, been piped off through an old brick conduit to be lost somewhere in the fields!)

Looking back on these notes, I realize that I have forgotten something else. When we left the kitchen we could have turned right into a short corridor that led to the drive-way. Instead of going out of this door, we could have turned right and walked along the narrow passage between the kitchen well and the high blank wall that fronted it. The passage leads to a very large room - the Gamekeeper's room - with racks, presumably for guns, all round the walls. Here it was that guests assembled for shooting parties.

The high blank wall has now been demolished, new windows have been inserted lower down in the kitchen, the old preparation rooms have been fitted out as kitchens. The old laundry and other adjoining rooms have been fitted with shower baths. All the old stone floors have been covered over. I look forward to the day when the Mansion will be put to good use, now that all this work has been done.

Childhood Memories

by Elizabeth Mullins.

I have been asked to write my memories of my childhood during the 1914-18 war. My father was a baker, and we moved from Wantage to Shaw, near Swindon, in 1914, where he worked for Mr. Carter. I attended Lydiard Millicent School. There were no buses, so we had to walk to and from school, morning and night. There was no school milk or school dinners either in those days. We took sandwiches, which we used to toast on the end of a ruler. Mr. Evans was the schoolmaster, and I spent the last year at school helping him with the infants. We could not get a drink during our dinner break, but a Mrs. Dixon, who lived in The Butts, used to put a bucket of water and a cup in the porch so that we could help ourselves. When the weather was bad, we often arrived at school wet through, and as there were no facilities for drying our clothes, we put our coats on still wet to go home in the afternoon. Food was rationed, but I never remember going hungry.

On Sundays, with five other girls from Shaw, I attended Sunday School and Church at Lydiard Tregoz. In the summer we could walk across the fields from Shaw up to "Fine Lydiard" church, as we called it, but in winter when the fields were water-logged we walked round by the road. Sunday School was held in the Mansion by kind permission of Lady Bolingbroke. Mr. Herbert Harrison was the Rector, and he taught the older children, and I taught the infants. The older ones had to learn the Collect for every Sunday by heart - and the Catechism, too. Lady Bolingbroke had a grey parrot who, when Mr. Harrison was speaking, would interrupt by saying, "How extraordinary" or would whistle "Now the day is over". This was too much for the Rector, and the parrot was banished from the Sunday School.

I still have my prize for 1916. It is a book called The Secret of the Everglades, presented to Lizzie Harman for regular attendance and good conduct at Lydiard Tregoz Sunday School. Signed: A. Herbert Harrison, Rector.

After Sunday School we all went to church for Matins. We were all in the choir. Mr. Wakefield and Mr. Cottrell sang bass. Mr. Charles Newman sang tenor, and his wife Mrs. Annie Newman and her sister Mrs. Parsons sang contralto. Mr. W. Strange and Mr. George Parsons sang tenor; and the girls from Shaw and the boys from Hook sang treble. Miss Habgood (another sister of Mrs. Newman and Mrs. Parsons) played the organ, and her brother Harry blew the organ.

There was no electricity then for the organ or lighting. The church was lit by oil lamps.

The morning service was much longer than it is now, and we had to sing all the psalms for the day. There were long prayers, and the Litany, and a long sermon. It seemed endless to us. Mrs. Newman always wore a starched petticoat under her long skirt. She had a pocket in her petticoat, and, always before the sermon, she would produce some extra-strong mints, which she passed to all of us girls to keep us quiet in the sermon. The church must have reeked of peppermint!!

I'm afraid I sometimes misbehaved in church. Lady Bolingbroke

occupied the family pew together with his Lordship - the young Lord, as he was called. Her Ladyship usually wore a lovely black velvet hat trimmed with ostrich feathers, and if I fidgetted or made the others laugh, she would look at me severely and shake her head over the top of her pew. We went up to church again for Evensong. If it was dark, we carried a lantern, or a candle in a jam jar to light our way.

Choir practice was always on Thursday evenings, and there used to be some heated arguments between the adults over the pointing of the psalms, which were sung from the Cathedral psalter.

I never saw any male staff employed indoors: the staff there were just a cook, housemaid, and parlour-maid. They all attended church, and sat in the nave or in the choir, but never at the rear of the family seat. They all lived in. There was a gardener, two game-keepers, and two or three labourers employed outside.

The family at Lydiard Park lived very simply, and the big rooms - morning room, library, billiard room (now the front hall), dining room, and drawing room - were very seldom used at all. During the war and her Ladyship's ill-health and lack of staff they lived mostly in the dining-room-cum-sitting-room up near the kitchen premises, and had log fires both there and in the big kitchen range. There was no electricity for heating or lighting, but only lamps and candles. When I left school I used to go up to the Mansion every afternoon. His Lordship was having tuition from a Mr. Gale, organist at St. Mark's church, Swindon. I used to go and pump the air into the organ while he practiced. I used to squeeze into a narrow space at the side of the organ, and had to pump a large handle up and down, and watch a small weight go steadily up on a piece of string, and then pump vigorously so as not to let the bellows become empty of air. He played nearly every afternoon, and in return he gave me music lessons, but I am afraid it all came to an abrupt halt when he was called up for the Army, and was sent to Sutton Veny camp, near Warminster. I still went up to the Park after he had gone, and spent long hours with Lady Bolingbroke, who was often confined to her bedroom owing to ill-health and very bad varicose ulcers on her legs. She must have suffered a great deal of pain, and we often sat at her bedroom window, overlooking the west door of the church and out across the fields towards Shaw, or, in the summer, if she was able to get downstairs, we often sat on the front steps looking out to the lawn. She seldom left the house, and there was no entertaining, except for the occasional 'shoot', which was attended by most of the tenant farmers.

His Lordship spent many hours in the drawing room alone, playing the piano. He acted as deputy organist, both at Lydiard Tregoz and Lydiard Millicent, when necessary. The only time I remember him playing the piano at a concert was when his brother Charles St. John sang at Lydiard Millicent, and his Lordship accompanied him.

We always had a Sunday School treat at the Park in the summer, and Lord Bolingbroke took us for trips on the lake. Here is a quotation from the Lydiard Tregoz Magazine of October, 1917:

On Saturday, August the 26th, the Sunday School and choir by kind permission of Lady Bolingbroke enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon at the Park. It was a great success, being favoured by fine weather. The children and others assembled at 3 pm. and games of all sorts were indulged in, and prizes of apples and plums were given to the successful candidates, sweets not being obtainable. Boating was not indulged in. We missed the kindly help of Viscount Bolingbroke, who is serving his King and Country. Considering the food control, a most substantial tea was provided by Mr. George Parsons, through the

generosity of the Rector, in the coach house, after which several adults also partook. The gathering broke up at 8 pm, when a few words were spoken by the Rector, and the National Anthem brought the happy day to a close. Many thanks are due to all helpers for their assistance.

Who was the mysterious and eccentric man, known as Mr. Gordon, alias Slater? He lived at Brook House, surrounded by several bull dogs, and always carried an iron walking-stick when he went out. He attended Lydiard Tregoz church in a high silk hat and a frock coat, and usually left before the sermon, making a great clatter as he put coins in the box at the back of the church, and slamming the door noisily. On some occasions he would stay for the sermon and write it all down in shorthand. No-one knew who he really was.

My parents moved to Maesteg, South Wales, in October 1917. I'm afraid that I was very homesick for Lydiard after we moved away. On my last Sunday at Lydiard I received a Bible from the Rector, a Prayer Book from Lady Bolingbroke, a volume of Shakespeare's plays from his Lordship, a suede hand-bag from Mr. Edward Hiscock, a silver bracelet from Miss Habgood, and a jewel box and a silver fruit-knife from Mrs. Newman. I little thought in 1917, that I should be returning twelve years later as District Nurse Midwife! Now in 1974, I still look back on my happy days at Lydiard with my old friends.

A poem by Mrs. Mullins, reproduced from News of the Lydiards, April 1962:

I remember how the showdrops always bloomed in Lydiard Park,
And the eerie cry of owls in Crowbrake after dark.
I still recall the tawny cows in pastures lush and green,
Forget-me-nots beside the brook meandering between.
I think of bluebells in the wood beneath the chestnut trees,
The pigeons cooing up above. (My memories are these.)

I remember, too, the hawthorn pink in blossom in Love Lane,
And a little rustic stile which led me to the woods again.
I think of how the sunlight gleamed upon that stately Hall,
The roses in the garden, nectarines upon the wall.
I remember how the cedar tree cast shadows on the lawn,
The scent of musk in twilight dusk, and birdsong in the dawn.

I still recall that little church where as a child I sang:
The high box-pews and painted glass, and how the church bells rang,
The windows looking out upon the peaceful country scene,
The lion and the unicorn above the chancel screen,
The Medieval monuments, and ancient heraldry,
The Golden Cavalier a gleam beneath his canopy.
I remember too, the organ, and the music that was played -
Deep fugue and sweet sonata, prelude and serenade.

And now I am growing old, these things I still remember.
God gave us memories that we might have roses in December.

SHORTER NOTES

The place of Broy in the St. John pedigree. (A supplementary note to Report No.3. p. 30.)

In previous Reports I have discussed the place of Broy in the St. John Pedigree, rectifying in Report No.3 incorrect conclusions reached in Report No.1., p.1., and Report No.2, p.28. Since Report No.7 was published fresh evidence has come to my knowledge from the elaborate monument to Sir John St. John of Bletsoe, in the church at Bletsoe, in Bedfordshire. Sir John, who died on 19th December 1558, appears in effigy with his wife Margaret (Waldegrave), five sons, and four daughters; but his will, made on 6 April, 1558, does not mention Margaret, and names only two of his sons - Oliver, his son and heir, and his second son John. The question therefore arises whether the figures - or some of them - were carved from the life before Sir John's death, and probably it cannot be answered. But even if nothing was done till 1559, the monument is a third-of-a-century earlier than the monument to Nicholas at Lydiard Tregoz and more than half-a-century earlier than the 1615 work on the triptych. Its heraldic evidence on the St. John pedigree is therefore valuable.

In Report No.2, pp. 30-32, I pointed out that the Broy coat appears as No. 2 and No. 22 of the 71 on the triptych (1615) and as No. 2 in all Sir Walter's work (1683-99), but not in that early position (No.2) elsewhere on the triptych, on Sir John's own monument, or in the east windows at Lydiard Tregoz and Battersea. In other words, Sir John, 1st Baronet, seems to have thought at first that (Beatrix) Broy was the first heiress whom his Glamorgan ancestors married, then became uncertain, and left it to his son Sir Walter to establish the fact later in the century. The evidence from Sir John's own monument at Bletsoe is therefore interesting.

The design of the monument incorporates three shields of arms, one representing St. John only, the second representing Sir John's marriage to Margaret Waldegrave, and the third representing the marriage of Sir John's grandparents. In all these three cases St. John is represented by a selection of twelve from the twenty-nine coats that the St. Johns were entitled to bear after Sir Oliver St. John married Margaret Beauchamp two or three years before 1430. The Broy coat is clearly the second of the twelve, and the whole selection makes sense as a proper choice from the first twenty-nine of the seventy-one on the triptych at Lydiard Tregoz. In fact, the twelve are the same as No.1 (St. John), 2 (Broy), 3 (Umfreville), 4 (Delabere), 7 (unidentified), 8 (Paveley), 9 (Beauchamp), 21 (Patshull), 23 (Stangrave), 25 (Beauchamp of Bedford), 26 (Grandison), and 27 (Tregoze). This evidence confirms the conclusions reached in Report No.3. The Broy coat could not have been included as No. 2 if Beatrix had not been an heiress; it follows, therefore, from this early evidence at Bletsoe - confirming the later evidence at Lydiard Tregoz - that five successive heads of the Glamorgan St. Johns married heiresses - Beatrix Broy, Elizabeth Umfreville, Elizabeth Delabere, Isabella Paveley, and Margaret Beauchamp.

The surprising fact that the monument incorporates a shield representing Sir John's grandparents (Sir John St. John and Alice Bradshaigh) - the marriage of his great-grandparents, Sir Oliver St. John and Margaret Beauchamp, was far more significant - presents a problem that is at present unsolved. Did this shield belong to some earlier monument, and was it incorporated in the present monument at Sir John's death or even later? If there is any truth in this speculation, we seem to have evidence that two generations before 1559 the St. Johns of Bletsoe believed that a Broy

was the first heiress whom a Glamorgan St. John married.

F.T.S.

On Nicholas St. John's Composition for Knighthood and the date of the death of Black Oliver.

In Report No. 7, p. 49, it was stated that:

Nicholas St. John, of Marlborough, was one of those many who, being in possession of £40 per annum in freehold land, were fined in 1631, for not receiving knighthood through failing to attend the coronation of King Charles I ... on 2 February, 1625/6 The absence of Nicholas from the coronation is note-worthy because his father must have died before that day.

The present writer remembers very clearly the twinge of doubt that assailed him as the above words were written. The article in Archaeologia, Vol. 39, pp. 189-244, by Francis Morgan Nichols, M.A., F.S.A., entitled "The Feudal and Obligatory Knighthood" shows that the doubt should have been heeded!

Mr. Nichols wrote:

Whatever may be the origin of knighthood, I have no doubt that it was from its connection with feudality that it derived its first importance and its stability. The feudal system, in its original vigour, bound the military tenant to personal service with his horses and arms and mounted attendant, and, as an earnest of his readiness to perform what was termed his knight's service, it was considered to be the duty of each successor to the fief to present himself, when summoned before his lord, prepared with all military equipments, for admission to the knightly order ...

According to the original theory, the obligation was held binding upon the tenants of one entire knight's fee or more. It occasionally happened, however, that a person holding a portion of a knight's fee ... had also other sufficient estate held in socage of land to enable him to support the dignity and expenses of knighthood. This kind of case seems to have given occasion to the fixing of a pecuniary census for the knightly order ... It was during the reign of Edward II that the knightly census was fixed at that amount (£40 a year) at which it remained with little deviation until the abolition of compulsory knighthood.

At the commencement of several reigns prior to that of King Charles I it had been customary to issue a general summons to the £40 freeholders to attend the coronation and receive the dignity of knighthood. Mr. Nichols is confident that the 'Summons' was a mere formality, except insofar as a small tax may have been levied, those actually knighted on these occasions being always selected by the crown.

Before the coronation of Charles I, in 1625, the customary proclamations were directed to be made for the knighting of all persons having £40 a year in land ... but ... it was not until the 29th of May, 1628, that a commission was issued to the Lord Treasurer, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and others, "to tax and assess fines as well for default in not obeying the summons of the first year of the reign, as for having respite of assuming the arms of knighthood"... . The Commission of 1628 was probably never acted

upon ... On the 28th of January, 1630, a new commission was issued ... During the two years following the issue of this renewed commission vigorous efforts were made to make the imposition profitable. The sheriffs were ordered to furnish more complete returns of the gentry and others having 40l a year; and, in July, 1630, additional lists of commissioners were named for compounding with persons liable to the fines in their several counties.

Upon the meeting of the Long Parliament knighthood money was among the foremost of the grievances to be redressed.

Had Charles I been more successful in obtaining supplies from Parliament in the early part of his reign, the form of summoning 40l freeholders to receive knighthood might probably have remained to this day as part of the coronation ceremonies, as time-honoured and as innocent as the challenge of the champion or the banquet in Westminster Hall.

According to Mr. Nichols' evidence the statement made in Report No. 7 must be discounted. Black Oliver may well have been the one summoned to the coronation, and Nicholas' name on the list may be there only because, in 1630, he was a £40 freeholder.

B.G.C.

RESTORATION WORK ON THE CHURCH BUILDING

The final stage of major restoration on Lydiard Tregoz Church was completed during 1974. Renewal of the lead of the South Chapel roof and repairs to the woodwork was begun on the 29th April. The work, using new lead, was completed and the account of £2,402.84 was presented by 30th June. With the aid of a grant from the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance of £500 and by exhausting all available Tregoz funds, the Church Council was able to complete payment.

Work on the South Aisle roof was begun within a few weeks and was completed by the end of November. The old lead sheets were trimmed, repaired where necessary, and re-laid. Only a minimum of new lead was used. A grant from the Wiltshire Historic Churches Fund and an interest free loan of £2,000 from the Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance enabled the Council to pay, less the retention percentage, the account for the second stage totalling £2,470.

The work, under the direction of Mr. Oswald Brakspear, has been carried out by Messrs. Smith & Hope Ltd., of Wootton Bassett. We are delighted to say that the completed roof is a fine work of craftsmanship, and we are deeply grateful to the young plumber, Mr. Geoffrey Greenaway, who carried it out.

The total cost of the restoration work, begun in 1962 with the relaying of the north side of the Chancel roof, amounts to £12,950.

M. West

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Mr. and Mrs.A.Smith,
Mr.E.E.F.Smith, F.S.A.,
+ Mrs.M.E. and Miss D.Smith,
Mr. and Mrs.S.R.Stiggers,
Miss C.M.Strange,
Miss P.Strange,
The Rt.Hon. the Lord Sudeley,
Dr.A.J.Taylor, C.B.E., M.A., D.Litt., F.B.A., P.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.,

The Rev.F. and Mrs.Thorne,

Mr.D.W.Tilley, M.C., M.Sc., B.Sc.(Eng.), and Mrs.Tilley,

Mr.M.J.Titcombe,
Mr.M.O.Titcombe,
Mrs.E.M.Thomas,
Mrs.E.J.Tuck,
Miss T.E.Vernon,
+ Mr.C.G.Walters,
Mr.D.R.M.West,

The Rev. M.O. West,
 The Rev. J.T. Wharton, M.A.,
 Mr. R.A. Willis, F.R.S.A.,
 Mrs. R.G. Woolford,
 The Misses A. and P. Yeo,

Congratulations

The Society congratulates two Friends on their recent appointments in the Society of Antiquaries of London - Dr. Arnold J. Taylor, C.B.E., F.B.A. who is now President, and Mr. A.R. Dufty, C.B.E., who is now one of its Vice-Presidents. Our congratulations go, also, to Mr. R.A. Willis, F.R.S.A., who is this year's President of the Sir Walter St. John's Old Boys' Association.

IN MEMORIAM

Mr. D. Murray John, O.B.E., B.A.

With the sudden and untimely death of David Murray John on 24 May last year, Swindon suffered a grievous loss. Although he had retired only very recently from active participation in the affairs of the town, there is little doubt that the wealth of experience at his command as Town Clerk, and later as Chief Executive, over a period of thirty-six years could have been of continued benefit to the town for many years.

As the architect of the post-war Swindon, it is not too much to say that, when the history of Swindon is written, the name of David Murray John will have an honoured place - in company with that of Iambard Kingdom Brunel.

Although Mr. Murray John played such a vital role in shaping the destiny of the Swindon of to-day, he shunned publicity, preferring the quiet satisfaction of seeing the successful outcome of his efforts.

In this connection the existence of Lydiard Park to-day bears tribute to him. There is no doubt whatever that without his active concern the Mansion would have disappeared long ago and that the Friends of Lydiard Tregoz might never have existed.

The story is well-known of how Mr. Murray John decided, in 1942, when the future of this country was very much in doubt, that Lydiard Park had a part to play in the better post-war Swindon that he foresaw; but not so well-known are the struggles he faced and overcame in persuading others to share his enthusiasm for acquiring, preserving, and restoring a building that would very soon have been beyond repair.

It was typical of the man that the more difficult the task the greater was his determination to achieve his aim. The saving of Lydiard Mansion for posterity provides an example of this that cannot be bettered. In post-war days, not unnaturally, the preservation of historic buildings was not of first priority, and many times he was faced with the prospect of having nowhere else to turn when it seemed that no further financial assistance towards repair costs could possibly be forthcoming.

How eventual success was achieved is a long story; suffice it to say that the meetings of the Friends of Lydiard Tregoz are sufficient testimony to a story with a happy ending, and such a happy ending should not be reached without reference to the importance of the Mansion to Lydiard Tregoz church hard-by. What the future of the even-more historic church would have been in isolation from the house is something that will never be known, but it can be imagined. The fact that the two buildings keep such friendly company together must give great satisfaction to all people who set store by aesthetic values.

As with Sir Christopher Wren and St.Paul's Cathedral, it would not be amiss to stand on the lawn at Lydiard Park and, looking around, think of David Murray John.

John Masters.

Mr. Norman Ingram.

On 12 March 1975, Norman Ingram, guide and caretaker at Lydiard Park, died, after years of suffering which were heroically borne. He, his wife Joyce, and their two children fell in love with the place at first sight when he came as temporary caretaker after the departure of Mr. George Rose. Great was everyone's pleasure when it was known that the appointment was to be made permanent. Nothing was too much trouble for Joyce and Norman, as they set themselves to help everyone who came to Lydiard Tregoz - to the house, church, or grounds - to find what they sought, whether it was genealogical information, or peace and quiet, or the opportunity to engage in lively recreation. They were friends to all who came.

In particular, the Friends have great cause to be thankful to Norman for all the effort he made to ensure the success of our meetings. We shall all miss him, but none so much as his wife and family, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

Brian Carne.

Statement of Account as at 31 May, 1975.

	£	p		£	p
Receipts			Payments		
Balance b/fwd	45.23		Secretary: duplicating	2.00	
Subscriptions and donations	74.41		postages	8.31	
Bank Interest	10.44		envelopes	80	
			Photography - Mr. Bird	2.50	
			Balance in hand	116.47	
	<u>£130.08</u>			<u>116.47</u>	
				<u>£130.08</u>	

Audited and found correct,

M. Sharp.

1 June 1975

Additional members:

- + Mr. and Mrs.E.Bampton, 7 Butts Road, Chiseldon, Swindon, SN4 ONN.
- + Mr.E.Bampton, 88 Stratton Road, Swindon.
- + The Rev. J.M.Free, A.K.C., B.D., The Rectory, Lydiard Millicent, Swindon, SN5 9LR.
- + Mr. and Mrs.L.Landers, 10 Frobisher Drive, Walcot, Swindon, SN3 3AA.
- + Mr.E.Smith, Lydiard House Farm, Lydiard Millicent.

 POSTSCRIPT

This last section affords the Editor the opportunity to thank all those who have made possible the production of this year's Report and, in particular, the Borough of Thamesdown which has generously continued its support in the matter of the duplicating materials.

Mention of the Borough leads on to say that, from April 1974, management arrangements for Lydiard Park passed to Arts and Recreation, and has now been designated part of the Museum service under the Curator, John Woodward. Visitors will see a number of changes in the state rooms. Electric lighting has been added to the three rooms that did not have it. The collection of personal memorabilia from the late Lord Bolingbroke is to form the basis of a series of exhibits in the main hall. A bed has been purchased for the state bedroom.

In regard to the park itself there are a number of plans on hand. Mr.Denys Hodson writes:

With the expansion of Swindon to the west, Thamesdown Borough Council is giving very careful consideration to the future status of Lydiard Park. It has, of course, always been shown on the strategic plans as a space to be preserved from development but the Council officers have now started discussions with the Countryside Commission with a view to the possible designation of the park as a Country Park under the Countryside Act 1968.

In the long term in order both to allow extensive public usage and to preserve for all time the best features of the park, a certain amount of planning will have to go into the creation of car parks, extra footpaths and so on. The Council, however, are determined that this will be done with the best possible advice to minimise environmental damage. Among elements being considered are the restoration of the lake, the laying out of nature trails and the possible inclusion of facilities for horse riding within the overall area of the park. There is also some possibility that some of the farm land to the north of the house could be re-established as park land.

Last Easter saw the departure of our Rector, the Rev.Michael West, and his family. They have moved to Cornwall, to the parishes of Germoe and Breage. The churches in these parishes were founded in AD 560 and AD 600 respectively. There ought to be plenty of scope for historical research there! On 22 May the Rev.J.M.Free was licensed as priest-in-charge of the united benefice. We welcome him and his family.

1974/75 seems to have been a great time of change all round. Our President has moved home, so has the present writer - with all the dislocation of work that follows a move. We are now ready to be off on another year's work!

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The Friends of Lydiard Tregoz

June 14th, 1975

Free to members