

FRIENDS OF LYDIARD TREGOZ

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Report no. 34

approval and full support of St.Mary's Church and the Borough of Swindon.

The objects of the society are to:

- foster interest in the Church, the House, and the Parish as a whole.

- hold one meeting in the House annually, usually in mid-May, with a guest speaker. The meeting is followed by tea in the dining room and Evensong in the Parish Church. (The meeting in 1997 was held at Battersea.)

- produce annually *Report*, a magazine of articles which are concerned in the broadest way with the history of the parish, its buildings and people, the St.John family and their antecedents as well as more locally-based families, and the early years of the Sir Walter St.John School in Battersea.
Copies of *Report* are deposited with libraries and institutions in England, Wales, and the United States of America. The offer of articles for inclusion is always welcomed by the Editor.

- make occasional contributions from unexpended income towards the cost of projects in either the House or the Church.

THIS EDITION OF THE *REPORT*

We are fortunate this year in having contributions from
Miss Janet M. Backhouse, who was at one time Curator of Illuminated MSS at the British Library/Museum,
Mr Joe Gardner of Purton Cricket Club,
Mr Douglas Payne, who was for many years Headmaster of Lydiard Millicent (CE Controlled) School, and
Mr Tony Spicer, a member of the Battlefields Trust.

As editor I should like to put on record my gratitude to Maiy Warden, the patient proof-reader, to Paul Stephens who for the last eight years has transformed raw text into something more acceptable, and to the printers, Telecottage Computer Services, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.

Brian Carne

**AN ELIZABETHAN GIRDLE BOOK:
AN UNNOTICED FEATURE OF THE PORTRAIT OF LUCY HUNGERFORD
AT LYDIARD TREGOZE**

Janet Backhouse

Outstanding among the fine collection of St. John family portraits now assembled at Lydiard Tregoze is the image of Lucy Hungerford, which hangs in a long-established position over one of the drawing room doors. Lucy was the mother of John St. John, the first baronet, and appears with her husband and children in the central panel of the famous St. John triptych in Lydiard church. Widowed in September 1594, she took as her second husband her cousin Sir Anthony Hungerford of Black Bourton, by whom she was the mother of the well-known parliamentarian leader, Sir Edward Hungerford. She died in 1598. The portrait, painted in or around 1590, when she was perhaps approaching thirty years of age, shows her in the rich but comparatively sober dress of a landed lady of the time, her wealth and status implied by a fine array of jewels and fashionable accessories which include a feather fan, a magnificent baroque pendant in the form of a mermaid, and, attached at her waist by an elegant gold chain, a tiny girdle book bound in gold and apparently ornamented in black enamel.

Girdle books were popular in England for much of the 16th century. Examples similar to that worn by Lucy Hungerford may be seen in a number of other female portraits, including those of Anne Penruddocke (1557; collection of Lord Howard de Walden), a lady who may be Mary I (late 1550s; Fitzwilliam Museum), and Anne Browne, wife of Sir William Petre (1567; Essex Record Office). A girdle book is held prominently by the lady in the Judd memorial panel of 1560 (Dulwich Picture Gallery). A further example is recognisable on the memorial brass of George Arundell and his wife at Mawgan-in-Pyder in Cornwall, dating from 1573. The earliest portrait example, so far recorded, belongs to a young lady of Henry VIII's reign, painted about 1540, and now at Parham in Sussex. Her tiny book is open in her hands and seems to be protected by a small golden box rather than a traditional binding. Nearer in date to the portrait of Lucy Hungerford is the Comewall triptych at Burford in Shropshire, painted in 1588, though the girdle book shown is worn by a lady who died in 1547. The latest currently known is that of Philippa Rosewell, wife of Sir George Speke of White Lackington in Somerset, which is dated 1592. Philippa's book is, however, of special interest and we shall return to it below. The books are variously suspended, some on chains, others on silken cords, but all are, of course, provided with the integral hanging rings which are the essential characteristic of this type of book.

Books intended to be earned around, worn upon the person of the owner, were not an invention of the 16th century. Practical texts, typically legal or liturgical, might be written out in a small format and provided with an extended binding ending in a knot or a clip to be attached at the belt. Numerous examples may be seen in late-medieval paintings and carvings, especially in Germany, and a handful of survivors have come down to us. There are also a few examples of tiny luxury manuscripts from earlier centuries, usually devotional, though deprived of their original bindings so that we can no longer be certain how they were intended to be used. One such is a Book of Hours, measuring only 2" by 1 1/4" (52 by 40 mm), written out by an English scribe named Roger Pynchebek in 1474 (British Library, Additional MS 58280). There was certainly a vogue for very small but very rich prayerbooks at the French court in the time of Anne of Brittany and her daughter, Claude of France, during the first quarter of the 16th century. One of the smallest of all, containing gospel extracts and prayers and measuring a mere 1 1/4" by seven-eighths of an inch (38 by 22 mm), though produced in France, was

owned by an anonymous English lady. It is also in the British Library (Sloane MS 116), and can be dated before 1529 as it contains an inscription to her by Cardinal Wolsey alongside one from Henry VIII. It is thus not unlikely that French fashion influenced the development of the girdle book in England, though firm proof in the shape of early French bindings is lacking.

Written evidence for books bound up in precious metals and often further enriched with jewels is abundant in the inventories, wills, and royal gift rolls of the Tudor period. Unfortunately it is seldom possible to establish whether a 'boke of golde' was designed to be worn or whether it was simply one of the richly decorated small-scale volumes which frequently appear in the hands of the subjects of contemporary portraits. A few references are more revealing. We do, for example, know from the chroniclers that Lady Jane Grey on her progress to her formal trial in 1553 earned two prayerbooks, one of which was 'a black velvet boke hanging before hir'. Of particular interest is the inclusion in the Holbein sketchbook in the British Museum of two detailed designs for girdle book covers, apparently intended to be earned out in gold with black enamel, and both incorporating the initial letters T, I, and W. These designs seem to have been commissioned in connection with the marriage of Sir Thomas Wyatt to Jane Hawte in 1537. A girdle book based upon them was described in detail in *Archaeologia* in 1873 and, though since lost to sight, may be presumed still to be in existence and awaiting rediscovery. The description included full details of the book's contents, consisting of private prayers and devotions with particular significance for members of the Wyatt family, underlining the essentially personal nature of these little books.

The Wyatt book was not a unique survival, though it is so far, according to the description, probably the closest in general appearance to the book worn by Lucy Hungerford. Three English girdle-books have survived intact and we have the decorated panels from a fourth. Two are traditionally associated with Queen Elizabeth I. One of them is included among the Hunsdon Heirlooms, now in the possession of the Berkeley family but with a credible history back to Elizabeth herself. Basically of the traditional black enamel on gold, with arabesque ornament, it is further adorned with decorative plaques, one of which is a shell cameo of a warrior's head. One of the precious books listed among the jewels of Queen Jane Seymour in 1536-7 (British Library, Royal MS 7 C. xvi) is said to have been decorated with an antique head, and it is interesting to note that this particular pair of covers now contains an account of the death of her son, Edward VI, in 1553, with a copy of his final prayer.

The second survivor, now preserved in the British Museum, is dated to the early 1540s and is exceptionally elaborate. Its covers are embossed and enamelled with scenes from the Old Testament - the stories of the Brazen Serpent and of the Judgement of Solomon - accompanied by quotations from the English translation of the bible that became current only in 1539. Today it encloses a miniature printed devotional book which was published in 1574 and cannot, of course, represent the original contents. However, the existence of printed books on this tiny scale - typically some 2 1/4" by 2" or 65 by 50 mm - does underline an on-going and reasonably widespread demand for such material, however used. Another little devotional collection of appropriate size, issued in 1558, is entitled 'The Pomander of Prayer' and, while conjuring up an image of a divine perfume ascending into heaven, may also surely reflect the fact that, like a pomander, it might find itself hung at the end of a lady's girdle. Uncut proof sheets of a third printed book on this scale, a tiny Sarum Hours printed in Paris for the English market in 1526 and now preserved as flyleaves in a later book at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, once again takes the whole story back into the earlier part of Henry VIII's reign.

The third surviving girdle-book (British Library, Stowe MS 956) is noticeably smaller than the other two. Its covers are of gold filigree, originally enhanced with the traditional black. It contains the penitential and other selected psalms in English verse, translated and apparently written out by John Croke, one of Henry VIII's six clerks in Chancery. Another, slightly larger copy of the same text tells

us that it was composed at the request of Croke's wife, so it was probably for her adornment that the tiny golden book was originally intended. It has been assigned to the early 1540s.

With the pair of detached panels, again in the British Museum, we return to narrative decoration based on Old Testament themes. This time one cover shows the Judgement of Solomon, the other Daniel's Judgement in the case of Susanna and the Elders. Apparently slightly earlier in date than the complete book associated with Elizabeth I, and possibly produced during the 1530s, these panels are of unusual interest because the Daniel subject is clearly identical with the painted cover of the girdle book shown in the portrait of Philippa Rosewell, already mentioned, which was executed in 1592. Investigation of the family history of the husband, Sir George Speke, suggests that the jewel may originally have been the property of the wife of his grandfather, Sir Thomas Speke (d. 1551), who was prominent at the court of Henry VIII. Philippa has thus been seen as displaying a treasured heirloom, representative of past family glories, rather than an ornament in current fashion, reflecting contemporary fashion fortunes. Recognition that Lucy Hungerford appears with a girdle book in an almost exactly contemporary portrait, emanating from a parallel social background, must modify this view, suggesting that these delightful little accessories to female dress remained 'objects of desire' even as late as the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, a good three-quarters of a century after the fashion first appeared in England. Further unnoted examples must surely remain to be recognised among the unpublished portraits and monuments of Tudor England.

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References

The Howard de Walden, Fitzwilliam, and Essex portraits, together with the Judd Memorial panel, are all reproduced in Roy Strong, *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*, 1969, nos. 46, 51 and 79, figure 32.

The British Museum book and panels, plus the Philippa Rosewell portrait may be seen in colour in the exhibition catalogue *Princely Magnificence: Court Jewels of the Renaissance 1500-1630*, Victoria and Albert Museum 1980, nos. 11, 12, and P17; see also Hugh Tait, 'The Tudor girdle prayerbook of the Speke Family', *The Society of Jewellery Historians Newsletter* 2, no. 4, 1982.

The Hunsdon Heirloom girdle book is reproduced in colour in Diana Scarisbrick, *Ancestral Jewels*, 1989, pi. 5, its text is quoted on pp. 14-15.

The portraits reappear, with details of their books, the Parham portrait, the Holbein design, and all four surviving examples, together with quotations from some of the inventories, etc. in Hugh Tait, 'The girdle-prayerbook or 'tablett': an important class of Renaissance jewellery at the court of Henry VIII', *Jewellery Studies*, 2, 1985, pp. 29-58. [Note: Hugh and I do not entirely agree about the definition of 'tablett' in this context.]

For a suggested link between the girdle book and the early history of the portrait miniature, see Janet Backhouse, 'Illuminated Manuscripts and the Early Development of the Portrait Miniature', *Early Tudor England (Proceedings of the 1987 Harlaxton Symposium)*, ed. D. Williams, 1989, pp. 1-17.

For earlier forms and functions of girdle books, see J.A. Szirmai, 'The girdle book of the Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum', *Quaerendo*, xviii, 1988, pp. 17-34.

THE BATTLE OF ELLANDUN AND LYDIARD TREGOZE

Tony Spicer

In October 2000 I visited Lydiard Tregoze for the first time. Previous visits to Swindon had usually been in the dark and in the rain, and had involved struggling round ring-ways to find a business park and being mystified by magic roundabouts. It was, therefore, a very pleasant surprise to find such a delightful oasis as Lydiard Park.

What had taken me to Lydiard Tregoze was that, in his book *More Battlefields of England*, Colonel A.H. Bume gave his opinion that Lydiard Tregoze was the site of the battle of Ellandun in AD 825. As a member of the Battlefields Trust, who helps organise some of the battlefield walks, I wished to see whether there was a suitable walk here, as well as satisfying my own interest in studying Bume's theory on the ground.

So, what do we know about the battle of Ellandun? To answer that, we must go back in time to early-9th-century England. England is not a united country. It consists of a number of different Kingdoms, of which the three most important are Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex. Northumbria has been dominant since the 7th century, but its power is now on the wane, its place being taken by Mercia under its famous King Offa. Whereas, today, we think of Mercia in terms of the West Midlands, then it extended across the whole of Central England, from the famous dike, along the Welsh marches, to East Anglia. But Offa died in 796, and there have been a succession of problems in Mercia. In the meantime, the power of Wessex has steadily been increasing, so that it now extends along almost all southern England, from Kent to Devon.

It is now AD 825. The king of Wessex is Egbert. The king of Mercia is Beomwulf. Egbert is in the west of his kingdom, at war with the men of Cornwall, either trying to extend his territory or resisting an attack, we do not know. He defeats them at Galford - probably Camelford, which is also one of the possible sites of Arthur's last battle of Camlann around AD 520. There, word reaches Egbert that Beomwulf is invading his kingdom from the north. He force marches his army back - by yesterday - and confronts Beomwulf at Ellandun.

The only chronicle to give any details of the battle is the 'Annals of Winchester'. I have been unable to find a translation of the passage - reproduced in the Appendix to this article - so, *faute de mieux*, here is my rendering, probably wrong in places, but which I hope gives the gist:

Beomwulf, king of the Mercians, deriding the ability of King Egbert, and, thinking that his experience was worth more than that of Egbert, wanted to play him at the game of war. He invited and provoked the latter's army to battle so as to make him pay homage. Egbert consulted with his noblemen, and the choice was taken to drive off shame with the sword. It was more honourable to be killed than to submit their freedom to the collar of the yoke. The battle took place in the summer season, the place - Ellendune, now in the manor of the Priory of Winchester. The kings came together to fight, with a disparity in the number and quality of their soldiers. Against each hundred soldiers of Egbert, who were pale and thin, Beomwulf had a thousand, ruddy and well-fed, as behoves the soldiers of St Mary. They clashed together valiantly, each man giving of his best. The Mercians were put to the sword without mercy, but as much as they were conquered, so they excelled themselves with valour and threw themselves back into the conflict regardless of their own danger. They fell more copiously than hailstones, with more suffocating from their own sweat than from blood. The whole ground was covered with the bodies of men and horses. Beomwulf himself, no longer king of Mercians but of moribunds, lest he be seen to be at one with his soldiers, sought flight for himself and would not have wished to lose his spurs for three halfpennies.

Henry of Huntingdon records that ‘the Brook of Ellandune ran red with gore, stood damned with battle wreck, grew foul with mouldering corpses’. It was evidently not an affair for the faint hearted. Other chroniclers say little about the battle other than that Egbert won it and the slaughter was great, although Florence of Worcester refers to ‘Ellandune, that is, Ealla’s hill’.

Politically, it was a most decisive battle, for Egbert, still in the same year, followed it up by driving the Mercians out of, firstly, Kent, and secondly, East Anglia. Four years later he overcame the whole of the Mercian kingdom, and then marched his army to Dore, near Sheffield, where a treaty was made with the king of Northumbria, who paid him homage and submitted to his overlordship. The next year the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that he led his troops into North Wales and ‘turned them to humble obedience’. He is described in that Chronicle as Bretwalda or ‘Ruler of Britain’, a predominance which the house of Wessex was to maintain.

But what has all this to do with Lydiard Tregoze, and why did Bume, writing in 1952, think that the battle of Ellandune was fought there? To answer that we must go back earlier, for Bume was not the first nor the only historian to associate the battlefield with Lydiard Tregoze.

An earlier study had been made by Dr G.B. Grundy in 1918. In an 1865 edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Ellandun had originally been identified with Allington, near Amesbury. However, this was subject to a note by the Rev. C.S. Taylor:

It seems unlikely that Beomwulf would be allowed to penetrate so far into Wessex. Wroughton is also called Ellingdon, and lies just at the point where the ridgeway crosses the Ermine Street, the natural point for a West Saxon King to resist an invasion from the north a large part of the modern parish of Wroughton is included in the Domesday manor of Ellandun.

This puzzled Dr Grundy. He worked out the number of acres per hide - if Ellandun was included with Wroughton - and concluded that this was so out of proportion to other areas, that at best only a part could be in the north of Wroughton with the rest belonging to the Lydiards. Further evidence emerged from local charters. There was a Saxon charter of Ellandun, dated 956. By it, 30 hides were granted by King Edwy to his kinsman. Dr Grundy noticed that in this charter there was a landmark - Heines Thom - which was also in a charter for Pierteau, the modern Purton. At the risk of oversimplifying a complex study, Dr Grundy also established that the river ‘Worfe’, found in the Purton charter, was the modern river Ray. Effectively, therefore, the Purton charter contained the same or similar land to the Ellandun charter. While the exact boundaries of the Purton charter cannot be identified, there were some clear landmarks. The boundary must have reached the river Ray somewhere close to Blunsdon railway station. It then went south up the river to a tongue of land at the bend of the river a quarter of a mile west of Moredon. There was a willow tree near the brook coming from Lydiard Tregoze, close to Sparcell’s farm. Finally,, we have Heines Thom, referred to above, which is close to Common Platt. Dr Grundy concluded:

The northern part of the land known in Saxon times as Ellandun.... extended considerably north of the north boundary of the present Wroughton. It must therefore have included parts at least of the modern parishes of Lydiard Tregoze and Lydiard Millicent.... It does show us that the area [of Ellandun] was not on the high down south of Wroughton, but on a slope of the down west of Swindon; and that this latter down is the Ellandun of the battle.

Dr Grundy was also an expert on ridgeways. These were the through-roads of the times. Although they made the journey longer, having to go along the ridges or higher ground, they had the great advantage of avoiding floods or waterlogged ground during winter. Also, I would venture to suggest, visibility was much better up on the ridge. This would make it easier, in days before maps for the traveller, to see where he was going and also to avoid an ambush. There were, of course, still the old Roman roads, but it may be that they had not been properly maintained, and it certainly seems to be

the case from Dr Grundy's work that Anglo-Saxon armies tended to prefer the ridgeways. Often, however, there would be a 'summerway' as well, where, instead of having to go over a hill, a short cut could be taken through lower ground during the drier months.

Dr Grundy identified a ridgeway which ran by Common Platt through Lydiard Millicent to Lydiard Green in a south-westerly direction. At Lydiard Green it turned south, by Hook, to Coped Hall where it crossed another ridgeway. Dr Grundy suggests that Beomwulf, in his invasion of Wessex, followed the line of the Roman road from Cirencester to Cricklade where he crossed the Thames. Passing down the Roman road to Kingsdown, he then turned west on to this ridgeway over Ellandun, leading him into the heart of Wessex. It was here that Egbert, coming up from Cornwall along the same ridgeway, met him. This would put the battle as taking place a little to the south of Lydiard Millicent and to the west of Lydiard Tregoze. Dr Grundy identifies Henry of Huntingdon's brook - 'Rivus' in Latin - as either the Ray or the brook from Lydiard Tregoze.

We now turn to the work of Colonel A.H. Bume, who was the leading authority on battlefields of his generation. He wrote very much from a military point of view, and is associated with his theory of 'inherent military probability'. He would put himself in the place of the opposing commanders and try to work out what they would do and what positions they would occupy. He has sometimes been criticised for an over-reliance on this theory but in fact he also paid great attention to the written sources and the lay-out of the ground itself, including, especially, the roads.

Bume was of the opinion that Egbert's father had constructed the Wansdyke - the great earthwork which ran from the Bristol Channel to Inkpen Beacon - to secure the northern frontier of Wessex, in the same way that Offa had built his dike to secure the western boundary of Mercia. He thought that Egbert, protected against Mercian invasion from the north by the Wansdyke, had been able to carry out his campaign in Cornwall and that Beomwulf had not dared to invade Wessex but had hovered just north of the border, while he waited for Egbert to finish in Cornwall. Bearing in mind that after the battle of Ellandun there was time during that same summer for campaigns in Kent and East Anglia, I like to think that the story was rather more dramatic than that - that Beomwulf actually invaded and that Egbert rushed back from Cornwall to meet him, more like the Stamford Bridge and Hastings situation in 1066.

Be that as it may, Bume draws on the work of Dr Grundy to identify the road where the battle was fought. He seems to me to have in fact selected a different road in the same area, although one also identified by Dr Grundy as having been in use at the time. This is the modern B 4553 from Cricklade to West Swindon, which goes through Lydiard Tregoze and, although the direct route is now broken up by the housing estate there, continues through to Salthrop and then, further south, turns into a footpath to Barbury Castle. Bume agrees with Dr Grundy that armies of this period confined their movements to established routes and concludes that the two armies met somewhere along this road. His view is that when two armies meet in head-on collision, each almost instinctively seeks out a ridge running parallel to its front. He inferred from the Annals of Winchester that the two armies were initially drawn up in sight of each other but out of range - a few hundred yards apart. He set out to find two ridges which would answer this description, each roughly perpendicular to the road which formed the axis of their advance and parallel to one another. Here are his findings:

I think we can find two ridges that answer to all these desiderata. The southern one runs through the crossroads, point 352 on the Swindon-Wootton Bassett road: the northern one crosses the old road 1200 yards further north, and is slightly oblique to it but not far from parallel to the southern ridge. These ridges are very small and the dip or undulation between the two is slight. The dip between the two armies at Waterloo was only slightly more pronounced, and the distance between the two ridges is almost exactly the same.

Bume was also looking for a stream or streams a short distance to the north of the northern ridge, which is implied by Henry of Huntingdon who stated that the river ran red with blood:

Now there are two small streams (soon to merge into one) that cross the old road in Lydiard Tregoze parish: the southern one just north of Wick Farm and the other at Roughmoor, 1000 yards further north. Both are now mere brooks but may have been wider in those days and would certainly be boggier and more formidable obstacles.

For these reasons Bume places 'the battle that secured the hegemony of Wessex, for good and all,' at Lydiard Tregoze.

I have now visited Lydiard Tregoze twice and tried to find Bume's ridges. It seems to me that the House and Church are at the eastern end of the northern ridge. It is more difficult to work out where the southern ridge is because of the housing estate, built presumably after Bume wrote his book. Also, Bume's map reference is now out of date and the then-route of the Swindon-Wootton Bassett road difficult to find. I am guessing that it ran between the modern Wootton Bassett road, through Freshbrook to Whitehill about where Hook Street joins it, but could well be wrong. However, there does seem to be a ridge going along walkways through the houses which becomes more discernible at the western end, where the business park is, and beyond. But I am little puzzled because, in his narrative, Bume describes the 'misnamed' Windmill Hill as being in no man's land between the two ridges, whereas I would have thought that it was nearer the southern ridge. I found what I think is the place where the small stream crosses underneath the old road - now closed to traffic - at the bottom of the slope behind the House and Church.

However, I have learned from experience that one needs at least three visits to a potential battlefield to understand it - the first to find out where it is, the second to find out what happened, and the third to find out that you have got it all wrong! So I think I had better leave it there and hand over the riddle to those who walk this pleasant area more often than I do for them to form their own conclusions about Grundy's ridgeway and Bume's ridges, and see if they can visualise the crashing together of those two mighty armies on that fateful day, so long ago.

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APPENDIX 1

The Latin text

Bemulfus, rex Merciorum, regis Egbirti deridens studia, experiri primus voluit, doctus plus valeat an indoctus, 'dum luditur alea Martis'. Invitat et irritat exercitatum feriat ad praelium, vel ad faciendum sibi homagium. Consulti proceres Egberti quid decernerent eligendum, consuluerunt ferro propulsare pudorem; honestius esse decollari quam libera colla iugo submittere; placet tempus in aestate, locus apud Ellendone, manerium nunc prioris Wintoniae. Conveniunt reges ad pugnam cum dispare cultu et numero pugnantium. Contra quippe centum milites Egberti pallidos et macilentos, Bemulfus habuit mille refectos et munitos quales decet esse milites Sanctae Mariae. Congrediuntur fortiter salutantes se de bene bonis. Mulctantur Mercii sine misericordia; tantoque vincendi vincuntur velocius, quanto qui minus noverant, inconsultius se ingerunt periculo. Cadunt uberius quam grando vel pluvia, et tamen plures ex delicatis suffocantur sudore quam sanguine. Tota tellus tegitur cadaveribus hominum et equorum. Bemulfus ipse non jam rex Merciorum sed mortuorum, qui 'Nec superesse videt de tot modo milibus unum' fugam sibi consulens pro tribus obilibus nolle amissae calcaria.

Notes

The spelling of Ellandun varies in different texts. When quoting I have used the spelling of the particular text.

Sources

My main sources are:

Annales de Wintonia (Winchester Annals), ed. H. Luard, in the Rolls Series, 1865

G.B. Grundy, 'The Ancient Highways of Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Hampshire and the Saxon Battlefields of Wiltshire', in the *Archaeological Journal*, vol. LXXV (1918)

Charles Oman, *England before the Norman Conquest*, 6th ed. (1924)

Col. A.H. Bume, *The Battlefields of England and More Battlefields of England*. These two books were republished by the Battlefields Trust in one volume in 1996, which is available from Battlefields Trust Books Service, 38 Oaks Avenue, Worcester Park, Surrey, KT4 8XD, tel: 0208-330-0150, price £20 including postage and packing.

Information about membership of the Battlefields Trust can be obtained from the co-ordinator, Michael Rayner, Meadow Cottage, 33 High Green, Brooke, Norwich. NB15 1HR
Tel: 01508-558145.

Tony Spicer would be delighted to hear from anyone who has a comment to make on his article, at 36 West Malvern Road, Malvern, Worcester WR14 4NA. Tel: 01684-572925.

GILES DAUBENEY (1796-1877)

THE CRICKETING RECTOR OF LYDIARD TREGOZE

Joe Gardner

I first came across the name of Giles Daubeney, curate of Lydiard Tregoze from 1831 and rector from 1839 until his death in 1877, in a small booklet entitled 'Purton Cricket Club - Reminiscences' when I was researching material for use in a booklet to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Purton Cricket Club, which was founded in 1820.

The 'Reminiscences', written by J.E.G. Bradford, contained a list of members for 1855, and included in the names were the following reverend gentlemen, Giles Daubeney, Francis Dyson of St. Sampson's Cricklade, Arthur Evans of Little Somerford, Thomas Gibbs of Coates near Cirencester, Meyrick Holme of Marston Meysey, John Mervyn Prower of Purton, and Thomas Ripley of Wootton Bassett. Also in the list were the reverend Coates, curate at Purton, and Charles Bradford, who was to become vicar of Clyffe Pypard. For a list of twenty-nine members to contain nine men associated with the church aroused my curiosity and set me off on a search to find out more about the names from the neatly-printed members' list.

Apart from his name on the list, Giles Daubeney is only once mentioned in the booklet, as having played in a match against Lansdown, Bath, in 1834. A copy from the score book used in this game showed that Giles batted at number five in each innings and scored 3, before being bowled by Protheroe, in the first innings, and scored 4, before being dismissed by Hughes, in the second innings. Purton, scoring 75 and 136, against Lansdown's 57 and 44, won by the large majority, in nineteenth-century matches, of 110 runs.

The church career of Giles has been well chronicled by Canon Brian Came, who has contributed several articles on him in the *Report* of the Friends of Lydiard Tregoz. From Canon Came's research it emerges that Giles was a conscientious person who became involved in the local community and conducted two services each Sunday, which was in stark contrast to the more lax standards of the eighteenth century. He conducted the affairs of the parish efficiently, and was a conscientious Justice of the Peace. During his time the new school was built. Under the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, Boards of Guardians were chosen from among 'substantial householders' by the Justices. Giles Daubeney was a member of the local Board from its beginning in 1839 and chairman from about 1857. [See, Alec Robbins, *The Workhouses of Purton and the Cricklade and Wootton Bassett Union* (1992), pp. 83,96.] When he became rector in 1839, Giles had already been rector Miles's curate for eight years, and so was well-established in Lydiard Tregoze parish.

I was next to come across the name of Giles Daubeney in 1995 when Purton Cricket Club celebrated its 175th anniversary. On this occasion the President of Lansdown Cricket Club presented Tony Smith, Purton's Life-President, with a record of all the matches played between Purton and Lansdown during the period, 1834 to 1851.

During this period there were thirty matches played between the two clubs. This would suggest that there were few other clubs of the standing of Lansdown and Purton at this time as only two other clubs, Anglesea (12 matches) and Clifton (16 matches) played ten or more games against Lansdown. It must be remembered that most of the games were two-day affairs, and only men of substance and local standing would have had the time and money to play.

The basis of the team at this time appeared to centre round E.H. Budd (15 appearances), his son George (22 appearances), John Gay (17 appearances), A.S. Crowdy (18 appearances), James Pratt (15 appearances), Lawrence (15 appearances), and two men of the church, Arthur Evans (25 appearances) and Giles Daubeney (19 appearances).

Giles must have been an energetic man. He was a regular member of the cricket team for twelve consecutive seasons from 1834. He may have been a member before this date, but with no records available it is only speculation. He usually batted at number five or six, and he often guested for Lansdown where he also batted in the middle order. In the days when any team score between fifty and a hundred was considered a good total, individual contributions were understandably on the low side. No personal hundreds were recorded in any of the Purton v Lansdown matches from 1834 to 1846. Personal scores of fifty were extremely rare.

In the thirty-six innings against Lansdown Giles scored 300 runs, with a highest score of 44 at an average of a shade over 9 runs per innings. This does not look the average of a class batsman, but when we remember the lower team totals it indicates that Giles was one of the better performers with the bat. To put his performances in context, the Rev. Meyrick Holmes, rector of Marston Meysey, during the period 1834 to 1851 scored 19 runs for Purton at an average of 1.2 runs per innings!

In a team where the Budds were the main bowlers and where James Pratt took numerous wickets, Giles was only an occasional bowler and the records from 1834 to 1851 show him taking six wickets against Lansdown. Unfortunately bowling figures were not recorded in the score books, and so bowling averages are not available.

In 1834 Giles was thirty-eight years old and his last recorded game was played on 16/17 July 1846, when he was fifty. A curious entry occurs on the team sheet in the game played on 22/23 July 1842. The list of the batsmen records two players with the same name - G. Daubeney. Who was the second G. Daubeney? It is not likely to be Giles's second son, Giles John, for the boy was only nine at the time, probably it is the 'G.B. Daubeney' who appears on the list of members in 1864.

The most successful match for Giles personally is the one recorded below. He scored 44 runs in the first innings and 12 in the second. He also took a wicket in the Lansdown innings and, although Purton lost the match, I have no doubt the glow of happy memories of achievement would have been present when he reflected on the sermons he had to preach on the Sunday after the match.

1836.]		LANSDOWN MATCHES.		29	
THE PURTON CLUB v. THE LANSDOWN CLUB,					
Played at Purton on August 18th and 19th, and won by the Lansdown Club, by 10 runs in one Innings.					
PURTON.			LANSDOWN.		
1st Inn.	2nd Inn.		1st Inn.		
Pratt ...bd. Wright .	..17 —	bd. Protheroe ...22	Bruce .....	...bd. Pratt .....	...24
Lawrence ...ditto Ditto .	..19 —	absent ... 0	Pycroft.....	...ditto Ditto .....	... 1
Crowdy ...bd. Daubeuey.	..11 —	bd. Wright ...21	Wright .....	...bd. Crowdy .....	...53
G. Danbeney-bd. Protheroe...	..44 —	bd. Protheroe ...12	H. Daubeney ...	...ct. Pratt .....	... 7
Codrington ...bd. Daubeney...	.. 6 —	ct. Taylor ...14	Tyler .....	...runout .....	...16
Bacon ...bd. Protheroe...	.. 2 —	bd. Danbeney ... 0	J. Marshall ...	...ct. Pratt .....	... 5
Warner ...run out ... 1 —		ctd. Wright ... 0	Protheroe ...	...bd. Crowdy .....	...39
Evans ...bd. Protheroe...	.. 5 —	bd. Daubeney ... 3	Smith .....	...ct. Waddeiove ...	... 3
Kitson ...outout ...12 —		ditto Ditto ... 5	C. Sainsbury ...	...not out .....	...53
Waddeiove ...bd. Protheroe...	.. 2 —	not out ... 0	Walters ...	...ct. Bacon .....	... 0
E. Budd ...bd. Wright ... 0 —		absent ... 0	W. T. Taylor ...	...std. G. Daubency ...	... 3
Wide Balls 0		... .. 1	Wide Balls.....	.....	... 1
No Balls 1		... .. 0	No Balls .....	.....	... 1
Byes 5		... .. 3	Byes *** .....	.....	...10
	<u>125</u>	<u>81</u>			<u>216</u>

I thought my information about Giles as a cricketer had come to an end, but I was very pleased when I enquired at Lydiard Park about information concerning Giles to receive a list of Purton Cricket Club members for 1864. The booklet contained the 'Rules' of the club, the dates when the professional bowler Purton had engaged would be at the ground to coach members, an alphabetical list of over-one hundred members, and a list of club officials. I was more than pleased to see that Giles was still associated with the club, not only as a member but as club President. It appears that a group of seven members ran the club. The Vice-President and Treasurer was Mr Simpson. The Hon. Secretary was the Rev. Meyrick Holme, and the committee consisted of Major Prower, Mr Pratt, the Rev. Francis Dyson, and the Rev. W.A. Norris.

By now Giles was sixty-eight, but his enthusiasm for cricket was obviously still strong. Was he the leading figure in attracting the impressive list of members? Unlike today, it appears that playing members and vice-presidents were all presented on one list. Of the twenty-nine playing members listed in 1855, twenty-six appear on the 1864 list. A close look at the list throws up some amazing statistics, and I believe that it must have been Giles, with his wide range of social contacts, who persuaded so many notable people to send one pound to the treasurer of Purton Cricket Club to become, effectively, honorary members.

Was it an average club which could attract the support of an earl, two viscounts, and a host of lords, honorable gentlemen, colonels, lieutenant-colonels, captains, and sixty men of the church? Unfortunately it is not possible to identify the playing members from the list of 224, but if the playing strength was similar to the 1855 list, then Purton had the support of nearly 200 honorary members. I wonder how many of them came to watch the matches.

Information on the 1864 members' list states that 'a professional bowler is engaged'. Unfortunately his name is not given, but his employment shows that the Purton club was not short of money. He was employed on Wednesdays from the beginning of May to the end of August. Rule V states that 'play days be every Wednesday during the season; the wickets to be pitched at eleven o'clock'. I take this to mean that the practice day was on a Wednesday, starting at 11.00 a.m., because, under the days when the professional bowler was engaged, the following appears, 'Notice will be given from time to time of matches to be played etc., etc.' - presumably the name of the opposition, whether the match was home or away, start and finish times, and the names of umpires - 'in the Purton news of the *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard* and the *North Wilts Herald* kind permission of the Editors. Match days were usually on a Thursday and Friday. Saturday cricket was not played, and the reason for this may have been that the club relied heavily on vicars, and they may have been too busy preparing for their church commitments on Sundays.

It would appear that there was no annual general meeting, and the chief club officers of President, Vice-President, Honorary Secretary, and Treasurer were elected annually at the Club dinner.

Rule IX indicates that there was no club captain, but that a captain for the day was appointed by the President for each match. The current laws of cricket as issued by the Marylebone Cricket Club were adopted and observed by the Purton Cricket Club.

Giles died in 1877, and I would like to think that his enthusiasm was available to Purton Cricket Club and that he remained President until his death.

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Appended to this article is the list of members in 1864. Should any reader be able to give me any information on any of the individuals listed, I shall be pleased to receive it at 1A New Road, Purton, Swindon, Wilts SN5 4HF, tel: 01793-770681.

Purton Cricket Club - List of Members in 1864

Aldworth, William, Frilford, Abingdon.	Courtenay, H.R.
Aid worth, John, ditto	Crawford, H., Cove House, Ashton Keynes
Aldworth, Hayward, ditto	Crawley, Rev. C.Y., Gloucester
Aldworth; Rev. J.	Cripps, W., Cirencester
Alexander, G., Westrop House, Highworth	Croome, W.F., Bagendon House
Anderson, H.G.	Crowdy, A.S., Donnington
Andover, Viscount, M.P., Charlton Park	Daubeney, Rev. G., Lydiard Tregoze
Archer, J., Lushill House, Highworth	Daubeney, G.B.
Archer, D., Kingsdown, Swindon	Daubeney, C.
Archer, Captain, Marston Meysey	Daubeney, W., Bath
Ashley, Lord, M.P.	Davis, W., Boyton, Heytesbury
Ashley, Ron. Evelyn	Dewe, W.T., Coates House, Cirencester
Ashley, Hon. Lionel	De Windt, G., Blunsdon Abbey
Astley, Rev. B.G.	Dickenson, Capt., .Ashton Keynes
Attfield, W., Bath	Duff, Major
Attfield, G., ditto	Dunsford, H.L., Swindon
Awdry, Rev.. W.H.	Duntze, G.A..
Awdry, A., Notton House, Chippenham	Durell, Rev. J.D.
Balfour, R.	Dyson, Rev. F., Cricklade
Barker, Percy, Fairford Park	Echalaz, Rev. T.
Barnes, Rev. R., Ardington, Wantage	Edmonds, R.. Trunkwell House, Reading
Bathurst, Capt., A.A., M.P., Cirencester	Ellison, Capt., Upton House, Tetbury
Beach, Sir. Michael E. Hicks, Williamstrip Park	Evans, Rev. A., Little Somerford
Beach, W.H., Watermoor House,. Cirencester	Everett, Rev. C.H. Netherton, Hungerford
Bellers, Capt., Royal Wilts Regt., Devizes	Fawcett, Rev. C., Somerford Keynes
Boldero, Rev. H. K., Grittleton	Fawcett, C.J.F, ditto
Bolingbroke, Viscount, Lydiard Park	Fenwick, Captain
Bouverie, Hon. W.P., Longford Castle	Fisher, Captain, Stroud
Bouverie, Hon. B.P., ditto	Fitzgerald, Major
Bowles, J. S., Milton Hill, Abingdon	Fuller, G., Neston Park, Chippenham
Bowles, Captain	Fuller, Rev. E.A., Cirencester
Bowly, E., Cirencester	Fyler, Rev. J., Windlesham
Bradford, J.E.G., Swindon	Gandy, Rev. J.H.
Bradford, Rev. C.W., Cliffe Pypard	Gay, J., Swindon
Bradford, F.	Gibbs, Rev. T.C., Coates
Bradford, R., Midge Hall, Wootton Bassett	Goddard, A.L., M.P., The Lawn, Swindon
Breton, Capt. Royal Wilts Regt.	Goddard, H. N., Manor House, Cliffe
Brice, Rev. E.	Goddard, Rev. F., Hillmarton, Caine
Brookes, Capt., Elmstree House, Tetbury	Goldsmith, Dr., Highworth
Brooks, C., Cricklade	Graham, Hall
Brown, W., Purton	Graham, T., Abingdon
Budd, Captain. R.N., Caine	Graham, W., ditto
Budd, E.H., Elcombe, Swindon	Gregory, J.
Budd, G.	Grimwood, J.G., Stanton House, Highworth
Buller, Col. Hon. J. Yarde, Chavenage House	Hacking, Rev. R., Rodbourne
Burland, Rev. M.	Hall, Marshall, Blacklands Park, Caine
Calley, Major, Burderop Park	Hallewell, J. Watts, Stratford House, Stroud
Codrington, W.W.	Hampton, E.. Cirencester
Codrington, Rev. J.E., Purton	Hanbury, E., Eastrop House, Highworth
Coker, Rev. J., Tingewick, Bucks	Hartley, Major, Lye Grove, Sodbury
Cole, Wentworth	Hawkins, Major, Wroughton House
Collins, Rev. W.	Haygarth, J.W., Reading
Collins, H., Reading	Hayward, Rev. H.R., Lydiard Millicent
Collins, Rev. J.F., Highworth	Hicks, Rev. H.W.
Constable, Rev. J. , R.A. College, Cirencester	Hilton, T.J.R., Chester
Cook, Rev. H.S.	Hitchcock, W.H., Miserdine Park
Cornwall, J., Fairford	Holme, Rev. Meyrick, Marston Meysey, Fairford
Cotes, Rev. D.O., Purton	Hooper. G.D., Wootton Bassett

Howard, Hon. Greville, Charlton Park
Hurlock, F.S.
Hyne, Rev. C.W.N., Bibury
Jeston, A.F., Malmesbury
Jones, Capt. A.N., Clifton
Jones, Rev. L.M.
Kaye, J., Inner Temple
Keene, Major, Minety House
Keene, Rev. T.P.
Kinneir, H., Swindon
Kirkpatrick, Rev. J.
Kitson, Rev. F.J., Hemyock, Devon
Lawrence, C., The Querns, Cirencester
Legh, J.P., Norbury Booths Hall, Cheshire
Legh, Christopher, ditto
Lindow, H., Slaughter, near Stow
Luce, Capt., R.N., Malmesbury
Luce, C., ditto
McKnight, Rev. W., Lydiard Millicent
Marshall, H.J., Poulton Priory
Master, T.W.C., The Abbey, Cirencester
Maskelyne, N.S., Bassett Down House
Maskelyne, E.M., ditto
Maskelyne, Rev. W., Crudwell
Maskelyne, W.H., ditto
Maurice, H.C., Harnhill
Mead, Rev. R.G., Bath
Methuen, Lieut.-Col. Lord, Corsham Park
Mildred, D., Preston
Moore, E.A.
Moreton, Hon. Berkeley
Moreton, Hon. Seymour
Morres, E.J., Bath
Mullings, Capt., Eastcourt House
Mullings, John, Cirencester
Murray, Rev. G., Shrivenham
Neeld, Sir John, Grittleton House, Chippenham
Nelson, T.L.
Norris, Rev. W.A., Oaksey
North, Captain
Ogle, Rev. J.A.
Oldham, R.N., New Swindon
Ormond, H., Swindon
Orpen, Rev. E.C., Ashton Keynes
Palmer, Rev. H.C., Lacock
Parsons, J., Oxford
Pavy, P., Wroughton
Payn, J.
Pechell, C., Leamington
Peel, Rev. H., Handsworth
Peters, Rev. T., Eastington, Stroud
Phillips, J.R., Red Lodge
Pitt, Rev. J., Rendcomb
Plummer, S.
Ponsonby, Hon. A.G.J., M.P.
Poole, R. B.
Pratt, J., Wootton Bassett
Pratt, W.F., Wootton Bassett
Price, H. P., South Cerney
Prower, Rev. Canon, Purton
Prower, Major, Purton House
Randolph, Rev. H., Marcham
Rawlinson, A., Charlbury
Rew, Rev. C., Cranham, Essex
Ripley, Rev. T.H., Wootton Bassett
Robbins, G.A., Clay Hill, Lechlade
Robinson, Rev. A.E., Highworth
Romilly, J.
Rooke, A., Avening House
Sadler, R., Purton
Saunders, C.A., Paddington
Scott, Harry, Ancrum, N.B.
Sewell, J.J., Cirencester
Seymour, Major, Hungerford
Sheppard, G.F.
Simcockes, Rev. G.S., Hankerton
Simpson, J., Salthrop House, Swindon
Simpson, Colonel
Simpson, J., Berkeley
Skelmersdale, Lord, Lathom House, Lancashire
Sloccock, Capt., Donnington Lodge, Newbury
Smith, J., Chilton Lodge, Hungerford
Smith, H., ditto
Smith, H.J., Somerford
Smith, G.B., Nailsworth
Spencer, Hon. and Rev. C.
Stracey, Lieut.-Col., Highgrove, Tetbury
Strange R., Mannington, near Swindon [crossed through
in text]
Suffolk, The Earl of, Charlton Park
Swinhoe, G., New Swindon
Thomson, J., Oxford
Thorpe, Rev. H., Aston-le-Wall, Daventry
Tomkinson, H.R.
Townsend, C.J.
Traill, J.C., Inner Temple
Trinder, E., Cirencester
Tuckey, Rev. E.H.
Wallington, Lieut.-Col.
Walters, H.
Warner, T., Cirencester
Way, Rev. L., Foxley, near Malmesbury
Willes, Rev. E.
Wombwell, C.O.
Wood, B., Cherrington House, Tetbury
Wood, Rev. J., Cherrington
Wright, F.
Wyatt, Captain
Yonge, C.
Young, A. A.

MEMORIES OF SHAW, 1911 - 1919

by Irene Jay

[Mrs Jay's first contribution, 'Memories of Shaw', appeared in *Report* 20 (1987), pp.57-59. We are grateful to her for making this account, written for her family in 2000, available to her fellow Friends.]

I was born in May 1911 at my Grandparents' house, 10 The Elms, Shaw, and given the name of Alice Irene Staughton. Since then the pattern of life has changed beyond recognition. Transport then was mostly horse-drawn, water came from the village pump, and oil lamps and candles were used after dark. Now families have cars, bathrooms, and electricity.

Although my early years were spent wherever my Father's work took him - at Stratton Audley near Bicester, at Comberbach in Cheshire, and Mayfair and Kensington in London - my earliest memory



A photograph, taken on 8 May 1916, of me and my parents, Herbert George Staughton (1883-1961) and Kate Annie Staughton (1886-1990). My Father, in the uniform of the Royal Marine Artillery, was on leave from France at the time.

is of getting out of a train at Swindon and sitting on a large green suitcase. I was told to 'mind the hat box' while Mother went to the guard's van to get the rest of the baggage, and then came the ride by pony and trap to Shaw. My Father had volunteered for the Royal Marines, our furniture had been put into store, and Mother and I were going to live with my Grandparents until the end of the First World War. Auntie Alice and Denis also came to live at Shaw when Uncle George joined the Royal Flying Corps. Norah was born in May 1918.

Shaw was a well-spread-out hamlet with a Methodist Chapel, the Nine Elms Public House, a shop and bakehouse, one pillar box, and a few farms and cottages. Everyone knew everyone else - part farming community, and part Great Western Railway workers. Swindon has now sprawled out over the surrounding countryside, including Shaw. No longer is heard the clip clop of horses' hooves going through the countryside to Swindon. The old road has even disappeared. The fields with names like Shellfinch, Meflins, the Marsh, Tumpy, and the Little Ground, in which generations worked and played, will soon be just memories, hidden beneath new roads and houses. When I was young there were only seven elm trees standing in the Nine Elms Tri-

angle in front of our house. In November 1928, on a very rough day, one of the elm trees blew down across a car and Mr and Mrs Ponting of Wroughton were both killed. After that the trees were topped and later completely removed.

No. 10 The Elms had four bedrooms, a parlour, a living room, a kitchen and walk-in pantry, all set in a good-sized garden of about a quarter of an acre with chicken houses, pig sties, outside toilet, coal-house, a greenhouse, and the old stable. Grampy's Penny Farthing bicycle was in the stable in rather a sad condition, rusty and falling to pieces. There was every kind of fruit tree in the garden, also soft fruit bushes.



10 The Elms, about 1910. My Grandmother, Julia Annie Jane Breadmore (1856-1945), and Toby at the gate

There was no piped water, drains, gas, or electricity, or refuse collection. Some people were lucky enough to have a well, but others, like my Grandfather, walked down the Washpool to the village pump to fetch drinking water. He used wooden yokes, shaped to fit a man's shoulders, with chains at each end on which to hang the buckets. Rain water from the water butts in the courtyard was used to wash ourselves, washing up, and washing clothes. Later, Mr Carter had a windmill built at Westhill which pumped water into a tank on the roof of Sellbrook House, the home of the Carter family. This was piped to any garden in the village, for those who could afford it, at 2d. a week. Grampy had it brought to a tap in the garden and to his two cottages next door. A long spell of no wind meant no water. In Winter the tap was kept covered with lots of sacks and old carpet to prevent it from freezing, which often happened. The ice in the water butts had to be kept broken or the butts would split. Treacle barrels were bought for water butts. Often there was a lot of treacle left in the bottom which was got out into jamjars.

There was no electricity. A paraffin lamp was the only light, and candles in candle sticks were earned when going to bed. We were taught from the beginning to be 'careful of the lamp', and 'watch what you do with that candle and hold it upright'. It really was second nature to be careful.

If you needed the privy after dark you took a candle-lit lantern as the toilet was up the garden next to the pig sties. It was quite eerie when the owls were hooting. This was a two-seater-built toilet with

wooden seats, a large one for grown-ups and a small one for children. The buckets were emptied once a week into a hole dug into the garden. If it was raining you took the umbrella from behind the kitchen door. This was a great big umbrella left over from the days when they owned a pony and trap. Toilet paper was a magazine which you tore up. I cannot remember when rolls of toilet paper came about. The inside walls of the privy were always papered with pages from coloured fashion books. This kept the wind out of the cracks as well as being interesting.

Two of the four bedrooms had fireplaces. They all had wash stands with a bowl, large water jug, and soap dish. Lifebuoy, Pears, or Knight's Coal Tar Soap was used for washing ourselves. There were chamber pots under the beds. Every day a pail was taken upstairs and all the wash basins and chamber pots were emptied and the contents buried in a hole in the garden. The water jugs were refilled. There were feather beds on the beds and these were shaken every morning and turned once a week. No electric blankets or rubber hot-water bottles. Sometimes bricks were heated in the oven, wrapped in a blanket and put in the beds, or red-hot cinders were put in the wanning pan and nibbed quickly through the beds to take the chill off the sheets.

There were, of course, no bathrooms, and children were bathed once a week in a large tin washing bath in front of the open fire in the living room. The baths were filled by someone using saucepans and kettles set on the open fire or range. Other nights my face, neck, and hands were washed with a square of wool flannel and soap, and my shoulder-length hair dampened and wound up in 'rags' or strips of cotton material to form ringlets. Grown-ups had a wash down in their bedrooms once a week.

The fires were lit early in the mornings in the living room and the kitchen range, and in the parlour on Sundays. Ashes had to be sifted and the cinders re-used because the ash went out on the garden. There were always two kettles on the range, one was for drinking water from the Washpool pump or garden tap, and the other from the water butts.

The kitchen floor was of flagstones laid on the earth. This was covered with coconut matting. In front of the fireplace were rag mats made from old woollen clothes cut into strips and threaded through sacking. (You can still buy these rag mats at Harrods' shop in London, but made from new material.) There was linoleum in the living room, and carpet in the parlour. In the kitchen was a black-leaded range, with open fires in the other rooms.

On the right side of the range was the pantry with a brick floor. There was a wooden cupboard for keeping food, benches round the walls, and a high shelf. The large hooks on the walls were for hanging sides of bacon. Everyone had egg and bacon for breakfast, and slices were cut off when needed. Large earthenware pans with wooden lids held the drinking water. It was dipped out with a jug. The cats' meat hung on hooks on the ceiling. All food had to be kept covered up, for there were thousands of flies in the Summer. The fields were a buzz of insects.

We only ate vegetables that were in season. They were all grown in the garden or in the allotment up in Stone Lane. Good Friday being a holiday was called 'potato planting day', when everyone would be working in their allotments. Only root vegetables were grown in the allotment because the poor or the lazy people used to steal anything easily available. Cabbages, beans, peas, onions, etc. were grown in the garden, also soft fruit - apples, pears, plums, and damsons. Granny sold a lot of surplus fruit. The men who worked for the Great Western Railway arrived home from the factory about 6 p.m., and, after eating their evening meal, the majority of them would be out working in their gardens or allotments until dark. They grew enough vegetables to feed their families all the year round. They had to get up before 5 a.m., walk three miles to Swindon, start work at 6 a.m. Life was hard.

On Sundays there was always a large joint of meat. One week it was sirloin of beef and the next a leg of lamb. Granny always cooked the hams whole for Sunday dinners. The rest of the week we finished up the joint or bought fresh meat from Harry Howard of Lydiard Green, who came round with his horse and van. Keeping fowls, we often had a cockerel. Every year when the hens went broody about three of them would be set on eggs to hatch out the baby chicks. About half of these would be cockerels which were fattened up for Sunday dinners. I don't remember a turkey at Christmas: it was always a goose. The fat that came from the goose was kept to rub on our chests when we had a cold. It was well rubbed in and then a piece of tickly flannel was over our chests. I hated it.

All the vegetables were put into nets and cooked together in a great pot over the fire. The vegetable water was used to cook the vegetable peelings, etc., for the pigs and chickens, and then meal was mixed into it. This smelt quite nice and the animals loved it. Absolutely nothing was wasted.

Washing up was done in a bowl on the kitchen table with a tray for draining.

Jam and wine

Spare fruit from the garden was made into jam or wine. We used to go out into the fields and pick dandelion heads, cowslip flowers, blackberries, sloes, elder flowers, and elder berries. The last two were kept for colds. The elderflower wine was for colds in the head, and the elderberry for colds on the chest. Anyone who called was offered a glass of wine. I don't remember coffee ever being used. We had tea to drink for breakfast and at tea time. The grown-ups had beer at dinner time. This was either home-made or bought by the barrel.

Pig killing

There were always two pigs in the sty because two pigs do better than one. The butcher came and killed them in the Spring and Autumn when there were no flies around. When the pigs were about to be killed, Denis and I were taken for a walk towards Lydiard Tregoze, but even up Crowbrake we could hear their piercing squeals. When it all went quiet we went back home and found the pigs lying in a bed of burning straw to remove the hairs. The butcher bought one and the other was cut in two halves and rubbed with salt and saltpetre twice a day and turned over each time until cured, when it was hung up on great hooks on the pantry wall. The insides were cleaned, the chitterlings or small intestines were used as sausage skins, the bladder was used to keep the melted lard. (Lard in shops was sold in a bladder.) There were always great feasting of black puddings, baked faggots, and brawn for a few days. As there were no refrigerators these were shared with the relations next door. Black puddings were made of pig's blood, finely cut up trimmings of pork fat, coarse meal, onions, herbs, spices, and bread crumbs, and all stuffed into the chitterlings and boiled. Baked faggots were made of the heart, liver, herbs, spices and bread crumbs, formed into balls, wrapped in a piece of caul - the membrane enveloping the intestines - and baked in a dish in the oven. The pig's head was boiled and used to make brawn.

Denis and I both had a pet goat each and, when they were grown, they were killed for meat. Mother cured the skins which we had at the side of our beds for mats.

Saturday

Saturday was always a busy day in the kitchen. All the brass and silver and the steel knives were cleaned, the grates blacklead, the steel fenders and fire irons cleaned, and wood chopped to light the fires. The matting on the floor and the mgs were taken out into the courtyard and shaken, and the floor cleaned.

In one corner of the kitchen was a brick-built copper. It had an iron container let into it and a small fire underneath with a flue. This was used for boiling clothes, Christmas puddings, hams, parsnips for wine, and many other things too large to go into the big pot on the range.

Sunday

Sunday was the day of rest. The only work done was to feed the family and the livestock. Denis and I were never allowed to play in the front of the house. We had to play quietly at the back of the house without making a noise or we were sent indoors. Granny was very strict - 'Do what I told you at once', and we had to be well-mannered and polite. Sunday mornings I walked to Lydiard Millicent Church with my Grandfather. He was churchwarden. When we got back home there was always a great joint on the table with steaming dishes of vegetables, followed by a big suet pudding. On winter afternoons we children were shut in the parlour with our toys and given sweets to keep us quiet while the grown-ups had a sleep or read the newspaper.

When the weather was fine, people would put on their best clothes and go for walks. In Winter it was along the lanes, but in Summer there were footpaths everywhere. People respected the crops and walked single-file. I doubt if anyone would find the paths today, stiles are overgrown, and the paths not used enough to make them plain to follow. Our favourite walk was down Watery Lane, past Brook House Farm, where my Great-grandparents used to live, along by the stream, and up Crowbrake. This road was lined with tall elm trees with rooks squawking in the branches. We liked picking the wild flowers - snowdrops, primroses, blue and white violets, and bluebells that grew in the banks. In Summer the flowers that we picked were never allowed indoors. We were given a jam jar and had to put them out on the garden. Sometimes we walked to Lydiard Tregoze across the Marsh Field - now covered in houses - and across Watery Lane and two more fields, keeping strictly to the footpaths. If you strayed from the path one of Lord Bolingbroke's keepers appeared from nowhere and told you off. If you saw some mushrooms you dare not pick them. The footpath skirted the walled garden, past the front drive to the Mansion, and across the Park to Hook. Notices saying, 'Trespassers will be prosecuted', were posted everywhere.

When I got older we walked once a year to Ringsbury Roman Camp. The banks down in the earthwork were covered with primroses. When I came back to live in Purton in 1968 there were no primroses to be seen and snowdrops had vanished from the hedgerows. There were thousands of snowdrops growing in Granny's garden, and people from Swindon used to walk out on a Sunday afternoon just to look over the hedge to see them.

Sunday evenings, dressed in our best clothes, hats, and gloves, and carrying our prayer books, the whole family walked to church, as did the rest of the village. We always waited for Mr and Mrs Cole from the big house and walked with them. Men always wore a flower in their button holes. We had to hurry along when the bells started. Lydiard Millicent Church was lit with oil lamps. After church we all walked up into the cemetery to see the graves. Walking home in Summer the grown-ups would go into friends' gardens and discuss the pigs and the vegetables. Finally, you would be invited to sample the home-made wine.

Monday

Monday was always wash day with the soaking, boiling, washing, blueing, starching, mangling, drying, ironing, and airing of clothes. Soaking was done overnight. In the morning the copper in the kitchen was filled with water from the rainwater butts outside, and the fire lit underneath. The water had to be baled out after the fire had gone out. Bars of Hudson's soap were used either grated for easy dissolving or in bars for rubbing on the clothes. Starch was made in a similar process to custard. Winter frocks of wool or velvet were made with detachable collars, cuffs, and linings to avoid washing the garment. Once washed they were used for second-best. All underwear was made of cotton, as were summer frocks except for best frocks which were made of silk. On a good day the washing would be done outdoors, if wet it was draped on a clothes horse round the kitchen range. Ironing was done with flat irons heated on the range. They were tested by a splash of water flicked onto the base, and according to the degree of heat a spit or hiss was heard. Irons were held with padded iron

holders. We always had cold meat with bubble and squeak - vegetables chopped up together and fried brown - for dinner on washdays.

Shopping

As most of our food was delivered to the house there was little need to go to the Swindon shops. There was no public transport. The only way you could get to town was by earner's cart, walk the three miles each way, or, when going on holiday, hire a pony and trap. A horse-drawn earner's cart from Purton ran once a week into Swindon. You had to climb up into the cart and sit on boxes amongst the vegetables. When it was time for the driver to go home you had to be ready or you were left behind and had to walk. (Public transport was not started until 1920 when the Bristol Omnibus Company began a service. The fare to Swindon was 4d. and to Lydiard Millicent 2d., but only a few families could afford the fare.)

People requiring the Post Office had to walk to Lydiard Millicent or Swindon. Miss Carter had a licence to sell stamps, but many people just handed the postman their mail and money, and he would deal with it.

Eveiy village had its bakehouse. Mr Carter owned the bakehouse and shop at Shaw, which was later ran by his sons. Bread was delivered as far away as Swindon where they had another shop. The shop was attached to the bakehouse. They sold most food except meat, fish, and milk. When they had finished baking bread they would bake cakes for people for a few pence. Bread could also be bought at Mr Parson's bakehouse at Lydiard Millicent. When he gave up Charlie Worley took on the business, then Ray Worley, and finally Walter Glead. George Parsons lived in the long brick house - now demolished - opposite the village shop.

Mr Wilkins the butcher of Purton killed the animals himself. He called in the week for orders and brought the meat in his van on Saturdays. There was no paper to wrap anything in, so you took a plate and a cloth, and collected it from the van. The cloth was to keep the flies off the meat, for there were thousands of them. Harry Howard from Lydiard Green came round in the week selling meat.

Mills the draper from Wootton Bassett came round once a month in a pony and trap. The front door of the house was never locked in the daytime, so he walked in with his cases of rolls of material, haberdashery, knitting wool, etc., and displayed them on the diningroom table. He then walked about the house and garden until he found someone. Haynes the grocer from Swindon also walked into the house. He called for orders once a fortnight, which were delivered a few days later. Rationing in World War 1 was from 1918 until 1921.

Mr Fisher from Lydiard Green travelled with his horse and van selling paraffin oil and all kinds of household utensils, candles, cleaning materials, brooms and brushes, soda and soaps, washing baths, buckets, and various items of ironmongery. Items which wouldn't go inside the van were tied to the outside, jangling as his horse trotted along.

Sometimes a man shouting 'fish for sale' came up the village. He had bought a box of fish - kippers, bloaters, or fresh herrings - straight off the train, up from the coast. You took your plate out to buy this special treat.

There were no milk deliveries. Milk was collected in a jug from a small holding at the Washpool. Later, a horse and cart came round with chums of milk from which they filled buckets. There were one-pint and half-pint measures hanging inside the bucket from which they measured out the milk to the housewife. Any milk not used that day had to be boiled at night.

Sometimes Denis and I were taken to Swindon shopping, especially at Christmas, to see the shop windows. There were only two or three large shops. Mcllroys was the largest, Ansty's on the opposite

comer was later burned down and never rebuilt. The Penny Bazaar later became known as Marks and Spencer. Many of the small shops were converted houses, with living accommodation above. You could buy anything you wanted in Swindon. We always went into Mellroys for a mid-day meal and later for a cup of tea and a cake. There were delicious-looking iced cream cakes, but Denis and I always had to have a plain sponge cake because 'it was better for us'. The trams ran through Swindon, also the canal was still in use. This has now been filled in and is the main shopping area.

The roads

The roads were rough. I never remember any rubbish lying about. The roadmen kept the roads and verges tidy and swept up the horse manure into heaps on the side. This was sold by the council. Piles of stones were unloaded at intervals along the grass verge. Then a council workman would arrive with his mid-day meal - a great hunk of bread, a piece of cheese, a raw onion, and a bottle of cold tea, all tied up in a red spotted handkerchief. All day long he would sit hitting away at the stones with his hammer until there were heaps of little stones. Then along came the road-making gang, throwing the stones in the holes in the road, followed by the water cart and steam roller. Whether anything else was used I cannot remember.

Lydiard Millicent School

When I was five years old, I started school at Lydiard Millicent, up in the Butts. It was over a mile to walk, and the roads were rough. It was best to walk in the ruts where the cart wheels had broken down the flints. Market days were a nightmare, for the cattle walked to Swindon market and back home at night. We had to get over a gate, or climb 'Granny's stairs' - ruts in the high bank at the side of the road - or go in someone's garden while they went past. In Summer we walked across the fields. I don't think it was any quicker, but it was more interesting and safer on market days. The footpath came out opposite the Sun Inn. Opposite the church were three ponds. The large pond on the south side of the road had a rowing boat in the centre. This old manorial fishpond has now been filled in. The overflow from the three ponds ran down one side of Lydiard Street, much to the delight of the boys. The sound of the school bell made the slowcoaches come running up the road. On wet days, with no macks or umbrellas, our top coats often got very wet. They were hung up in the lobby and were still wet when we went home, but nobody seemed to worry. I still remember that smell of wet wool. I wore a hat, gloves, black woollen stockings, and buttoned-up boots. These were buttoned up with a button hook. The school was cold so you needed to wear plenty of clothes. We all suffered from chaps and chilblains. I wore a vest and a liberty bodice with buttons for holding up my white calico knickers. There was a back flap that unbuttoned when needed. It was much better when elastic was invented. Then came a wool flannel petticoat with scalloped embroidery edges, a white petticoat and a woollen or cotton frock with long sleeves, and finally a white broderie-anglais pinafore, with frilled shoulders and well-starched, covered the frock. They looked quite pretty and were everyday wear for girls before the First World War. In Winter, I had a fur necklet and a muff. These were made of moleskin. The muff hung round my neck on a cord.

School started at the age of five and finished at fourteen. We were taught to read, write, spell, do our sums, and sew. We were not issued with precious pencils and paper until we could form our letters. To learn to do this we used small shallow trays with a layer of fine sand in them and a wooden stick with a point. Then came slates and slate pencils made of slate or chalk, and, as we grew older, we progressed to pencils and paper. If I was away ill, school books were sent home for Mother to hear me read. I took my sandwiches and a bottle of milk to school in my satchel. The earth toilets were at the far side of the playground. After eating our dinner we went into the playground or wandered the fields. Children who had a half-penny to spend could buy sweets at the little shop owned by Lottie and Mary Ann Smith - now called No. 5. You pointed to the jar of your choice, and the sweets were put in a pointed bag. This made them look a lot more. When the two Miss Smiths were not attending to customers they did dress-making for local people. My friend lived in The Close, a long rambling

old brick house with a stone roof and a pigeon cote. In summer dinner-times we used to go there and play in the garden. The lovely old house has been demolished and a new estate built on the land.

The games we played at school seemed to have their seasons. At one time all the boys would be playing marbles. Then it would be hoops. Every child owned a hoop and, armed with a sick to hit it with, would roll it along the roads. Boys had iron hoops, girls' hoops were made of wood. Tops would also have their season. For this, you needed a short stick with a piece of cord tied to the end, and the boys would whip their tops along the road to school. Then out came the skipping ropes, and every girl would be skipping to school. At another time there was hopscotch. We would chalk squares in the playground with numbers on them, find a flat stone, and, hopping on one foot, would push the stone from one square to another. If you hopped on to a line or let the raised foot touch the ground you were out. Other games were ball, tag - where you had to catch anyone who was not holding on to something, and dabs or five stones, made from the knuckles of pigs' feet.

After school some children were allowed in the road to play. Although it was the main Swindon to Lydiard road, there was very little traffic, and you could hear the clip clop of the horses' feet. Motorised vehicles were very rare, and I doubt if they went faster than 30 m.p.h. A shout would go up, "Here comes a car", and little children would be grabbed and everyone stood on the side of the road until the vehicle had passed by. Denis and I were never allowed out to play in the road. Granny said, "You are not going out there to play with the riff-raff of the village. If this garden isn't big enough to play in you can go to bed."

In Summer we roamed the fields, eating bread and cheese (hawthorn leaves) from the hedges, wild-rose petals, and sorrel leaves, picking wild flowers, cutting diy teazle sticks to make whistles, and, I regret to say, bird nesting for eggs; but I must add that there were thousands of birds in the garden and hedgerows in those days.

Occasionally the rag-and-bone man came up the village. He bought bones and rabbit skins, etc. For a jam jar he would give you a paper windmill on a stick. There were no expensive toys in those days, but we were never bored. At Christmas Denis and I always hung our stockings up from the mantle shelf above the living room fire. I cannot remember what we had, but it was war-time - just a few toys, with sweets, sugar mice and sugar pigs. One Christmas we both had a Noah's Ark with farm animals. Our mothers had made them after we had gone to bed. Easter eggs were ordinary eggs with the shells dyed.

There were always one or two cats and Toby the dog. He knew the day of the week when the butcher came and would sit in a chair in front of the window, looking for the van. Suddenly he would dash outside to get his special bone. Granny fed the cats every night. Their meat was kept hanging up on a hook on the pantry ceiling. A lump was cut off for each cat and out they would dash into the courtyard, spitting and swearing at each other.

Entertainment

A picnic was a great event. Once a year a few families went for a picnic. The grown-ups earned the food and drink. I cannot remember where it was, but we walked a long way to a field where a fanner had put up a swing in one of his fields for us. We had egg-and-spoon races, three-legged races, and sack races, etc. What pleasure we got from such simple things!

Entertainment for grown-ups was a village effort, with concerts, dances, whist drives, and football. Cricket was only played by the upper classes.

The Church Fete was the highlight of the Summer at Lydiard Millicent. Dressed in our Sunday-best clothes we walked up to the Rectory. Granny always made the cake for the 'guess the weight of the

cake' competition. The flower and vegetable shows were of great interest. The men spent a lot of money on the coconut shies and bowling for the piglet. We also walked across the fields to the Purton Church Fete.

Holidays

Holidays during the First World War were to relations at Hugh's Farm at Alderton and, later, to Easton Town Manor Farm at Sherston, Wilts. Travelling by train was a great event. A pony and trap ride to Swindon Station, where, on cold days, a coal fire was lit in the waiting room. I was usually given a penny to buy a bar of chocolate from the slot machine. Then watching for the signals to change, and the engine came in sight with puffs of smoke. Rushing along the platform, trying to find a seat, for there were no corridors. We always had a porter who earned the cases for a few pennies. In August 1915 Dad, Mother, and I were on holiday at Littlehampton, though I cannot remember anything about it.

Another holiday Mother and I went on was to Stansted Abbots to stay with Auntie Em and Uncle Bert. He was the village carpenter, did the funerals, and kept a bicycle shop. One night a zeppelin was brought down in a nearby field. The next day, after going to see the mass of twisted metal, Mother and I went back to Shaw.

In July 1916 Uncle Albert, who was in the Royal Marines, and Auntie Ada came and stayed at Shaw. My Father was home on leave at the same time, and we all went up to London, where Uncle bought me a lovely doll with a china face. I remember seeing the searchlights criss-crossing the black sky, looking for enemy aeroplanes. We also went to the furniture repository in Paddington where our furniture was packed into a small cubicle right up to the ceiling. Uncle Albert and my Father returned to France. Uncle Albert was wounded in the last Battle of the Somme on 13 November 1916, and died on 26 December in hospital near Etaples.

Great Western Railway.

My Grandfather worked for the Great Western Railway Company at Swindon, a complex of buildings and sheds where Brunel's first engines were built. Engines were designed and constructed there, also passenger carriages, etc. Hooters signalled the time to start work and breaks during the day. Hordes of workmen streamed out of the factory at dinner time and again in the evening. We could hear the hooter out at Shaw, and people who couldn't afford to buy a clock took their time by it. Work started at 6 a.m. At 8 a.m. they stopped and cooked their breakfast. Lunch time was 12 to 1, when they could cook their food or have sandwiches. Work ended at 5 p.m. Whole families worked there for generations.

The Great Western Railway Medical Fund provided doctors, a hospital, surgery, eye clinics, a dentist, and a convalescent home for employees and their families. It was the forerunner of the National Health Service. The Mechanics' Institute and Library provided daily newspapers and books, and all for a few pence a week.

As my Grandfather worked for the Great Western Railway, we were allowed to go to the Fete in the G.W.R. Park in Faringdon Road. On arrival, all children were given a fruit cake weighing 'Tib and three free tickets for rides on the roundabouts. There were fireworks in the evening, but, as we had three miles to walk home, we only saw the rockets in the distance.

The first two weeks in July were Trip Weeks, when the factory closed down. The employees called it 'the lock-out', as no wages were paid for holidays. (Not until 1938 were G.W.R. workers paid while on holiday.) They and their families could travel free to any destination on the Great Western Railway for the day or longer, whatever they could afford. We only went for the day because of leaving the

animals. Swindon became empty, for nearly everyone worked 'inside', which is what the factory was called. On that day we were up while it was still dark, and rode to the station in a pony and trap, which had been ordered the year before. We passed many people walking. All food and drink had to be taken for the journey, for there were no buffet cars on trip trains. When we got to the station, all the sidings were full of steam trains, labelled with their destinations. They left early before the ordinary trains started running. There were no platforms in the sidings, so we had to help each other up the five feet from the ground. There were no corridor carriages, so it was a great scramble to get a good seat with one's back to the engine. If you faced the engine and the window was opened, you were likely to get smuts on your clothes and in your eyes. Everyone wore hats, and the men had a flower in their button hole. There was great excitement when the sea at Weston-super-Mare came into view. The day went all too quickly, and soon it seemed it was time to return home, tired and weary but happy after our long day.

I don't remember many callers at Shaw. Everyone was too busy doing their work. Sunday was the day for meeting people when you went out walking. The Rev. Harrison called once a month with the magazines for Granny to deliver. Everyone who called was offered a glass of home-made wine. Once a week the tenants of Grampy's cottages came in with the rent money.

Tramps used to pass our house, travelling from one workhouse to another. They used to call for a drink of water, and Granny always gave them a large piece of bread and some cheese. I think the news must have got around, and that's why we had so many. They had to do jobs in the workhouse at night and before they left in the morning.

The police walked or rode bicycles. A policeman from Swindon and one from Purton met every afternoon under the Nine Elm Trees and signed each other's books before returning.

If anyone was ill, home cures were tried. If that didn't work, someone had to walk to Purton to fetch the doctor. He came in a pony and trap. Then someone had to walk to the surgery to collect the bottle of medicine. Not everyone could afford to have a doctor.

When someone died the whole village knew when they heard the church bell tolled. It was always the custom for six friends to carry the coffin on their shoulders. All mourners wore black, and the curtains in front of the house were kept closed until after the funeral. People showed their respect for the dead by closing their curtains as the cortege passed their houses. If in the road, men removed their hats and stood still with heads bowed.

The Rates, or Poor Rate as it was called, were low, and there was no water rate as that was collected free from the roof into the water pumps or from the Washpool pump. There was no refuse collection, and kitchen waste went to feed the animals or was put on the compost heap. There was no plastic, and paper was saved to light the fire. Anyone who bought food in tins had to bury the tins in the garden.

End of World War I

11 November 1918. With no television or wireless the first news we heard of the war ending was a lot of shouting and cheering. We all rushed out to the front gate and saw my Grandfather coming up the road from Swindon, waving a big Union Jack and shouting that the war was over.

My Father was demobilized on 19 July 1919. We moved to London, and with that my way of life was completely changed.

E.G. WOOLFORD, labourer and farmer, and the HOUSE OF BOLINGBROKE

Douglas J. Payne

[We are indebted to Mr Payne, formerly headmaster of Lydiard Millicent School, for this article. It is based on the diaries which Elliot Woolford kept for most of his life.]

Elliot Woolford, son of William and Frances Woolford, was a labourer's son, born in 1867 at Dogridge in Purton. He attended Purton National Schools, and left at the age of thirteen to work as a market gardener's labourer. Shortly after his eighteenth birthday, he decided that, with the aid of his younger brother Rowland who had just left school, to wrest a living from the land as a self-employed man. It was a bold decision and, at the time, many would say that it was a foolish one, for agriculture was in a parlous state and young labourers who tried to 'better themselves' were frequently derided by their peers for their efforts.

Elliot's sole assets were some basic tools, a horse and cart, a shilling, and the leasehold of scattered holdings rarely exceeding an acre, but he had the unqualified support of his father who was a stone mason, an independent artisan, and a firm supporter of the Land Reform Movement who also acted as the local agent for the Liberal Party. His mother, née Fletcher, whose family had 'come out of Suffolk to be servants in the Bolingbroke household', was a devout member of the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Hogg's Lane, Purton. Elliot and his brother proposed to earn their living initially by buying and selling produce in the villages to the west of Purton, by cultivating rented lands in the neighbourhood, and selling their produce in the weekly markets in Swindon New Town. Their story is one of exceptional endeavour, triumphs over vicissitudes, failures through lack of experience, and persistence in the face of many adversities.

Earlier, in 1885, Elliot was glad to earn a shilling by acting as a temporary ostler until the early hours of the morning for Captain James Sadler, who had driven over from Lydiard Millicent with his wife and step-daughter to attend a New Year's Eve Ball, given by Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin and his wife of Hill House, Purton. Despite a very cold evening many village folk had turned out to watch the 'gentry' arrive. In common with most young men he accorded them the courtesies which were due to their station in life, and respected 'Jimmy Sadler', whom he knew well by repute, for his firm but fair justice and benevolence in the community, but he did not look upon the rest with any admiration despite the fact that his mother had been employed in Lord Bolingbroke's household before her marriage. However, he kept his own counsel in these matters because it was always possible that one day he would require aristocratic patronage, for the Bolingbroke family was a major landowner in the district, with farms to rent. Although he was a fervent Methodist, Elliot attended Anglican churches occasionally in the company of young ladies, and on High Days and Holy Days it was an entertainment to line the main drive leading up to 'Fine Lydiard' and watch the company arrive. Occasionally he would ride to hounds on his versatile horse, Garnett, with the Vale of the White Horse Hunt of Cricklade, but he was careful to keep well behind in the field and often went home early.

Five years later he felt that he had acquired sufficient experience and capital to take on a small farm, but, despite the advice and support of Captain Sadler, he was unable to gain an audience with Lord Bolingbroke when Park Farm - a prime tenancy - became vacant, and His Lordship's agent, Hayward, did not encourage him to apply for an alternative vacancy. As Elliot was to discover when eventually he obtained the tenancy of Bagbury Lane Farm - some 41 acres in Purton belonging to Mr E. Kempster - other business people felt that his credit was not good and bankers' references were hard to obtain. Without them, and the recognition of contemporary farmers, trade was hard. He owed much

to the support of fellow-Methodists in agricultural trades, when seeking credit. Several years of hard work were necessary to build up this small and very neglected farm, and Elliot might have remained there for many years to come, but Kempster decided that he wished to sell up and Elliot was obliged to look elsewhere. Once again, the most likely source for a tenancy was the Lydiard Estate and, on 15 November 1898, Elliot applied once more in person, but His Lordship was 'not at home'. A servant took his address for 'correspondence'. Then Sadler intervened on his behalf and a few days later Elliot, with Grimes, a well-known Swindon repository owner who spoke for him, stood with Hayward in the hall awaiting His Lordship's pleasure regarding the tenancy of Hook Farm. Eventually it was given, which was just as well, for, when he returned home, he found that Bagbury had just been sold on to Bartlett of Bournemouth and the wall of the stable had fallen down in a gale.

The terms of the tenancy were left entirely to Viscount Bolingbroke's agents. Elliot was to take over on Lady Day from Mr Arthur Edwards, the current tenant. Elliot found that the buildings and boundary fences were in poor condition but the fields had been well cultivated, although drainage was so poor that Mr Henry Price used to carry his wife across the fields to do housework at the 'Big House'. Charles Strange (alias Welsh) occupied a cottage across the fields which was so poor that it was 'in a very bad state, walls all cracking, or parting, doors not fitting as the house has got all out of shape and the windows is [sic] also bad - but there is a good garden to it.' On the night of 13 February they went out to 'tie the shop down to prevent it being blown away.' Negotiations for repairs and improvements had to be made either through the estate-steward Edward Hiscocks, an intransigent man, or with the estate agents, and in both cases they were long-winded affairs. There is no further mention of Viscount Bolingbroke in Elliot's diaries until November 1899 when the rent had to be paid to Messrs Goodwyn and Sons at Lydiard House in the presence of His Lordship. It was a grand and formal affair. Tenants arrived by carriage, on horseback, or on foot, according to their circumstances, and were often accompanied by members of their families, formally attired. Spectators lined the drive. His Lordship greeted them all and spent a few moments with each tenant, but on this occasion there was a dramatic sequel. At 7.45 p.m. on this day he called for a glass of wine or spirits, drank it, leaned back in his chair, and died. Elliot wrote, 'It was very singular that he should die on his audit day. Personally, he was a very good man, but being extremely poor, was considered very mean. He employed very little labour and did not keep the Farms and Buildings in repair. The estate is in a very dilapidated state. His chief past time was shooting.'

Viscount Bolingbroke's funeral was on 10 November. Elliot attended, together with most of the tenantry. The funeral sermon was preached on the 12th, and the text was 'We do all fade like a leaf'. The Bolingbroke family, including His Lordship's widow who had been Bessie Howard, a commoner's daughter from Lydiard Millicent before her marriage, attended wearing deep mourning.

There was an estate sale in 1900 to realise consumable assets such as felled wood from the coverts. Despite his Methodist background Elliot was becoming more involved with St. Mary's Church, and noted that the Rev. G. Baily, 'a good man and an advocate of teetotalism', was becoming infirm. Disputes with the estate and its stewards began to emerge after His Lordship's death. One such concerned the tenants' ancient 'rights to conies', and Elliot wrote on 5 March 'the keepers came around and caught all the rabbits they could with ferrets and nets and Mr Henry St. John shot a few. I think it very mean of them to come around and kill the fanners' rabbits.'

However, relationships with the Big House took a totally unexpected turn when, on 22 April, Lady Bolingbroke and Mr Edward Hiscock paid them - the brothers - a visit for a basket of 2 sittings of hens' eggs and Elliot walked with them a little way.

Her Ladyship's humble origins might explain her interest in sitting hens, but not in Elliot's wildest imagination did he ever imagine that one day he would consort with aristocrats, whatever the

circumstances. It was the beginning of an unconventional friendship and, in retrospect, it may have been a deliberate ploy on the part of the Viscountess to extend her limited circle of friends. At first minor quantities of produce changed hands. Baskets of vegetables were sent up to the House, and baskets of fruit came down from it. Her Ladyship was instrumental in getting four loads of props delivered for mound [fence] mending.

On 11 May 'we took tea with Her Ladyship who afterwards showed us around the lake, gardens and woods.' On 25 May 'Rowl got home at 1.00 a.m., from Lady Bolingbroke's.' On 28 May she came down and decided to purchase a mare and colt from them for £30. On 31 May Rowland attended the Bath and West Show in the company of Lady Bolingbroke, her steward Hiscocks, and 'the young lord who was 5 years old'. When the horses were delivered Elliot noted wryly that Her Ladyship asked for a few days' grace for payment. The brothers' social circle and standing increased with an introduction to the Hon. Henry Mildmay St.John and his brother when they walked out as a party. Ellen Woolford, Elliot's eldest sister from Purton, was invited to be introduced to the young Lord, and there is an intriguing entry for 13 June when Elliot wrote, 'The young lord came to tea with his nurse and he seemed to be veiy attached to Rowl and he wanted Rowl and the nurse to sleep with him, saying the bed was big enough for 4. He is intelligent and well spoken but is a very self-willed lad. ' Rowland had another late night at the House, getting home at 1.00 a.m., and had difficulty in getting up for milking at 3.00 a.m. The diary entry for 24 June refers to the young lord as 'Vernon or Vemie, who would have Rowland put him to bed.' Afterwards, the adults had supper and sang hymns until 12 o'clock.

When Richens, an estate labourer, did a moonlight flit without paying a debt, Rowland, Hiscocks, and the keepers sat up all night in ambush which, in the labourers' ethics of the time, would have been considered by many as a betrayal of class solidarity. Rowland returned from one night's carousal at the House and 'was ill all day from the effects of Whiskey, Champaign [sic] and etc. ' Elliot was not only a teetotaler but a dedicated supporter of the Temperance Movement, the Blue Ribbon army, and the itinerant evangelists who preached on the evils of drink. On 31 July Elliot bought a pint of whiskey when the Hon. Charles Reginald St.John, Vernon, and his nurse came to supper. In August Hemy Mildmay St.John, his brother Charles, Hiscocks, Jim, Fred, and Rowland were part of the Lydiard Mansion team to play cricket versus Purton. The result was not recorded.

The 'Big House' gave a summer party in 1900 for every pupil in attendance at the Hook National Schools, and the family insisted on donating a present for every child. The Lydiard Brass Band played selections. Later, Henry St.John exercised his horse Bennie on the plough at Hook Farm. Later again, the Mansion team overwhelmed the Wootton Bassett cricket team by 149 for 6 declared, against a score of 46. The diaries record a succession of comings and goings during 1900. They occur with increasing frequency and involve the Franklin sisters, Viscount Bolingbroke, his nurse Laura or May Darlton, and Henry Mildmay St.John, so that there was much joy and carousal at Hook Farm.

Mrs Norman Hitchcock died on 19 September, aged thirty-nine, leaving a distraught husband and eleven children. Later, Mr Hitchcock suffered another tragedy when his home was destroyed by fire. Rowland went round all of the gently, beginning with Captain Sadler, to arrange a subscription, but Elliot refers to this derisively as 'begging', for Hitchcock was 'only a baker who lived in Hook street'. Evidently Lady Bolingbroke was more sympathetic, for it was she who handed the subscription papers and the £20. 10s. 0d to the sorrowful victim.

Before she left the Bolingbroke's employment, May Darlton introduced her temporary successor Elsie to her friends at Hook Farm, and the Hon. Charles St.John joined them for 'supper and a little harmony'. All previous violations of a fanner's privileges were forgiven when the brothers were invited to participate in a pheasant shoot through Park Copse. Elliot's exaltation was completed on

20 November when he was invited to act as sidesman at Hook School Church and collected *Is. 8d.*, gleefully noting that it compared favourably with the morning collection at Fine Lydiard, which amounted to *6s. 3d.* This was a far cry from the days when Elliot viewed the gentry at Anglican worship from afar, and scorned them. People came from all directions to see Godwin's Farm at Greatfield ablaze, but few sympathised for 'no one can tell how it caught fire'.

Early in the New Year of 1901 Elliot and Charles St. John presented a magic lantern show on 'Canada' in Hook school. In April Norman, Fred, and Edward and Alfred Hiscock travelled with the Hon. Charles St. John to Oaksey Races in Elliot's trap, and, later in the month, they were seen 'with other local big-wigs at the Sherston Steeplechase'. Elliot acquired his first push bike in June, and he wrote, 'I got trying to ride it. Two held me up and Lady Bolingbroke pushed me.' However, it was 'Mr N. Kinchin who learned me to cycle and Vernon St. John and Elsie was watching me.' Rowland married Miss Kate Kinchin in September. The Hon. Charles St. John was best man and Viscount Bolingbroke gave the bride away but, curiously, Elliot did not attend because he was digging potatoes all day.

There were occasional invitations to attend at the House for billiards, cards, etc., but it was becoming clear that Elliot was becoming increasingly unhappy with the tenor of the entertainment on offer. The influence of one man is suspected. On one occasion he attended at the Bolingbroke Arms by invitation to gamble on the toss of a coin for drinks and cigars. 'I had 40 cigars to finish up with; cost me *8s. 0d.*, and I am the most unlucky of the lot.'

As Lady Bolingbroke's social circle expanded to include 'mere tradesmen like J. Hooper Dixon from Swindon', his interest in the affairs of the House began to dwindle temporarily. He was indignant when 'Her Ladyship tried to censure me for [allowing] football in Dayes field' and scornful when he learned that she had caught her groom and her cook in a compromising situation. Yet, at the House in January 1902, Lady Bolingbroke gave an Annual Dinner and Dance to the employees and a few of her friends, and 'her Ladyship had but three dances, all with me!' However, she was becoming more selective, and the only visitors who came from the House were Vernon and his new nurse, Miss Hall. On 14 January Lady Bolingbroke herself came down in her carriage on her way to Hook school to practise an anthem which was to be sung to celebrate the reopening of the church. At the celebrations, the Bishop of Bristol preached at Mattins and Canon Estcourt preached at Evensong, when Lady Bolingbroke sang the solo in the anthem 'Within the walls'. Elliot gave the young Lord a box of chocolates for his sixth birthday, but, for the most part, his only contact with the family was when he met up with them at celebrations.

Purton villagers had celebrated the relief of Mafeking in great style, and on 2 June 1902, there was 'Great rejoicing, bells ringing, bands playing, flags flying, and a party up at the House'. Following the death of Queen Victoria, the Coronation of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra had been arranged for 26 June 1902, but, due to the king's illness, it had to be postponed. 'Every parish in England had prepared for great rejoicings and decorations erected everywhere had to be pulled down at once. Food prepared for the public had been bought by cash, received from subscription, in Swindon. They decided to sell it by auction which nearly caused a riot, mounted police being called to the affair I gave 10 shillings towards the Coronation for this parish [and] on June 27th, cake which was prepared for the Coronation was this day distributed among the poor of the parish *against* the wishes of nearly all the Parishioners.' No view was expressed from the House. When Coronation Day was eventually celebrated on 9 August, 'all neighbouring villages had celebrations except this one'. Then, belatedly, the House gave a lead and there was a celebration tea and a mug for each of the children with sports to follow, on 23 August.

Elliot was no longer numbered among the guns at Estate shooting parties, but at the 1902 Boxing Day shoot he numbered the kill, which amounted to 482 pheasants and 10 rabbits.

All of the Family and many estate workers attended the funeral of Tom Hiscocks, son of Hemy Hiscocks, on 8 November. The Spring of 1903 was very wet, cold, and treacherous underfoot, but nevertheless Lady Bolingbroke, Mr Edward Hiscocks, and the young Viscount paid occasional visits to Hook Farm. Hiscocks accompanied her everywhere, comparable in some ways with Ghillie Brown's service to the late Queen Victoria. Elliot leased the Manor Lawns for grazing cattle from May to October for £22 because of the shortage of grass, and the weather was so bad that Hook Sports' Day, patronised by Lady Bolingbroke, with Ambrose Smith's roundabouts and Purton Brass Band in attendance, and usually held in Drury's field, was rained off before the races had begun. Torrential rain fell and gales brought down whole trees. The Annual Shoot at the House, when Elliot kept a tally on the bag, was a failure, 'over 1500 pheasants having been drowned'. Elliot ate his Christmas dinner alone, dining off a pheasant sent by Her Ladyship. He did not attend the Servants' supper, being 'invited in an abominable fashion by Teddy Hiscocks'. However, he was agreeably surprised to be invited, once again, to be a gun in Her Ladyship's New Year Shoot on 18 January 1904, and on 29 January was one of 'her party of four' to attend an entertainment in the Reading Room at Lydiard Millicent. Miss Howse the House cook and Miss Darlton, once again the Viscount's nurse, were frequent visitors to Hook Farm, but the former was under notice to quit. The young Viscount, accompanied by Laura Darlton, came up to the farm on 15 March 1904, on his eighth birthday, to show his presents.

Norman Hitchcock, whose wife had died prematurely leaving a large family and whose bakery was destroyed by fire, failed to elicit any sympathy from Elliot when he was declared bankrupt in the New Year, but a few months later, the House, and therefore Elliot, could not fail to be materially sympathetic when Norman himself died, leaving a second wife, aged twenty-three, and thirteen children. The poor man had been kicked by a mare at Flaxlands farm, and died a month later in the Victoria Hospital. On the day of his funeral his widow gave birth to a daughter.

On 9 June the young Viscount, aged eight years, smoked a whole cigar without his nurse's knowledge. When Lady Bolingbroke organised a concert at Hook school, it was counted an honour when four conveyances 'put in' at Hook Farm, Frank Keene ostling for them. At the next winter shoot Elliot counted the game and hung 420 pheasants, 3 rabbits, 1 woodcock, and a pigeon in the House larder.

Early in January 1905 he was able to enjoy once again Her Ladyship's Annual Supper for her employees and friends. Fifty people attended, and after Elliot proposed Her Ladyship's health, 'acknowledgment was made with musical honours, dancings and singings all night until 4.00 a.m. It was a Capital dinner with plenty of drink, tobacco and cigars - everything went off well.' This celebration might be contrasted with another personal venture shortly afterwards, when 'I went to Wootton Bassett in the evening and had a shave and called in at the Crown Hotel and had a drink, got into conversation, and then condescended to play cards, Nap, and was successful in winning each game. Consequently, I had 3 glasses of beer, and an oz. of tobacco costing only 3d the lot. Got home 11.30, somewhat degraded, thinking I could have spent the evening in a more respectable and profitable manner'.

The Family and servants of the Big House attended the funeral of Ellen, Elliot's eldest and favourite sister, who died in February, aged fifty-six years. Although she was a native of Purton and a strict Methodist like her mother, she was buried in Hook cemetery, and the formal service was held at St. Mary's church, followed by a wake held at the farm. It appears that at this time Elliot enjoyed cordial relationships with the Bolingbroke family, but not with some of the influential staff. Once again he did not attend the Christmas festivities, preferring to attend the Fanners' and Gentlemen's Dinner at the Angel Hotel in Purton.

In September 1906 he noted, with deep regret, the death of Miss Laura Darlton up at the House. She had been a good friend and used to visit him every week with the young Viscount, as his nurse, before Ellen's death. For the first time ever, the Annual Estate Audit, where rents were paid, was held at the King's Arms in Swindon, but sweetened with a good dinner, songs and speeches. Just previously, the Agent had looked over the farm and found things 'very much out of repair' and, in particular, the dairy was in such a state that 'the milk won't keep because of the stench'. Mr Hiscock's notice was called to the need for early repairs, but he employed an inebriated mason.

The only item of note for 1907 was a Service for 'over 100 Cyclists at St.Mary's church, and afterwards at the House', on 22 September. After a lapse of seven years, the stable roof was at last repaired and this, and other lapses of stewardship, was pointed out as evidence of 'the lamentable state of affairs into which the Estate has fallen. It has always been short of money, and [it] is not wisely spent'. Christmas celebrations were ignored.

There was a diversion at the House on 21 April, when a balloon flown by the Hon. C.S. Rolls descended after a flight from Monmouth lasting four hours and twenty-five minutes. The shooting rights were let out, for the first time, to a Mr Allen, who in the course of three drives through Park Copse, shot a bag of 290 pheasants, 3 woodcock, and 258 rabbits, but the usual hospitality offered by the House was not forthcoming.

There was a threat of war in the air, and 30,000 soldiers were on manoeuvres in the district, many camped around Coped Hall. A detachment of the Territorial Army camped in the Park during a weekend in April 1909, and Elliot was invited up to the House to be introduced to the Earl of Suffolk. Invitations to attend for any purpose were becoming increasingly rare, and Elliot found difficulty in persuading anyone to take an interest in the local administration of the Estate. Essential business was conducted through the Agent. A military census was earned out on the Estate farms in November to see how many horses and carts were available for mobilisation. The Annual Shoot over the Estate produced the lowest bag ever recorded of 34 pheasants, 54 rabbits, and 2 woodcock.

It would appear that from this time onwards there was a gradual decline in the social relationships between the Viscountess and her tenantry which she had developed and encouraged after the death of her husband. When the Audit Dinner was due, the Agent, Mr Goodwyn, presided, and she was rarely seen at Balls or Political meetings. Her only appearance in 1909 was at the Grand Unionist Ball at Lydiard School, when fellow guests included Colonel Calley, Captain Fuller M.F.H., and T. Hooper-Deacon esq.

The young Viscount now presided at the Annual Shoots. On 17 November 1909 the guns were His Lordship, Mr Hemy St.John, Dr I.S. Coomb, Dr R. Swinhoe, Edward Hiscocks esq., and Harvey White esq., but the bag was almost entirely in rabbits. In other words, pheasants were not being reared. For the first time Elliot enjoyed a ride in a motor car, driven by Mr White. Harry Hiscocks, a life-long gamekeeper to the Viscounts Bolingbroke, died on 18 July 1910, aged 67 years.

In 1910 King George V succeeded his father, the late King Edward, and local Coronation celebrations were held at the House the following year, when over 400 people enjoyed a free tea on the lawn. Two large tents were erected for the purpose and, after tea, sports were held, followed by dancing to the Lydiard Millicent band. A vote of thanks was accorded to Her Ladyship. She organised a church bazaar in aid of the organ fund in August, and Elliot gave her 121b. of jam towards it, but the bazaar was opened by Mrs Calley.

Some people with long memories suppose that Lady Bolingbroke was never accepted as an equal by her husband's associates and fellow-aristocrats, and that she became alienated from her family and

childhood friends as a result of her liaison with the late Viscount. It is also believed that her health began to deteriorate well before the war. Elliot never recorded any critical comments about her, and although they met on progressively fewer occasions, she was always very affable towards him. For professional reasons, Elliot was obliged to sup, albeit with a long spoon, with Edward Hiscocks, who was the tenant of Parkside farm, and from whom he leased grazing rights. In any case, Elliot was preoccupied by other matters, for he became engaged to be married to Amy Newth, whom he eventually married in 1911.

In 1913 there was a development which brought the local community leaders together to consider an unusual situation. Lady Bolingbroke convened a meeting, attended by Messrs C. Large, W. Rebbeck, E. Hiscocks, E. Woolford, and others, concerning 'A Schoolmaster who has left our church and given up the Sunday Schools and joined a band of worshippers, a set which is not approved of by the Vicar and the rest of us. Therefore we have decided to ask him to resign or give the religion up forthwith. They frequently hold meetings in the school house.' Mr Leighton's crime was that he had embraced the sect known as the 'Russellites'.

As a married man Elliot was able to play host more often, and from time to time parties of Bolingbrokes began to appear at Hook farm to play Bridge but, eventually, when war was declared, other priorities developed. Mr Henry St.John came down to the farm on 25 November 1914 to make his farewells before going to the war, and Harry Titcombe, Albert Lockey, and William Aldridge, all of whom were Estate employees, left to enlist in the ranks. Strangely, the progress of the war did not warrant more than Elliot's passing attention. The death of a former employee in action was not recorded in his diary. He was almost entirely preoccupied with fanning and the need to produce more crops with a diminishing labour force and accelerated inflation.

Viscount Bolingbroke came of age on 15 March 1917, and Elliot helped to organise a collection on behalf of the tenantry, with the aid of Owen Hale, which raised £ 14. 9s. 6 *d*. Eventually the Viscount was presented with a silver rose bowl weighing 200oz., on a dark stand with ringed lions' heads for handles, costing £73. At His Lordship's 'Coming of Age' party, the organising committee was photographed by the *Daily Sketch* with George Price, the oldest Estate tenant, aged 75 years, who was chosen to present the gift as a token of esteem.

The war precipitated major changes in relationships within society, and, when the Estate was sold off in part, Elliot was able to purchase Hook farm and eventually Woodshaw farm. When he was a young man, a cousin, Edith Cowley, who had emigrated to the United States of America, complimented him in her letters when he became the tenant of Bagbury farm, stating 'I look forward to hearing of you as Squire, Lord of all you survey'. Such equality was unthinkable to Elliot at the time and almost too improper to imagine. It is doubtful if he ever envisaged such a close relationship with a noble family as developed in the hamlet of Hook, and its development must be largely due to the history, character, and personality of Bessie Howard, Viscountess Bolingbroke.

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Editor's footnotes

An account of the **Reopening of the church** appears in *Report 23*, pp. 19-21, where it is stated that Lady Bolingbroke sang the solo part in the anthem by the church choir.

Frederick Leighton and the Russellites The role of the schoolmaster was an important one within the community, and Mr Leighton amply fulfilled that role. He served as headmaster for thirty-six years, being appointed, at the age of twenty-four, in 1892 and died at the age of sixty in 1929 still in

post. He was chairman of the Parish Council for twenty-six years, and secretary of the Church Restoration Appeal in 1901 and of the committee which organised the erection of the War Memorial in 1920.

The 'Russellites' were named after 'Pastor' Charles Russell (1852-1916), founder of the International Bible Students Association, now generally called Jehovah's Witnesses. Local opposition to Mr Leighton's embracing that cause arose from Russell's teaching which, among other things, excluded all possibility of clergymen being numbered among the Elect. Russell's teaching could also be used as political propaganda of a subversive type. It proclaimed the approach of a general revolution of the workers which was to be followed by the resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgement, and the Messianic Kingdom on earth. 1914 was declared to be the year when these things should happen. The publications of the movement taught that allegiance to one's country was secondary to that of the cause and earned on a vigorous campaign against the British Empire.

[See, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F.L. Cross, pp. 717, 1189.]

1913 was not a time to promote such a cause locally, and Mr Leighton must have been persuaded to alter his allegiance.

The **rose bowl** which was presented to the 6th Viscount on his coming-of-age in 1917 has happily been returned to Lydiard Park under the terms of Lord Bolingbroke's will. Together with a photograph of the occasion, it is exhibited in the Library. These items, together with the **Commemoration book**, are part of the steadily-growing collection and archive at Lydiard Park.

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ST.JOHNS OF LYDIARD TREGOZE

Brian Carne

Had Swindon Corporation not purchased the Lydiard Park estate in 1943 the house would almost certainly have been demolished. The intervention of the Corporation, its extensive conservation work on the house and parkland over the years, and the reassembly of the family portraits and other artefacts, formerly in the house, has preserved a memorial of a family which for centuries dominated the life and activity of much of the parish of Lydiard Tregoze.

A junior branch of the St.John family became established in Wiltshire in the fifteenth century. Successive generations served as members of parliament and sheriffs of the county, and acted as responsible stewards for the land they inherited or acquired. Queen Elizabeth I visited Lydiard Park in 1592. During the seventeenth century there were many occasions when great men and their retinues came to stay at Lydiard. The status of the St.John family in the parish of Lydiard Tregoze is reflected in the nineteenth-century seating arrangements in the church. Consigned to the cramped north aisle were the occupants of the manor and farms of the tithing of Midghall, which was not part of the St.John ancestral lands. The nave and the south aisle were used by the St.John family, their servants and employees, and their tenants. Up to the 1840s the three-decker pulpit faced the St.John-family pew. (*See, Report 1* (1968), p. 23, and **25** (1992), pp. 22-23.)

The financial affairs of the Wiltshire St.Johns were in good heart during the lifetime of Sir Walter St.John (d. 1708). His grandson Henry St.John (d. 1751), created Viscount Bolingbroke, took the family to the zenith of its political fortunes but also brought shame to the family through his way of life. Certain unfortunate aspects of his life - but not his ability - reappeared in some later generations. The succeeding heads of the family appear to have been set on a course of drift which made the eventual sale of the estate in 1943 inevitable. Vernon Henry St.John (d. 1974) inherited a handful of titles, furnishings from Lydiard Park, and little else. The decline in the family's fortunes began in the eighteenth century: the death knell was sounded, at the end of the nineteenth century, with the marriage of the 5th Viscount.

An estate was expected to produce a level of profit sufficient to support the lifestyle expected of an aristocrat. He had to finance portions and jointures, a London household, electoral expenditure, and other outgoings depending on his personal predilections..... The aristocratic power base lay in rural England, symbolized by the county house and its attendant park..... The aristocracy was a landed elite. Without land there was no credibility. Noble poverty has no place in England..... Mortgages imperilled the status and position in society of the family through putting at risk the main principle of aristocratic life - property ownership. What was a pedigree worth without power?

[J.V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England 1660-1914* (Blackwell, 1986), pp. 9, 31, 138.]

The story of the decline and fall of the house of St.John of Lydiard Tregoze can be read in surviving records, particularly the many deeds of mortgage, and in the lives of successive generations of the family.

THE SURVIVING RECORDS

Deeds of Mortgage

There are two separate reasons for the mortgage deeds. (*See, Appendix 1 for further details.*)

Firstly, there are charges against the income of the St.John estates to provide for members of the family, and, in order to make these charges secure, part or all of the estates are 'conveyed' to trustees,

who are often relatives of the beneficiaries. Under these agreements the capital value of the estates is only at risk to the extent that either the annual rental income falls short of the sum of the annuities or the annuities are not paid on time. Frederick provided an annuity for his divorced wife. George Richard raised sums of money and created annuities for his children, for his wives, and for his step-sister and her children by him. The cash payments resulted from the mortgage or sale of non-entailed land, and the annuities ended with the death of the beneficiaries. Henry provided for his daughters with sums of money as dowries.

Secondly, there is the mortgaging of part or all of the core estates in order to realise some of the capital value of those estates. (By 'core' estates is meant the ancestral property in the Lydiards as distinct from those estates which were purchased by members of the family and which were steadily sold by their descendants over the years.) By these mortgages it was possible to augment income by borrowing money at a fixed rate of interest with the estates as security. As borrowing increased, the growing sum required new mortgagees and more interest had to be found out of current rental income. Eventually it can happen - as it did - that a large part of the estate was swallowed up and eventually became the property of others. This second type of agreement - borrowing against capital - became more simpler when the law relating to the breaking of entail was changed. (See, Appendix 2 for the details of the breaking of the entail.)

The diminishing estates

Frederick, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke, inherited from his father, in 1748, the manor of Lydiard Tregoze and lands in Lydiard Tregoze, Lydiard Millicent, Shaw, Poulton, Marlborough, Ogbourne St. Andrew, Mildenhall, Bynol, Broad Hinton, Cotmarsh, Chaddington, and Clyffe Pypard; the manor of Bynol; the manor of Beckenham in Kent; and the manor of Purley Magna and lands in Purley Tylehurst and Pangbourne in Berkshire. In 1757 these lands - with the exception of Lydiard Park - were let for an annual rental of £3,250. There were also his mother's lands in Kent which he inherited. On the death of his uncle, Viscount Bolingbroke, in 1751 he received the manor of Battersea and certain lands 'in and around the village of Nine Elms' in the parish of Battersea. In 1763 he sold the whole of his interest in the manor and lands of Battersea for £30,000. By 1786 the manor of Purley had passed to Charles Mackreth, 'Proprietor of White's Club, Usurer, and Book-maker'.

His son George Richard's marriages did not bring any significant capital to the family, and he steadily sold off farms and land. George Richard's son Henry (d. 1851) borrowed heavily, and a valuation of the estate in 1853 shows that there was a gross rental of £5,374 for the 3,300 acres in Wiltshire that remained. By that time the mortgage that was charged on this estate amounted to £47,000. Goodwyn's cash account with Henry's son, Henry Mildmay, [WRO 305/30] shows that the gross rental collected in 1853 amounted to £5,367. 2s. 2d. From that sum was deducted taxes, tithes, insurances, repairs, and agency fees to leave the net sum of £4,222 8s. 10 d. Out of this net sum came the payment of interest to the mortgagees (£2,065 9s. 1d), a payment to the executors of Mr. J. Wickens, and interest charged by Goodwyn's on advances. The cash that was paid into Lord Bolingbroke's account at Scott & Co. was £1,923 0s. 1 Id. In 1883 Lord Bolingbroke received from Goodwyn's £1,628 2s. 8d.

Henry Mildmay died in 1899. The valuation of his estate for probate was sworn at £83,857, the mortgage standing at £58,000. Goodwyn estimated [WRO 2323/11/1] that his net personal estate amounted to £3,840 13s. and his net real estate, after deducting the mortgages, amounted to £28,278. The day before he died he executed his will which had one provision - 'I give devise and bequeath all my real and personal property whatsoever and wheresoever to my wife Maiy Emily Elizabeth St. John Viscountess Bolingbroke absolutely And I appoint her sole EXECUTRIX of this my Will I impose no trust or condition upon her she knows my wishes and I have full confidence that she will do what is just and right with regard to each of my children'. (Lord Bolingbroke was unable to sign the will, but made his mark in the presence of the witnesses, Dr Maclean and T. St. John Oswald,

managing clerk at Bevir's, the Wootton Bassett solicitors. Mr Oswell's mother was related to the St.Johns of Bletsoe.)

Goodwyn made a report on the estate in 1905 [WRO 2323/14] which contains the following:

[The Bolingbroke Arms] The widow Hitchcock the tenant had been there for about forty years and the place had been demolished within the last few months after an intimation from the magistrates that they could not renew the licence to a new tenant when Mrs Hitchcock left unless the place was rebuilt. (The Surveyor of Taxes values the inn with 6 acres at £20.)

I am not sure that accurate information is obtainable about the lives upon which the fifteen cottages held under lease for lives are so held. They are for the most part wretched places, some of them more like hovels and £250 is probably as much as they are worth in fee simple when they come into possession. Lady Bolingbroke, to my knowledge, recently purchased four freehold cottages of the same general description, with the sites of five cottages, which had fallen down, for £295, which is to say £20 per cottage for those standing.

In the particulars of real property. The house [Lydiard Park] and buildings are in a sad state - needing extensive repairs - and in fact quite unfit for occupation. A large outlay would be inevitable to secure a tenant. Before the house can be let a sum of say £5,000 must be spent on modernizing it, by an Electric or other Light Installation, New Sanitation, and a complete system of heating and the entire redecoration throughout.

Hemy Mildmay's widow extinguished the mortgage on the estate over a thirty-year period. In 1920 over 2,000 acres, including some of the outlying farms, were sold. Several sales in that year featured land in Brinkworth and in Braydon, Great and Little Chaddington (279 acres - for the sum of £10,200), and farms in Lydiard Tregoze, Broad Town, and Broad Hinton parishes - Purley (106 acres), Little Cotmarsh (141 acres), Great Cotmarsh and Seagers (224 acres), Bynol (203 acres), and Lower Bynol (239 acres). In 1930 another 1,800 acres were sold. This sale included the following farms, Marsh (101 acres), Prices (201 acres), Hook (153 acres), Flaxlands (213 acres), Wick (138 acres), Parkside (105 acres), and Eastleaze (196 acres), together with the Bolingbroke Arms, forty-four cottages, allotments, and market gardens.

Lady Bolingbroke made her will on 1 July 1902. After providing after her death, an annuity for life of £100 to her husband's daughter Ellen Medex, further annuities of the same amount were given, from when Vernon Henry should become twenty-five, to her sons Henry and Charles and to her cousin Edward Hiscock. By her will she devised everything to Edward Hiscock and Thomas St.John Oswell, who should act as executors of the will, trustees of the estate, and guardians of her three sons, then aged nineteen, sixteen, and six. As trustees, Hiscock and Oswell were to manage the estate until Vernon Hemy became twenty-five, and Hiscock was to have the use of Lydiard Park or of some other house on the estate free of charge to look after the three boys.

Lady Bolingbroke died 22 February 1940. The valuation for probate of the gross value of her estate - that is, all that was left of the St.John estates - was £16,492, and the net value of her personal estate was £1,036. Probate was granted in February 1942 to Edward Hiscock, the surviving executor. At the time of his mother's death Vernon Henry was forty-three. Perhaps because of the annuities that were to be paid to the two elder brothers, the decision was made to sell Lydiard Park and its parkland, Windmill Leaze Farm, part of Wick Farm, Creeches Farm, and some fields - 750 acres in all - as well as nine cottages. The estate was put up for auction on 29 July 1943, the contents of the house having been sold previously. The Corporation of Swindon acquired the house and parkland for £4,500, completing the purchase on 9 October 1943. During 1943 the advowson of the church was acquired for the bishop of Bristol. Lord Bolingbroke did not enter into possession of Lydiard Park: the several sales were commissioned by Edward Hiscock, the surviving executor of Lady Bolingbroke's will.

THE GENERATIONS FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Frederick (d. 1787), 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke, lived above his means, enjoyed society life, patronised the turf, and was an inveterate gambler. [*Report* 21 (1988) pp. 15-46 and 32 (1999) pp. 5-6.] From the age of forty-eight, he is stated to have been out of his mind. His son George Richard and his executor uncle renounced their interest under his will, claims by creditors apparently accounting for more than the whole of his personal estate.

George Richard (d. 1824), 3rd Viscount Bolingbroke, fortunately did not have his father's interest in either horses or gambling. Instead, he had a passion for shooting and for women. In 1783 he married a daughter of his tutor and by her had three children. The third child - his eventual heir - was only a matter of a few months old when he formed a liaison with his half-sister, by whom he had four sons. Whilst his first wife was still alive he went through a form of marriage in Germany with Baroness Hompesch and by her had at least eight children, the last three of whom were legitimate. Financial provision had to be made for his half-sister, his wife, and his surviving children. [*Report* 6 (1973) pp. 91-114, 7 (1974) pp. 82-85, 9 (1976) pp. 31-42, 22 (1989) pp. 35-39, and 32 (1999) pp. 6-7.]

Henry (1786-1851), 4th Viscount Bolingbroke

Henry was the younger and only surviving son of George Richard's first marriage, to Charlotte Collins. His father abandoned her and her three children for his half-sister and, later, for Baroness Hompesch who eventually became his second wife. Charlotte, her father, and her three children were in Italy from 1793 to 1796. [*A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701-1800* (Yale U.P., 1997) compiled from the Brinsley Ford Archive by John Ingamells.] In 1803, when Henry was seventeen, his older brother George died, The following year, in May and June, his mother died aged forty-four, his only sister Mary died, and his grandfather died also. In 1804 Henry's father married Baroness Hompesch in New York, and by 1807 they were back in England. Henry was only a few months old when his father had left. After about twenty years' absence he had returned, with Henry's step-mother and six step-brothers and step-sisters.

Baroness Hompesch (d. 1848) did all she could to provide for herself and her children. What she could not get for them was the succession to the honours and estates of her husband's family, which belonged to Henry, the son of her husband's first marriage. Relationships between her and Henry were never very cordial.

In 1812 Henry married Maria Mildmay St.John-Mildmay (1793-1836) at St.George's, Hanover Square. Maria St.John-Mildmay was the second daughter of Sir Henry Paulet St.John-Mildmay (1764-1808), 3rd Bt., and his wife Jane Mildmay (d. 1857, aged 93). Sir Henry belonged to the St.John family of Farley Chamberlayne, Hants, and was a descendant of John St.John (d. 1576), of Lydiard Tregoze, by his second wife, Elizabeth Whettell. Jane Mildmay was a multiple heiress.

All three benefactors - Jane's father, her uncle by marriage, and her great-uncle - gave instructions in their wills that the persons to whom their property should come should use the surname and arms of Mildmay and no other surname. From the point of view of the vast accumulation of properties that came to the 3rd Baronet with Jane Mildmay this was probably the most important marriage that any St.John ever made, with the possible exception of the St.John-Beauchamp marriage about 1430. In 1790, therefore, in compliance with these testamentary injunctions, Sir Henry Paulet St.John obtained royal permission to use the additional surname of Mildmay and to bear the Mildmay arms alone. [Report4 (1971), p. 57.]

It is just as well that there was an 'accumulation of properties' for Sir Henry St.John-Mildmay had eleven sons and three daughters. His eldest daughter married Paul Methuen, created Baron Methuen, and the youngest married William Pleydell-Bouverie, Viscount Folkestone, later the 3rd Earl of

Radnor. So, Hemy, the future 4th Viscount Bolingbroke, married into a numerous and well-connected family.

Henry and his wife, Maria (St.John-Mildmay), had four daughters and two sons. The daughters were born first - Maria Jane Louisa (1813-1861) who married John Lauriston Kneller in 1839; Anne Jane Charlotte (1814-1881), known as Charlotte, who married Lawrence Robert Shawe in 1838; Isabella (b. 1816) who married her brother-in-law Frederick Horlock in 1857; and Emily Arabella Jane (1817-1855) who married, firstly, William Corbet Smith (1810-1847) in 1840, and, secondly, Frederick Geldart Webbe Horlock in 1852. After the four daughters there were two sons: Henry Mildmay and Spencer Mildmay (1822-1849) who married Dora Clutterbuck in 1842 and, by her, had a son Spencer-Henry Richard Mildmay St.John (1843-1844) and a daughter who also died young.

When Henry and Maria married in 1812, they had to make their home away from Lydiard Tregoze. Two of their daughters, Maria Jane Louisa and Anne Jane Charlotte, were baptised at Lydiard Tregoze, the one in 1813, the other in 1815. The entry in the Register gives their place of residence at that time as Watchfield House. According to the 1861 Census Charlotte was born in Cavendish Square, London, and Henry Mildmay in Fyfield, Hants, where he was baptised on 30 March 1820.

It is probable that Henry and Maria took up residence at Lydiard Park after the death of his father in 1824. William Cobbett visited Lydiard in 1826, and noted an air 'of neglect...if not abandonment'. Probably with some of the money his wife brought, Henry replaced the servants' accommodation on the west side of the house with a more up-to-date wing, demolished the long service range which ran from the house to the south-west, and may have refurbished the kitchens. He negotiated with the aged rector an exchange of lands and built the new rectory, which enabled him to demolish the old rectory just outside the churchyard wall. In the house there are examples of Maria's work: the petit-point needlework on the lady's chair in the Library and the embroidered panel of a black servant and two dogs. At one time, after 1960, there was at Lydiard Park a huge painting of what could have been two Newfoundland dogs. Tradition has it that Henry painted it. Tradition also has it that it was Henry who overpainted the triptych in the church and executed the small replica of one of its panels (Lyd. 1993/83) Occupation of the house may have ended with Maria's death in 1836.

The 1841 Census shows that Lydiard Park was by then occupied by a tenant, Thomas Orby Hunter, and by Charles Orby Wombwell and his wife and daughter. Their establishment consisted of eight male servants and eight female servants living in the house, with a further three male servants living in the stables. An Inventory of the contents of the house was made in 1848 after the death of Thomas Orby Hunter. [*Report 11* (1978), pp 45.] By the 1851 Census Charles Orby Wombwell had become the tenant, with a slightly smaller establishment of servants.

In addition to residence at Lydiard Park, Henry and Maria spent time in Scotland and Wales. In 1833 he lent the use of his shooting box at Rosehall in Sutherland to his young cousin Charles William George St.John. Maria died in 1836 at Aberystwyth at the age of forty-three: Henry died in 1851 at Elgin at the age of sixty-five. During his possession of the estate, Henry had borrowed heavily. In 1842 he, with his son Henry Mildmay, executed the deed of disentailment of the St.John estates. By July 1852 the mortgage had risen to £47,000.

Henry Mildmay (1820-1899), 5th Viscount Bolingbroke

Henry Mildmay, 5th Viscount, was the grandson of George Richard (d. 1824), 3rd Viscount, by his first marriage. The eldest legitimate son of George Richard's second marriage was Ferdinand St.John (1804-1865). Ferdinand's eldest son was Canon Maurice William Ferdinand St.John (1827-1914). Should Henry Mildmay have died without a male heir, then the succession to the title and the estates, albeit mortgaged, would have gone to his second cousin, Canon St.John. On this question of a valid

marriage and a legitimate heir hung a continuing drama, not resolved until after the death of Henry Mildmay.

Henry Mildmay was thirty-one when his father died. He was unmarried and his only brother, Spencer Mildmay, had died in 1844. The heir presumptive from 1851 was his uncle Ferdinand. Little information can be given about the early years of Henry Mildmay.

In the family archive belonging to Sir Michael Leighton, Bt., is a five-page typescript, unsigned and undated but not before 1899, 'A Record of the Principal Events in the Life of Henry [Mildmay] St. John... Viscount Bolingbroke'. The 'Record' gives us the information that Spencer Mildmay died in India, and continues,

It seems rather extraordinary that so little should be known about these two brothers, but the explanation is that, in consequence of a scandal connected with the birth of Spencer, Lord and Lady Bolingbroke found it convenient to live out of England for some time.

They are known to have lived in Versailles, and apparently neither Henry nor Spencer went to a Public School or University, nor is anything known about their education except that Henry was at a private school.... Henry is said to have been a shy and nervous sort of boy, disinclined for the society of his equals. Tradition has it that one person - his uncle Ferdinand (his father's half-brother) - was successful in dragging him out of his seclusion and making him take his proper place as son of the house. But that uncle was a cheery, breezy, energetic person, with an inexhaustible supply of high spirits which lasted during the greater part of his life, and no sympathy for any sort of shyness - in fact, though there was a difference in age of fifteen years between them, he was probably the best possible companion for his nephew, and his influence must have been most salutary. Unfortunately, he was not often able to exercise it.



Henry Mildmay, 5th Viscount Bolingbroke

Henry Mildmay succeeded to the titles and estates in 1851, and thereafter Lydiard Park was not let to tenants, perhaps because so much needed to be done to the property. The 1861 Census records that on the census night Henry Mildmay, aged forty, was living there with his sister Charlotte and the very small establishment of a butler, a housekeeper, a housemaid, and a valet. Lord Bolingbroke lived at Lydiard Park in 1868, 1869, and 1870, for he applied in 1873, through his solicitor, to the Local Government Board of Swindon to have a nuisance controlled. He claimed that the hooter on the Great Western Railway Company factory in Swindon, which sounded out frequently every working day, beginning at 5.15 a.m., was disturbing his sleep and imperilling his health. The full story is told in *Report 24* (1991), pp. 12-19. Lord Bolingbroke was unsuccessful in his attempt to silence the hooter. The 1871, 1881, and 1891 Censuses show the house as occupied only by a minimum of servants on the days of the census.

Henry Mildmay was appointed a Deputy-Lieutenant of the county of Wilts on 20 July 1860 [Lyd. 1993/284]. His epaulets, spurs, and ceremonial sword can be seen at Lydiard Park, but it is not known

when, if ever, he wore them on official duties or at the Court functions to which he was regularly invited.

A liaison and a marriage

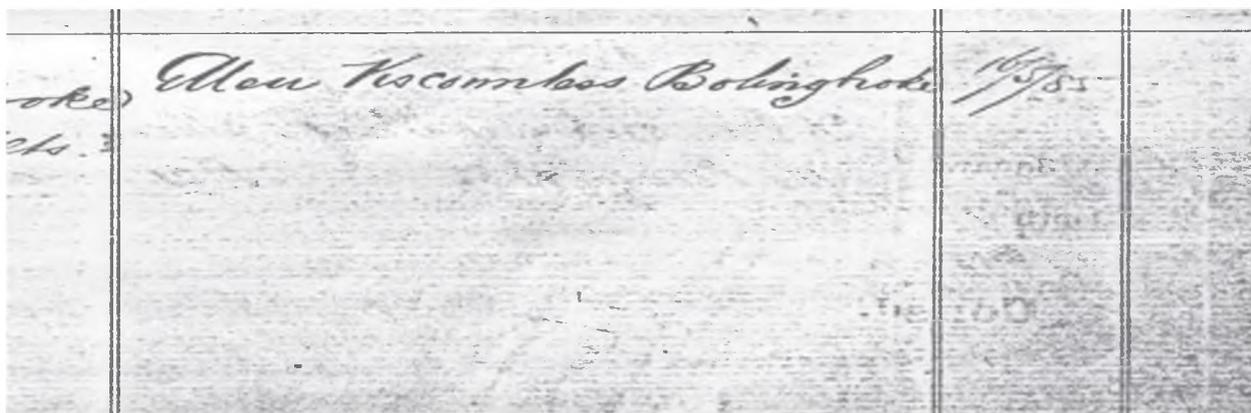
After his father's death, about 1852, Henry Mildmay met Ellen Medex, according to one version of the story, at the home of a friend in Blackheath.

There he met a young girl of seventeen, Ellen Medex, who, with her widowed sister, Madame Bischoff, had just arrived in England from Belgium. She was of mixed nationality, her father being a Greek Jew, who kept a school in Brussels, and her mother being a Scotswoman.

... Shy as he was, Lord Bolingbroke fell in love with Miss Medex at once, and a few days later begged her to marry him. She was prepared to accept him, when her sister, Madame Bischoff, interfered and peremptorily forbade any such union. As a result there was a bitter quarrel between the two; and in the end Ellen Medex, declaring that she would please herself, left England with Lord Bolingbroke. They went first to Holland, and then to Belgium, travelling as a married couple. It is significant, however, that nobody ever saw their marriage certificate. Nor, while they were in Brussels, did they call on Mr and Mrs Medex, who were said to live there.

After wandering about the Continent for some years, Lord Bolingbroke returned to England, accompanied by Ellen Medex. Although he represented her to be his wife, he adopted a very curious attitude toward her. Thus, instead of taking her to his family seat at Lydiard, they lived together in London, in various lodging-houses, as Mr and Mrs Morgan, and also in hotels as Mr and Mrs St.John. In 1863 a daughter was bom to them, whom they called Ellen Rose; and later on there was a boy, who died at birth.

Although during her lifetime Lord Bolingbroke had always preserved a singular reticence about the lady who had originally come to England as Miss Medex and had returned from Belgium with him as Mrs Morgan, he adopted a different attitude when she died in 1885. She was buried at Highgate Cemetery [in the Egyptian Avenue], and on her coffin-plate was the inscription, "Ellen, Viscountess Bolingbroke," and this was repeated in the register of deaths. Also Lord Bolingbroke then for the first time declared himself in the Peerages for the following year as a widower, and the father of two sons, Henry Mildmay and Charles Reginald, bom respectively in 1880 and 1883.



The entry in the register book of Highgate Cemetery

The above quotation is from Horace Wyndham, *Romances of the Peerage* (London, 1930), pp. 67-68. Wyndham points out that from the death of the 4th Viscount in 1851 until the revelations that appeared in the several *Peerages* in 1885 the heir-presumptive was the Hon. Ferdinand St.John until 1865 and, from his death, the Rev. Maurice William Ferdinand St.John. Wyndham further spells out the story of the unsuccessful attempts by editors of the several *Peerages* to get documentary evidence for the marriage to Ellen Medex in 1869 and the birth of the two boys. Right up to 1893 Lord

Bolingbroke gave his word that the statements he had made about his marriage and the legitimacy of the boys was correct, and wrote to the editor of *Debrett*, who had questioned these matters, 'My certificates remain in my possession. I am surprised you should not have chosen to accept my information.' Since there was reasonable doubt the editors of the *Peerages* then reverted to their former statement that the heir-presumptive was Canon St. John.

The fact is that, in 1885, at the age of sixty-five, he was unmarried and had no heir. The Medex marriage was a fiction, and he had already begun a new liaison, which had resulted in the birth of two boys, Henry and Charles, in 1882 and 1885, whose births were not registered and who were apparently not baptised either.

In perhaps 1881, leaving 'Mrs Morgan' in London, Lord Bolingbroke made one of his periodic visits to Lydiard. Tradition has it that, one day, his horse cast a shoe and he took the horse to the blacksmith in Lydiard Millicent, Robert Howard. The visit to the blacksmith was of great consequence, for he met Howard's daughter Bessie, then aged about twenty-two. The visit led on to her being offered the post of housekeeper at Lydiard Park and to a shared life with Lord Bolingbroke in Bath as Mr and Mrs Wilson. Two sons were born to 'Mr and Mrs Wilson', but they remained in Bath whenever 'Mr and Mrs Wilson' returned to Lydiard and resumed their unmarried status.

Another explanation for the way in which Lord Bolingbroke became acquainted with Bessie Howard appears in the 'Report....', quoted above, that is in Sir Michael Leighton's archive:

it was in or before the year 1879 that Lord Bolingbroke's connection with Miss Howard began. She was the daughter of a blacksmith and niece of one Hiscocks, the Gamekeeper at Lydiard Park, Lord Bolingbroke's place in Wiltshire. She is said to have been in service as nursery-maid or 'Mother's Help' in the house of a clergyman named Jones, who after-wards became Rector of Lydiard. How she attracted the attention of Lord Bolingbroke is not known, but report says that, when staying at her uncle's house, she earned the 'washing' up to the big house and so came under his notice.

There may be a basis of truth in this account. The Rev. Ebenezer Humphrey Jones and his first wife had at least twelve, possibly fourteen, children. A son, Humphrey Tudor Morrey Jones, was born in 1875. The Rev. E.H. Jones became assistant curate to the Rev. Giles Daubeney, rector of Lydiard Tregoze, for a period of about nine months up to April 1877 and will have found accommodation in the parish. On 6 February 1877 another son, Herbert Trevor, was baptised at Lydiard Tregoze church. Mr and Mrs Jones may well have employed Bessie Howard, possibly on the recommendation of her Hiscocks uncle, to help with the children. (If this is true, it adds significance to the nomination by Lady Bolingbroke, the former Bessie Howard, of Mr Jones in 1900 to be rector of Lydiard Tregoze and of her intention to nominate the Ven. Humphrey Tudor Morrey Jones, archdeacon of Brazil, also to be rector of Lydiard Tregoze at the next vacancy. Unfortunately Mr Jones jnr died suddenly in 1936, the year that the next vacancy occurred.) Taking the washing up to the 'big house' may have led to the offer of employment in a menial capacity, which, in time, led to her promotion by Lord Bolingbroke to the position of housekeeper.

On 5 January 1893, with the greatest secrecy and at Bath Register Office, Lord Bolingbroke and Mary Emily Elizabeth Howard were married. In the register he is described as a widower - and no doubt his new wife believed this to be true - and Robert Howard is given the status of 'Gentleman'. Lady Bolingbroke gave birth to a daughter six weeks after the wedding, who was either still-born or died shortly after birth, and, on 15 March 1896, to a boy, Vernon Henry, the future 6th Viscount Bolingbroke. Lord Bolingbroke was not accustomed to registering his children, and it took him eighty-one days to register the birth of Vernon Henry. Until his death in 1899, Lord Bolingbroke insisted that absolutely no-one should know about their marriage. He would have been gratified to know that the secret was kept until his funeral.

His death and funeral

Lord Bolingbroke died in the evening of Tuesday, 7 November 1899. National newspapers reported his death on the 9th, and stated that, subject to the validity of the marriage said to have been contracted in 1869, the heir was Canon St.John. Horace Wyndham (p.76) wrote, ‘The news of his death was sent to his relatives; and two days later Lord Bolingbroke was buried in the family vault at Lydiard Church.’ The news, according to this statement, was sent out to relatives on Thursday the 9th. Canon St.John learned of the death of his cousin on the 9th, probably from the newspaper. The same day he wrote to his London solicitors, Royds & Rawstone, who replied the following day that it

was advisable that you and your son [Henry Percy St.John] should attend the funeral I think for the present it will be best for you not to assume the title. In a week or two’s time we shall probably know if there are any grounds for disputing your right to succeed or not.

[Lyd 1994 137/15]

The funeral was on Saturday, 11 November, and it was reported in the *Swindon Advertiser* on Monday the 13th. According to the account, those attending the funeral included Lady Bolingbroke and her two elder sons, Ellen Rose Medex, and Canon St.John and his two sons. There were three wreaths on the coffin, with the messages: ‘To my dearest husband, with deepest sympathy and sorrow, from his wife, M.E.E.B.’, ‘With deepest sympathy to dearest father from Henry, Charlie, and Vernon’, and ‘Dolly, dearest father, deepest grief, daughter Ellen St.John.’ There is no record of a floral tribute from Canon St.John. The newspaper report added:

After the ceremony Mr H. Bevir (the family solicitor) made the following announcement to the Press: - “The late Viscount married late in life, and leaves a widow and a son, the Hon. Vernon St.John, who succeeds to the title as Viscount Bolingbroke. The announcements made in some quarters that Canon St.John is the heir have been made from a want of knowledge of the true circumstances.”



Canon Maurice William Ferdinand St.John [Lyd 1994/125]

This sequence of events means that Canon St.John only learned of the alleged marriage on the day of the funeral, probably when everyone else did - after the funeral had taken place. Sir Roland Gibbs is a great-grandson of Canon St.John and his grandfather was present at the funeral. Sir Roland affirms that the tradition in the family is that Canon St. John knew nothing about the marriage and the heir until Mr Bevir made the announcement.

The news, without doubt, came as an unwelcome surprise to Canon St.John, but it was somewhat reminiscent of another marriage which had appeared in the several *Peerages* between 1885 and 1893. His London solicitors set about establishing the truth. Mr Bevir called to see them on 22 November. He showed them a copy of Lord Bolingbroke’s will and gave details about his three sons.

Visits were made to the Register Office at Bath, and, as a result, Canon St.John relinquished his claim to the title and estates.

The stuff of romantic novelists

The clandestine marriage and the frustration of Canon St.John's reasonable expectations have stimulated the imagination of at least two writers. An article in what looks like a weekly magazine from the 1930s is headed, 'REAL LIFE ROMANCES WHICH WILL AMAZE YOU', and a core of facts are presented in a liberal wrapping of imaginative writing.

Having no reason to doubt his succession to the title and estates, the Canon of Winchester [sic. recte Gloucester] went down to Lydiard Park to take possession. The family solicitor was already there, and welcomed him by the title of Lord Bolingbroke, while the servants gathered in force to greet respectfully their new master.

It was the unofficial ceremony which is usual in these cases, and afterwards the canon and the solicitor repaired to the library to discuss such details as payment of death duties and the late Lord's will.

They were still debating these matters, when the door opened and a lady in black entered, leading a small boy by the hand.

"Who are you?" said the lawyer, as both men rose to their feet.

"I am Viscountess Bolingbroke, the widow of the late Viscount, and this child is his only son and heir," was the astounding answer.

They stared at her again, unbelieving, amazed that anyone could be found who would go through this ridiculous piece of play-acting.

"Are you serious, madam?" the lawyer asked.

"I am serious", she said quietly. "My son is the new Lord Bolingbroke and the owner of Lydiard Park and the family estates. I married the late Lord Bolingbroke at a registry office in Bath. We lived there as Mr and Mrs St.John."

The 'son and heir' was not present as he was living at 10 Russell Street, Bath at the time. The 'family solicitor' Mr Bevir will have learned the facts from his managing clerk long before the supposed visit to Lydiard Park by Canon St.John.

The second account was given by Sir Harold Morris, Q.C., in his book about interesting cases in which he had been involved. [Back View (Peter Davies, 1960), pp. 183-186.] Sir Harold was one of the two barristers who were retained to present the petition, in 1922, before the Committee of Privileges of the House of Lords for the 6th Viscount to be allowed his seat in the House. Sir Harold devoted a section of his book to the Bolingbroke case and reproduced the relevant information that he had been told about the Medex affair and the maniage in Bath. One would expect that he would have avoided speculation about Canon St.John's enlightenment.

In 1860 when he was about forty he [Lord Bolingbroke] went to stay in Brussels and there met a young woman called Ellen Medex, who was then seventeen years old and lived with an elder sister, a Madame Bischoff. Lord Bolingbroke proposed to Ellen Medex but Madame Bischoff, strongly opposed to the marriage, refused to give her consent to it. Lord Bolingbroke asked Ellen Medex if she would come and live with him in England and she agreed to do so. He did not take her to Lydiard Tregoze, his seat in Wiltshire, but installed her in humble lodgings, first at the less fashionable end of Gloucester Place and later in Oxford Terrace, where they lived together under the name of Mr and Mrs Morgan.

Ellen Medex bore to Lord Bolingbroke four children, of whom the first two were girls who died in infancy, the third child was a girl named Ellen Rose, and the fourth was a boy who was still-born. Ellen Rose said in evidence [before the Committee of Privileges] that she had been told that her birthday was 3rd January, but was never told the year of her birth and she thought that when her mother died in 1885 she must have been in her twenties.

In 1879 a Miss Mary Emily Elizabeth Howard, who was then twenty, went as housekeeper to Lord Bolingbroke at Lydiard Tregoze. After she had been there some time she became Lord Bolingbroke's mistress . . .

As soon as [Lord Bolingbroke's] death was announced, the heir presumptive went to Lydiard Tregoze to claim his heritage, and the door of the mansion-house was opened to him by a comely woman of about forty, who said, "Who are you?" When he replied, "I am the sixth Viscount Bolingbroke," she said, "No, you are not. I am Viscountess Bolingbroke and my son Vernon Hemy is the heir to the title and he will be the sixth Viscount," and further to convince the heir presumptive she showed him the certificates of her marriage and of her son's birth.

Canon St.John died in 1914. His grandson Geoffrey Robert St.John (1888-1972) cherished the hope that he might inherit the title, but it was not until 1974 that one of Canon St.John's great-grandsons, Kenneth Oliver Musgrave St.John, a travel agent in New Zealand, became the 7th Viscount Bolingbroke. Kenneth attended the meeting of the Friends in 1980. Sadly, of recent years, he has suffered debilitating strokes, which have severely affected his business.

Mary Emily Elizabeth (1859-1940), 5th Viscountess Bolingbroke



Mary Emily Elizabeth was the daughter of Robert Howard of Lydiard Millicent - at the time of her birth a gardener - and his wife Susanna (Hiscock). Her birth certificate, strangely, has no name for her on it; simply it states that a girl was born on 31 January 1859. She was baptised at Lydiard Millicent church on 18 September 1859. She followed the example of other members of her mother's family in obtaining employment at Lydiard Park. She became housekeeper to Lord Bolingbroke in about 1879, bore him two sons, in 1882 and 1885, and married her employer in 1893. A third son was born in 1896. Lord Bolingbroke died in 1899, leaving her in absolute possession of his entire estate. He laid on her the duty of care for his daughter Ellen Rose Medex, who received from her father's widow unfailing kindness and support.

Lady Bolingbroke did not have an easy life. Lord Bolingbroke was not the easiest of men to live with. For years she had to live the lie of returning from Bath, where she left the children, to Lydiard as Miss Howard. She was forbidden to tell anyone of her marriage, and had to endure the censure of those who

believed her to be otherwise than she, in fact, was. Against her will, Lord Bolingbroke sought to establish, from 1885, that their first two children were the legitimate children of Ellen Medex.

From her husband's death onwards she had no support from members of his family. The aura of her title and her status in the local community brought a degree of separation from her former friends and neighbours. Increasingly she turned to her cousin Edward Hiscock for advice and support. She played her part in local affairs. As patron of the living, she appointed the Rev. Ebenezer Humphrey Jones to the rectory in 1900, and enjoyed good relations with him and his family until his resignation in 1914. Rector Jones set about raising money for the restoration of the church. [See *Report* 23(1990), pp. 16-19.] Lady Bolingbroke served on the restoration committee, and opened the bazaar in the rectory grounds in 1901 where she presided over the needlework stall. To raise further money she organised a concert, at which Thomas St. John Oswell gave a monologue and sang a song. She presented a new communion cloth for the re-dedication service, at which she took a solo part in the anthem that was sung by the choir. She attended meetings of the parish Vestry.

Elsewhere in this *Report* are reproduced extracts from the diaries of Elliot George Woolford of Hook Farm which recount something of the life and activities in the parish of Lady Bolingbroke up to 1917. In 1914 she presented Herbert Harrison to the rectory, and encouraged him in organising a Sunday School, which met in her house. Elizabeth Mullins wrote about the Sunday School in *Reports* (1975), pp.30-32, and recalled the regular attendance of Lady Bolingbroke at church, sitting in the family pew, usually wearing a long black velvet hat trimmed with ostrich feathers. She was joined in church with her indoor staff, a cook, a housemaid, and a parlour-maid. As outdoor staff she employed a gardener, two gamekeepers, and two or three labourers.

The Rev. Herbert Harrison was succeeded by the Rev. W.H. Willetts in 1936. Mr Willetts' daughter, Mrs. Margaret North, contributed to *Report* 30 (1996), pp. 14-18, memories of her time at the rectory and of the kindness of Lady Bolingbroke:

Our family became very fond of Lady Bolingbroke. She was a delightful lady, so friendly and welcoming. She had lovely silver hair which was arranged in curls all over her head. I often went to tea with her. She was bedridden for the last few years of her life. She had very bad ulcerated legs. She never complained, but she must have suffered dreadfully. Her bedroom was a smallish room overlooking the church path. She was able to see people coming and going on Sundays - a bit of light relief from the monotony of other days.

Lady Bolingbroke died on 22 February 1940, and was buried in the family vault in the churchyard. At her funeral the chief mourners were her three sons, Viscount Bolingbroke, Captain and Mrs Henry St. John, and Mr Charles St. John, Mr Edward Hiscock, and her cousin Mrs Boughton-Leigh of Rugby. They were supported by many residents of the two Lydiard parishes.

Henry Mildmay, Charles Reginald, and Vernon Henry (1896-1974), 6th Viscount Bolingbroke

Henry Mildmay was born, the son of Lord Bolingbroke and Miss Howard, at New King Street, Bath, on 5 December 1882, according to the declarations made before the Committee of Privileges. In *Report* 33 (2000), pp.55-57, extracts from 'The Last Crusade' by Denis Pitcher appear, which draw upon letters exchanged by Henry and Lady Bolingbroke during the first World War.

Henry did not attend any school, receiving his education through tutors. Only Charles went to school, at Newbury Grammar School. None of the brothers had a job prior to the War, and spent their time at Lydiard assisting Teddy Hiscock, the Estate Manager, in various tasks around the estate. In 1914 Henry was nearly thirty-two years old.

He enlisted in 1914 and was gazetted as Captain in 1915. He served in the Gallipoli campaign, in which he was wounded. In 1932, at the age of fifty, he married Miss Joan Daubeny. He never took up any profession, spending some years looking after an estate, near Bath. During the second World

War he served in the Civil Defence, and also worked for the American forces stationed in the West of England.



Captain Henry St.John with his mother [Lyd 1995/14] Charles Reginald St.John [Lyd 1993/261]

Hemy and Joan lived at Cullompton in Devon, where he died in 1957, aged seventy-five. Members of the Friends of Lydiard Tregoz will remember with great pleasure the occasions when Joan was able to attend our meetings. She was a very gracious lady, generous in her judgments, and an enthusiast for all that was being done in her husband's old home. She died in 1985, when she was over ninety years old. There were no children of the marriage.

Charles Reginald was bom on 14November 1885 atNewKing Street, Bath. He established a thriving dry-cleaning business in Surrey, and lived at Surbiton with his wife Ivy, and their children Anthony and Marjorie. Charles died in 1969. Ivy died in 1971.

The ashes of the two brothers and their wives are buried in Lydiard Tregoze churchyard, as are those of the 6th Viscount.

Vernon Hemy was bom on 15 March 1896 at Gay Street, Bath. At the age of three he succeeded his father as 6th Viscount Bolingbroke. After his death in 1974, Miss Catherine McLean contributed an obituaary for *Report* **8** (1975), pp.9-11, from which much of the following information is derived.

Vernon's early years were divided between living at Alfred Street, Bath, and Lydiard. His education was in the hands of governesses. Showing an early interest in music, he had piano lessons from Dr MacFarlane of Bath and organ lessons from Mr Gale, organist at St.Mark's church, Swindon. Two brothers were rectors of the Lydiards, Percy at Lydiard Millicent and Herbert at Lydiard Tregoze. Both were keen sportsmen, and they took Vernon shooting and fishing. The Rev. Percy Harrison (d. 1937) was very knowledgeable about natural history in all its forms, and he stimulated Vernon's

interest in the subject. Vernon contributed occasional notes to the *Magazine* of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, in later life contributed articles to the *Ringwood and Fordingbridge Journal*, and made a celebrated collection of butterflies and moths - his pride and joy - which he presented to the National Museum of Wales.



The Rev. Percy Harrison, rector of Lydiard Millicent [Lyd 1995/41]

Through the Rev. Percy Harrison, Vernon was introduced to F.W. Frohawk (d. 1946), a distinguished zoologist, the author of several standard works on birds and butterflies, and the holder of a civil list pension for his services to entomology. At least from 1937 until 1943 they exchanged letters [Lyd 1993/293a-z]. Vernon called to see him at his Sutton, Surrey, home. In a letter-tome, written in 1966, Vernon declared, ‘Personally as a naturalist, birds, beasts, and bugs interest me far more than old family events of the dim past’.

In 1917, to celebrate his coming-of-age, a presentation was made to Vernon by the estate tenants of a silver rose-bowl and an illuminated book which contained the names of ninety-one subscribers. The presentation was made by George Price, who, at the age of seventy-five, was the oldest tenant present. A speech was made by Mr Goodwyn, which included the words, according to the report in the *North Wilts Herald* on 16 March 1917:

He himself could feel something of the good feeling and spirit which accompanied the gift, for he was an old servant of the family and had associated himself with pleasure with the presentation. It was in 1837 that his father first acted for the Lord of Lydiard Tregoze as agent for the estate; and it was in 1884 that the late Lord Bolingbroke entrusted him (the speaker) with the management of the estate. He hoped that the splendid feelings existing on the estate would continue for many years. He was certain that in whatever walk of life Viscount Bolingbroke chose - music, Parliament or diplomacy - he would uphold honourably the noble traditions of the historic house.

“I, too, can only add,” said Mr Goodwyn, turning to the Viscount, “that I hope and trust you will live long to enjoy your heritage and know that, as to-day, you have the assurance of the goodwill of the tenantry”, (applause)



The presentation of the rose bowl by George Price to Lord Bolingbroke, 15 March 1917. On the steps, 1. Owen Hale behind Mr Hervey White; centre, Mr Rebbeck; behind Lord Bolingbroke, Mr Woolford [Lyd 1993/253]



The Rt. Hon. Lance-Corporal Vernon Henry, Viscount Bolingbroke, 1917
[Lyd 1995/21]

The rose bowl is in the Library at Lydiard Park, and the 'accompanying volume' is there also but not on display. Mr Goodwyn expressed the hope that Lord Bolingbroke would long enjoy his heritage, even though he knew the size of the mortgage on the estate. What he could not have foreseen was that Lord Bolingbroke would never come into possession of the estate.

Lord Bolingbroke received his calling-up papers - according to an undated newspaper article - on the eve of his twenty-first birthday. He reported for duty on 28 March and entered the 3rd Devonshire Regiment as a private. He is said to be the only peer of the realm to serve in the First World War as a non-commissioned officer. He played in the string section of the regimental orchestra during his training. He saw active service in France and was shell-shocked. After hospital treatment, he was discharged from the armed forces.

From 14 March 1917 Lord Bolingbroke could claim a seat in the House of Lords. A petition was made to George V to that effect. The king referred the petition to the Attorney-General in January 1918, and, in July 1920, the latter recommended to the king that the matter should be referred to the House of Lords with its Committee of Privileges. The Committee heard the uncontested evidence in March 1922 and reported to the House in Vernon's favour, but it was not until 1926 that a Writ of Summons to the House of Lords was issued to him.

In 1920 he was invited to unveil the parish War Memorial at Hook. For a short time he opened a music shop in Tetbury, where sheet music, gramophones, and records were sold. During the second World War he joined the local Home Guard.

In 1940 his mother died, and he moved to Brook Cottage to live with Edward Hiscock. Under the terms of his mother's will everything was devised to trustees for the benefit of Vernon after the payment of certain annuities. He was able to keep for his own use such silver, pictures, furniture, books, and such like as he chose, but Edward Hiscock, as the sole surviving executor, decided to sell the house and the remaining estate. For a while he stayed at Brownsover Hall with his cousin Mrs Broughton-Leigh, who assisted him in the sale of some paintings. In December 1943 Christies sold for him a number of paintings and family portraits, the most important of which have come back to Lydiard Park in recent years by gift, loan, or purchase. Vernon also sold items of furniture.

Eventually, in 1949, Vernon bought Moorhayes, a house on Crow Hill, near Ringwood. There he spent the last twenty-five years of his life, walking in the New Forest, pottering in his garden, learning more and more about the natural history of the area. He was a director of Lignacite (Holdings) Limited of Fordingbridge and a director of a local building society. The front gate of Moorhayes was decorated with a painted cut-out of a Swallowtail butterfly.

On 15 June 1950 he married Barbara Valenzia Frohawk at Christchurch, Sutton, Surrey, after a five-year engagement. The daughter of F. W. Frohawk, she was a professional cellist, having trained under Madam Suggia. The marriage was a disaster, and a decree nisi was granted to her in 1952 on the plea of non-consummation of the marriage. She continued to use her title as Lady Bolingbroke, and published a booklet in which she declared that her marriage was the worst time of her life. She died in 2000.

For many years Vernon resented the cruel fate that had deprived him of a great inheritance, and he preferred not to talk about Lydiard. However, a gentle approach by John Murray John, town clerk of Swindon, eased his opposition. Not only did he agree to sell the bulk of his family portraits to the Corporation, but did what he vowed he would never do. He came back to Lydiard to talk about the positioning of the portraits and was entertained to lunch in the Dining Room. In 1969 he made his will. The main beneficiary was Catherine McLean, who also received a life interest in those contents of 'Moorhayes which came from my old home Lydiard Tregoze House ... and after her death upon trust that the same be given to the Swindon Corporation absolutely to be replaced in Lydiard Tregoze House'. He died in 1974, and Swindon Corporation negotiated terms with Miss McLean in 1986 for the early return of these former contents. Miss McLean died in 2000.

Lord Bolingbroke's estate was sworn at £42,948 gross (£42,355 net, duty paid £6,584). With his death the final curtain came down on the St. John family of Lydiard Tregoze.

The monument to the family is Lydiard Park and, as this article stated in the opening paragraph, its survival is a great accomplishment for the Corporation of Swindon. The house was purchased in 1943 as an empty shell, except for the Rysbrack bust of the 1st Viscount Bolingbroke and the busts in the Library and Entrance Hall. Every endeavour has been made by the Corporation to put the house in good order and to reassemble as much as possible of its former contents. That so much has been done in recent years to bring the ground-floor rooms alive is in no small measure due to the energy and enthusiasm of the present Keeper, Sarah Finch-Crisp.

APPENDIX 1

The Mortgage Deeds

Over the years there has been a dispersal of family papers. The Hon. Ferdinand St. John (d. 1865) obtained a number of letters and other documents, probably after the death of his father George Richard, 3rd Viscount Bolingbroke, in 1824. These papers have been transcribed in *Report* 27 (1994), 28 (1995), 29 (1996), and 31 (1998). The accumulation of papers in the office of Goodwyn, land agents, have been transferred to the Wiltshire Record Office. It is not known where the accumulation of papers - as distinct from legal documents - in the office of Harold Dale, solicitor of Wootton Bassett, have been deposited. In the 1960s there were two trunks of mainly nineteenth-century papers and account books at their Wootton Bassett office.

Tradition has it that, prior to the sale of Lydiard Park in 1943, much of the accumulation of family papers that remained in the house was patriotically given for war-time salvage. Lord Bolingbroke retained a selection of family papers and other items of memorabilia, which have been returned to Lydiard Park under the terms of his will.

The late Mr Harry Bennett acquired a consolidated deed of mortgage when he bought The Brook, Lydiard Tregoze, the former home of the Hiscock family. The deed is dated 27 January 1869, and consists of fifteen membranes (sheets of parchment), 27" x 21", five of which have entries on recto and verso (front and back).

In 1973 Swindon Corporation purchased twenty-three documents from Derek and Glenda Wallis of Bath. Mr Denys Hodson, in a letter dated 1 November 1972, stated that the deeds had been 'found in a bricked-up oven by a demolition contractor'. The collection has the accession number in the Lydiard Park archive of Lyd 1993/289, the figures in square brackets below refer to the numbering of the separate items in that collection, which consists of the following:

- [1] 10 November 1809 Bargain and Sale of Manor and Rectory of Ly diard Tregoze for the purpose of suffering a Recoveiy thereof. (1 membrane)
- [2] 31 December 1809 Lease for a year of Chaddington Farm. (1 membrane)

- [3] 31 December 1809 Lease for a year of the Manor and certain fields. (1 membrane)
- [5] 1 January 1810 Appointment and Release of a field to be used in connection with a settlement made on 3 February 1789. (2 membranes)
- [4] 1 January 1810 Appointment and Release of the Manor etc. in connection with a settlement made on 5 July 1794. (3 membranes)
- [7] 5 June 1812 Bargain and Sale to make a Tenant for suffering a Recoveiy. (3 membranes)
- [6] Trinity Term 1812 The Recovery. (1 membrane)
- [8] 1 June 1827 Lease of woodlands for one year. (1 membrane)
- [9] 2 June 1827 Release of woodlands. (3 membranes)
- [10] 5 June 1827 Mortgage of woodlands at Lydiard Tregoze and Bynol to secure £2,881. 4s. Od.
- [11] 5 April 1828 Mortgage for securing £7,104.2s. Od, with an endorsement of 4 October 1843 to secure reversionary rights (11 membranes)
- [12] 29 July 1828 Assignment of reversionary rights. (5 membranes)
- [13] 30 June 1842 Deed of disentailment. (10 membranes)
- [14] 27 July 1842 Mortgage for securing £16,880. 3s. 6d, with endorsements for further securing additional sums - £2,544 (25 October 1843), £2,206. 4s. Od (15 July 1846), and £1,780. 12s. Od. (27 August 1847). (6 membranes)
- [15] 25 July 1845 Mortgage for an additional £3,786. 6s. 6d. (6 membranes)
- [16] 20 January 1849 Mortgage for an additional £2,018. (3 membranes)
- [18] 28 July 1852 Assignment for greater security for a £2,500 mortgage, with an endorsement of 3 August 1863 for the assignment of the mortgage. (2 membranes)
- [19] 28 July 1852 Consolidating mortgage for £47,000, with an endorsement of 3 August 1863 for the assignment of the mortgage. (30 membranes)
- [20] 5 June 1853 Additional mortgage to secure £2,880 4s. and £ 1,550, with endorsements for additional mortgages on 6 December 1854 to secure a further £3,000, 28 August 1856, and 26 January 1869. (4 membranes)
- [Mr Bennett's deed of 27 January 1869 consolidates these mortgages and has a further indenture, dated 18 April 1884, as an endorsement.]
- [21] 23 May 1884 Abstract of title of James Wickens to a mortgage for £5,000 together with Counsel's opinion.
- [22] 24 March 1916 Declaration of trust by Earl Percy, later to be Duke of Northumberland, and members of his family over the mortgage they held for £58,000, assigned to them on 12 May 1899, which is secured on property at Lydiard Tregoze.
- [23] 26 March 1921 Conveyance by Lady Bolingbroke of the site of Bolingbroke Close, Hook, to the Rural District Council.

Elliot George Woolford purchased Hook Farm in 1930 from Lady Bolingbroke, the consideration of £3,000 being paid to the mortgagees of the estate, the Duke of Northumberland, Lord William Percy, and Lord Eustace Percy. The abstract of title for the farm drawn up after the death of Elliot Woolford lists a further nine indentures or endorsements which do not appear on the above list. They are dated, 9 March 1839 to secure £2,500 [by way of dower for the Hon. Maria St.John and her husband John Lauriston Kneller], transfers of mortgage on 18 April 1884, 18 July 1884, 6 August 1890 (2 endorsements), and 23 March 1916, and two further endorsements on the same day, and a deed of further mortgage between Lady Bolingbroke and the mortgagees on 11 June 1923.

The archive of the land agents Goodwyn & Sons of Granville Chambers, Portman Square, which have been deposited at the Wiltshire Record Office, contains copies of a number of these indentures

and adds two further deeds -12 May 1899 to secure a further £3,000, and 11 June 1928 a consolidating mortgage. [WRO 2323/11/1]

There are more deeds that have probably survived, although their present whereabouts are not known. I have copies of two schedules. Both are similarly endorsed in ink, 'Received the above docus this 2nd July 1944 Townsends Solics Swindon'. The shorter schedule lists sixty deeds and documents, which are described by date of execution and the listing of the parties involved. (These are not sixty different documents: deeds which appear as endorsements on earlier deeds are separately listed.) The longer schedule is headed, 'LORD BOLINGBROKE'S ESTATES. SCHEDULE of DEEDS and DOCUMENTS in the possession of the Mortgagees of the above estates handed over to Messrs. Bevir & Sons', but is endorsed in ink on p. 17 with, 'N.B. AH the above documents were received from Messrs May, May & Deacon'. The longer schedule lists 137 deeds and declarations, and includes all the deeds that appear on the shorter schedule. The longer schedule begins with three documents relating to the rent charge made by Sir John St.John in 1645 and continues with a series of deeds concerned with the marriages of John, 2nd Viscount St.John and of Frederick, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke. A group of deeds relate to the estate of Frederick, before and after his death. Eighteen deeds concerned with the financial arrangements of George Richard, 3rd Viscount Bolingbroke, precede those that also appear in the Lydiard archive. There are copies of wills, of the Divorce Act of 1768, and of entries in baptism and burial registers. (Of particular interest is a statutory declaration, made on 5 July 1852 by E.W. Haines, giving proof of the deaths of the four Bartons - the sons of George Richard by his half-sister.) The longer schedule concludes with the receipts, dated September 1943, for the payment of the final legal charges.

APPENDIX 2

How the entail was broken

The law of entail is derived from the feudal system under which land was granted to a feoffee and the heirs of his body. (The word 'tail' is derived from the French *tailleur*, 'to cut', the inheritance being cut down and limited to the heirs of the body.) The inheritance itself was alienated and protected for the heir irrespective of whether or not the previous holder had died intestate. Over the years means had been devised for circumventing this entailment. Precedents had been created whereby it was possible for a fictitious suit or 'recovery' to be brought to court and judgment obtained whereby the alienation was lifted. By an Act of Parliament (1833) the matter was made more simple. By means of a deed enrolled with the supreme court the entail could be broken by the tenant in tail in remainder (the heir) with the consent of the tenant for life, who currently enjoyed the estate. This was the effect of the deed that was made on 30 June 1842.

The deed of disentailment

The 1842 indenture was made between Henry, Viscount Bolingbroke, and his heir, the Hon. Henry Mildmay St.John, and John Wickens of Lincoln's Inn. Subject to existing agreements which covered a debt owing to Philip Williams and James Stephen Wickens and also the annuity payable to Isabella, dowager Lady Bolingbroke, and four dowries yet to be paid, the deed was intended 'to destroy all estates tail of the said Henry Viscount Bolingbroke and Henry St.John' as listed in an attached schedule according 'to an Act of Parliament for rendering a Release as effectual for the Conveyance of Freehold Estates as a Lease and Release by the same Parties'. The deed is irrevocable, and the Hon. Henry Mildmay St.John further declared 'that no woman who shall hereafter be his widow shall be entitled to dower out of the said hereditaments'.

The intention clearly is that the deed of disentailment should be comprehensive. The legal mind was brought to bear on what was involved. It was not satisfactory simply to refer to 'land': what about water, and so on? (Remember, Shylock was entitled to his pound of flesh but not to a drop of blood,

since blood was not included in the terms of the contract.) The deed, therefore, covers all the property in the schedule, all other property in which they may have an interest in remainder, and also

all houses outhouses buildings bams stables Coach houses cottages dovecots Yards Gardens Orchards lofts lands meadows pastures heaths moors marshes wastes waste ground folds fold courses and liberty of foldage feedings parks warrens commons common of pasture common of turbary mines minerals mills mulctures customs tolls duties furzes trees woods underwoods coppices and the ground and soil thereof mounds fences hedges ditches freeboards ways waters watercourses fishings fisheries fowlings courts leet courts baron and other courts perquisites and profits of courts view of frankpledge and all that to view of frankpledge doth belong reliefs heriots fines sums of money amerciements goods and chattels of felons and fugitives felons of themselves outlawed persons deodands waifs estrays chief rents quit rents rents charge rents sack rents of assize fee faim rents boons services royalties jurisdictions franchises liberties privileges easements profits and other hereditaments belonging or in anywise appertaining or with the same or any of them respectively now or at any time heretofore demised leased held used occupied enjoyed or accepted reputed deemed taken or known as part parcel or member of them or any part of them or appertaining thereto with their and every of their appurtenances And the reversion and reversions remainder and remainders yearly and other rents issues and profits of all the said Manors or Lordships and other hereditaments and all the estate right title interest inheritance use trust property claim and demand whatsoever both at Law and in Equity of them the said Hemy Viscount Bolingbroke and Henry St.John (party hereto) respectively of in and to the said premises and eveiy part and parcel thereof

APPENDIX 3

The families of HISCOCK and HOWARD

The name Hiscock - or any of the variants of the name that appear in the parish registers - does not appear in the Tax Censuses of 1697, 1700, or 1702 [WRO 212B/7202A/7a, b, c], but the marriage of an Anne Hiscox took place at Lydiard Tregoze in 1707. The first baptism that is recorded in the registers for a Hiscock took place in 1773, when Nathaniel the son of William Hiscox was baptised. Nathaniel remained in the parish until his death in 1847, and is described in the Census Schedules as a labourer. He had a numerous family, the eldest surviving son being Robert Hiscocks (baptised 1809, living 1881). Robert must have found favour with 'the big house', for he acted as gamekeeper to Lord Bolingbroke for many years and had, as a result, The Brook as his home. (He is described as gamekeeper in successive Census Schedules from 1841 to 1871.)

Robert Hiscocks married, in 1832, a local girl, Mary Strange, and the parish registers record the baptism of five daughters and two sons of the marriage. The eldest daughter, Elizabeth, according to the 1851 Census, was a living-in kitchen maid, employed by Orby Wombwell, the tenant of Lydiard Park. She was then aged eighteen. At Lydiard Tregoze in 1857 Robert and Mary's second daughter, Susannah, married Robert Howard, blacksmith, of Lydiard Millicent: and it was then-daughter Mary Emily Elizabeth Howard - known as Bessie - who became Viscountess Bolingbroke.

The elder of the two sons of Robert and Mary Hiscocks was baptised Giles, no doubt as a gesture of appreciation for the life and work of the rector at that time, Giles Daubeney. Giles Hiscocks died at the age of twelve. The second son, Henry, was more usually known as Harry, for so he appears in the parish registers for the baptism of two of his children. Harry was appointed gamekeeper by Lord Bolingbroke to work alongside his father and, later, to supersede him in the position. He and his wives, for he married twice, and his children shared The Brook with his parents. By his first marriage Harry had a daughter Maiy who went into service at Lydiard Park before her marriage to Albert Fisher of Purton. The eldest of Harry's sons, William Robert, became a third-generation gamekeeper at Lydiard Park, living-in according to the 1891 Census. William's younger brothers Tom and Edward

were apprenticed as carpenters according to the 1891 Census. It was this Edward, first cousin to Lady Bolingbroke, who figures largely in the story of the St.John family after the death of Lord Bolingbroke in 1899. The local tradition has it that he was working in the railway workshops in Swindon when the news came of the death of the old Lord. On hearing the news he is said to have downed his tools and announced to his work-mates that he was never going to work again.

Edward Hiscock was generally referred to as Lord Teddy, especially by those who found him disagreeable. He gentrified himself, acted as manager for the estate and protector for his cousin Lady Bolingbroke. His generation dropped the final 's' from their surname. He was one of the two executors of his cousin's will. He continued to live, unmarried, at The Brook (or Brook Cottage, as it was then known) until his death on 18 September 1945. His estate was sworn at £215 19s. 8d., and probate was granted to his friend Mrs Mabel Florence Lewis, the sole executor.

About 1880 Harry Hiscocks's wife died and he married again. Of this second marriage there were four sons, the second of whom, given the old family name of Nathaniel, was prevailed upon to write an account of his early years for *Report 5* (1972). An extract from this account is reproduced as Appendix 4 to this article.

APPENDIX 4

Extracts from 'My early days' by Nathaniel Hiscock, *Report 5* (1972) pp, 11-21.

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

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

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

[Nathaniel's mother died when he was eight, and he went to live with his half-sister Mary in Purton. He returned to live at The Brook when he was eleven to help look after the house, his father, and his brother Ted. He left Hook school when he was thirteen.]

So now to work. My first regular job was at Lord Bolingbroke's for a while, doing anything that was wanted. Gardening with Mr Chantler (don't touch the fruit), sawing wood with Mr Selby - lots of it as there was no coal it was a full-time job, any trees or branches falling in the woods had to be cut

by hand and stacked, then helping in the stables cleaning out with the Groom - Mr George Beasant - and sweeping up the Avenue and Yard, a full day's job. Then, of course, there was ferreting for rabbits with my eldest half-brother William. He knew every rabbit burrow in the estate and my golly I had to work. It was a nasty job but the rabbits had to be kept down. In the big woods we used long nets and drove the rabbits to them. Sometimes we went over to Bynol on the Downs, the Keeper there was Mr Love, a great character who afterwards lived at Hook. There were some big woods there on the side of the hill. When we finished the day the rabbits had to be cleaned and packed ready for market. Then there was partridge shooting, walking miles to drive the birds towards the guns. I sometimes carried a game basket strapped to my back which was agony. Then there was the pheasant shooting - beating through the woods and hedgerows, getting the game home and laying them out for inspection by Lord Bolingbroke who was not able at that time to get about much. I have a little story here -

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

Before I go any further I must mention a few personalities I remember. The Postman, Mr Mark Morse, he came out from Swindon every day and went back in the evening. He had a veiy long round, and when he retired it was reported in the *North Wilts Herald* that he had covered a distance equal to *nine times round the world*. He earned a Horn which he sounded as he was passing and we had to ran if we wanted to fetch or send a letter. During the day he used to make and mend boots at Lydiard Millicent. Then there was Mr Huggins, the Vicarage Gardener - he had the trick of wagging his ears which used to amuse us. The Sexton was Mr Jack Hunt. In Church we had to sit in front of him. During the singing of the last hymn he used to send us youths out to harness the horses into the carriages and traps for the owners. He then came out and took the *tips*, perhaps giving us a few coppers for our trouble. Sometimes we tricked him, and received the full tip ourselves. He would also get us into the Belfry to help chime the bells and toll the single bell for Service.

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

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

[After several local jobs] My step-brother Ted had taken over Flaxlands Farm so I went there to help at 8/- per week, the most I had been given up to now. Father gave me a shilling a week pocket money (riches). There was plenty to do. I had to be there at 6 a.m., 3 miles from our house, and I got home at about 6.30 p.m., not much time for fun.

[Nathaniel Hiscock's reminiscences continued with his time in the railway workshops in Swindon, the army, and end with his entry into the Royal Marines at the age of nineteen. There is only one reference in the latter part of his article to Lydiard Park - 'There was another Estate Underkeeper and General Man, Mr James Love, who lived at Hook - a great fellow full of fun and jokes.']

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CORRIGENDA

Report 30 - p.46 1.6, for 'Rio de Janeiro', read 'Brazil'

Report 33 - p.34 11. 1 and 2, for 'Sir Hemy Fumese', read 'Sir Robert Fumese'

SHORTERNOTES

NEW MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE

From 1994 onwards the committee of the Friends had the great benefit of having Tom Hassall as a member. He was Secretary to the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, and, when the Commission moved from London to Swindon, he joined our committee and brought his wisdom and vast experience to our discussions. Now that he has completed his service to the Commission, he has resigned from our committee, though happily he has continued his membership of the Friends. His place on the committee has been taken by Robert Hook, also based in Swindon, who is the Outreach and Professional Training Officer of English Heritage within the policy unit of the Archaeological and Survey Department. We are delighted to have him as a new member of our committee

'THANK-YOU's and PRESENTATIONS

At the end of the Service of Thanksgiving and Rededication of the East and West Windows on 28 January 2001, the Rev. Ann Mackenzie took the opportunity of making presentations, with suitable expressions of thanks, to several members of the church. Firstly, she asked Joan Rummung, Jean Brock, Pat Williams, Betty Pleasant, and Marie Hunter to come to the front for each one to receive a bouquet of flowers. During the year there are many visitors to our church, and coach parties need to be welcomed, shown round the building, and provided with refreshments. As members of the Mothers' Union, these ladies have been busy in this way. As a result of their catering for visitors to the house and the church, they had raised the sum of £1,360, which, with an additional £70 in donations, has been given to the church and the appeal for the restoration of the windows. Secondly, she thanked Ron Brock who had put in a great deal of effort in coordinating, on behalf of the church council, the process which led to the repair and conservation of the two windows from the time when they were first vandalised.

The third presentation was to Bob Hatch, who has recently retired from the post of verger. He was appointed in Canon Willetts' time, in 1954, and served for forty-six years, during all of which time he looked after the churchyard and the church building. When, early in the 1960s, he took self-employment, he placed his considerable carpentry skills at the disposal of both Lydiard churches, replacing floorboards and joists, damaged by wet rot, and putting the woodwork of both churches in good order.

Forty-six years of voluntary service is noteworthy. What makes his service even more important is that our church stands in an isolated and vulnerable position. It is good that national grant-making bodies have recognised the importance of the building and its monuments in making grants for conservation work, but such conservation work is jeopardised unless there is someone like Bob Hatch who regularly visited during the week to clean and effect minor repairs. Visitors can enjoy looking at monuments in their restored state: only Bob can say just how much extra cleaning and clearing-up each job entailed for him. The church and churchyard have richly benefited from Bob's care. His willing and pleasant manner have made visitors welcome, and the Sunday congregations have enjoyed a building made ready for them, week after week.

SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER 2000

The year 2000 saw fresh displays installed at Lydiard. Easter began with a new permanent exhibition in the Dining Room where a lavish **display of replica puddings** recreates a Victorian dinner party. Thanks are due to Waddesdon Manor for supplying some of the extraordinarily realistic ice creams and sugared fruits which have helped turn the dining table into a real talking point.

In the Library a new **character figure of Vernon St. John** as a small boy can now be seen perched on the sofa. The model, which joins those of his parents, is based on a photograph of Vernon wearing a sailor suit, which can also be seen in the House. The original picture is one of the many family photographs in the Lydiard Park archive.

Costume displays drew many visitors to the house during the summer when period clothes **from film and BBC TV productions of Jane Austen novels** could be seen throughout the State Rooms. Dresses worn by actresses Kate Winslett and Emma Thompson drew a lot of attention and encouraged many first-time visitors to the House.

Acquisitions were modest in 2000. However, with the help of proceeds from our high days and holidays cafe in the house we were able to purchase several engravings. The most interesting of these are a stipple engraving of the Duchess of Devonshire after Bartolozzi after a drawing by Diana Beauclerk and a 1752 view of Battersea parish church and manor house. Both of these pictures are now on display.

One of the really pleasant developments in 2000 has been the involvement of **volunteers from the Upper Thames branch of NADFAS**. They have formed into several teams, each pursuing a particular project which will assist in the knowledge, interpretation, and care of Lydiard Park and the collections here. We now have regular groups busily transcribing documents, marking artefacts with museum numbers, researching servant life, and embroidering seat covers.

Lydiard's museum assistants continue to provide a welcoming environment for all our visitors. They also deal with many public enquiries, do much 'behind the scenes' work, and ensure the house always looks well cared for. We were very sorry to say goodbye to Mary Golding this year who has done a super job at Lydiard but has many other calls on her time. Mary will be back to join Lydiard's team of special cover assistants in 2001. Teresa Squires has now joined Janet Porter on the front line!

The programme for 2001 is equally full. **The Lady Diana Spencer (Beauclerk) room** will be further developed, and elsewhere there will be additional portraits, new Victorian displays, and rare objects displayed for the first time. The magnificent Empire-style mechanical desk will also return from restoration with spectacular results. **Shakespeare in the Park** (21 st/22nd July) will be 'The Taming of the Shrew', and the popular Spring flower displays and Christmas decorations in December will feature as usual. **What's On Leaflets** will be distributed at all the Friends in May 2001.

Hoping everyone has a happy year.

Sarah Finch-Crisp

Keeper of Lydiard House

P.S. Those of you who have collected the Reports of The Friends of Lydiard Tregoz will be aware of their importance in contributing to the knowledge of Lydiard Park and the people connected with it. All unwanted back copies are always welcome here as there is a steady public demand for them.

Friends of Lydiard Tregoz
12 May 2001