
Somerset Snippets

The Newsletter of the Friends of Somerset Archives

Issue 9

April 2007

From the Editor

Since our last letter our members have enjoyed some interesting events including the AGM and Quiz night and a visit to Glastonbury Rural Life Museum where a talk was given by Ann Heeley.

Because of storm damage to Anne and Robin's house the AGM was held at Wilton Village Hall. In keeping with tradition the AGM was very brief, the same officers remaining in post for this year. Each officer gave a report of their responsibilities and how the various projects were progressing. Anne Leamon, as Chairman, spoke of how she felt that the Friends have a positive part to play in helping make Somerset's valuable archives available to the public. She also felt that we could be of help to the Record Office despite having to abandon the idea of mentoring due to County Council policy which prevented us from carrying out a useful survey to see if this service was required. Concern was also raised over the cut in opening hours of the



Record Office, which the majority of users thought was a step in the wrong direction. Dr. Janet Tall who, as a member of the Friends as well as being the Senior Archivist for Somerset, was in attendance gave us an explanation of cuts, which we all appreciated.

With the main business over it was time to turn to the important task of eating an excellent and enjoyable buffet that Anne and Robin, in spite of coping with a damaged roof and flooded house, managed to supply which we all enjoyed. The evening ended with an entertaining quiz relating to Somerset prepared by Esther and Jane. This was up to the same very high standard as last year.

Finally I have to tell you that this will be my last letter as Editor. I am withdrawing from all the secular organisations with which I am involved due to pressure of work in the parish of Kewstoke where I am Reader. The Diocese of Bath and Wells is to lose a number of Ordained Ministers by 2012 and, in some cases, parish boundaries will be changed. We must be vigilant about what happens to any records which the churches are holding. I hope to still find time to contribute to the newsletter and support the Friends in other ways.

Grace Rubery

Transcribers Tales

Whilst transcribing the Tithe Apportionments for the dual parishes of Stocklinch Magdalene and Ottersey I was reminded of a story from my childhood. In the 1970's the "higher" church was not used, and when my friend and I asked why this was, we were told that on the death of

rebellion of 1685; he was also made the 1st Baron of Wem. When King James fled England in 1688, Jefferys also tried to flee, but was forced to take protective custody in the Tower of London, where he died in 1689.

Originally he was buried in the Chapel Royal of Saint Peter Ad Vincula in the Tower; his body was moved to St Mary Aldermanbury in 1692. However after his death an effigy of Jefferys had been beheaded and burnt in London. Could this be the source of the tale, did his family fear his corpse might suffer the same fate and tried secretly to move it? The people of Stocklinch would have witnessed the Judges punishments as Charles Speke from Ashill was hanged from a tree in Ilminster Square



The Church at Stocklinch Ottersey

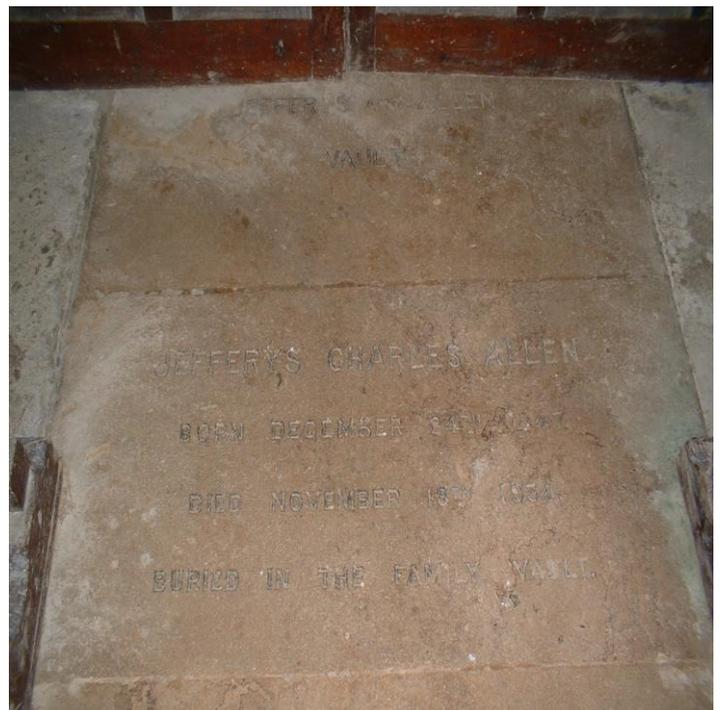
“Judge” Jefferys his head had been removed from his body and was buried at the church and because of this the locals avoided the church. It had been finding the name Jefferys in the Tithe Apportionments that brought this story to mind, could it be true?

Robin Bush in his book, Somerset The complete Guide, says the tale is ‘spurious’ and the only link is the coincidence of the Lord’s names, although his version is that of a headless body being buried there. A booklet produced by the Churches Conservation Fund agrees there is no link despite local tradition. However another source in Ralph Whitlock’s book Somerset states that “Judge” Jefferys’ sister Mary lived at Stocklinch Ottersey. She had his body brought to Somerset where it was waylaid by locals at Taunton, who hanged the corpse and cut off its head, the body being recovered at night and interred in the family vault at Stocklinch

George Jefferys was born in 1648 in a royalist protestant Denbighshire family; he rose to success under King James II, and became known as the “hanging” Judge after the Monmouth

Whether or not there is any truth in the tale or not, what remains fascinating to me is how much Judge Jefferys was still hated in Somerset three hundred years after the rebellion.

The church is well worth a visit and was unlocked



The Jeffery and Allen Family vault in the Church



The former Inn at Ilford Bridges Stocklinch

when we viewed it; it is maintained by the Churches Conservation Fund.

Another story involving a property in the parish is that of the Ilford Bridges Inn, which has been a private house for many years. According to my father, during the civil war a group of Royalist soldiers were resting on a warm day on the water meadows behind the Inn when a troop of Parliamentarian soldiers swept down from Stocklinch and killed them all. Also of interest in the tithe apportionments is the private house known as Old Way Gate, this was a former toll house on the busy road to Ilminster about half a mile from the Inn, back toward Ilton.

Susan Law 2007

Records of the Somerset Light Infantry

On Thursday the 7th December 2006 a number of the Friends gathered at the Record Office in Taunton to listen to this talk by archivist Liz Grant. Liz began by telling us that she had joined the staff of the Somerset Record Office just over three and a half years ago as project archivist for 'The Records of Honour' project. This was a Heritage Lottery Funded project to catalogue the regimental papers of the Somerset Light Infantry, to help publicise the archive through exhibitions and compile a pictorial regimental history.

From the informative talk about the regiments past history we learned that the Somerset Light Infantry traces its origins to the year 1685. The Earl of Huntingdon created the new regiment in the same month that the Duke of Monmouth was leading his rebellion in this county.

The Regiment's first action was to guard the prisoners captured after the defeat of Monmouth's army at the Battle of Sedgemoor in July 1685. Over the next few years they fought against the Jacobites in Scotland, against Irish Catholics, in 1701 in Holland against the French and in 1704 at the siege of Gibraltar against the Spanish. This gave the regiment its first battle honour.

The archive of the Somerset Light Infantry that is held at the Somerset Record Office is a large collection which fills over 100 boxes. There are over three and a half thousand items, of which 1800 are photographs.

Unfortunately, the individual service records are not held at the SRO. The pre 1922 are held at the National Archives, whilst the post 1922 records are still with the MOD as all these records were created and maintained by the Ministry of Defence Those held at the National Archives are free for access; however, you do need to know the regiment of service and approximate dates of enlistment and demobilisation.

Probably of most interest is the photographic collection dating from the 1860s through to the present day. Those beginning at the start of the 20th Century and up until the outbreak of the Second World War are very well represented, with many images of each company and battalion. At a minimum the photographs will give an indication of how your ancestor lived, the uniforms worn, areas of service and if you are really lucky an ancestor may be named.

There are also some diaries. Following is an extract from a diary of Arthur Cook describing the first day of the Battle of the Somme

"It is a lovely morning and the birds are singing...The bombardment is now terrific the German lines are one cloud of smoke, that it seems to be impossible for anyone to live in such a hell, it's a wonderful sight. We were able to stand on the parapet to get a better view, there is not a sign of life in front and no response from the German Artillery, we have that to come I expect. The men are in excellent spirits and eager to make a move, after being so long in the trenches. At 7.20 am a huge mine was exploded under the Hawthorn Redoubt just to our right front, it made our trenches rock. Punctually at 7.30 am the attack was launched, the R.Bs. [Rifle Brigade] led

[Second Lieutenant] Tilley has fallen, also platoon Sergeant, this leaves me now in charge...this within 5 minutes of our advance...I led the platoon in to the German first line, and after a breather went in to the German second line, here I lost control owing to the men rushing from one shell hole to another in their advance. The ground is littered with our dead...The clearing parties are not doing their work properly in clearing the trenches of all Germans, as here and there parties of Jerrys are popping up and throwing grenades at us from all angles...It is impossible to get any further, it is said some reached their objectives and are now cut off from us...Col Hopkins of the Seaforths is doing



the 11th Bde attack. Troops could be seen advancing in perfect skirmishing order, as far as the eye could see left and right. What a sight it was to watch, everything going smoothly with no resistance, the first line had nearly reached the German front line, when all at once machine guns opened up with terrific murderous fire. Our men were timed to advance 10 minutes after the R.B.s, but so eager were they to get on, that they left soon after the R.B.s, and consequently were caught in the open by these guns. A and B Coys were the leading Coys followed by C and D in close support. M.G. [machine gun] fire was directed on us from both flanks, men are falling fast just like skittles, my platoon officer, 2Lt

excellent work here, he is walking around giving encouragement to all, he saved a dangerous situation when someone gave the order to retire, there was an immediate panic and some 4 of 5 hundred retired, it was a very difficult job to stop the whole lot retiring and it was only by a bugler of the Seaforths sounding the 'charge' that saved the situation...I have never seen so many dead in such a small area before, in places where enfilade [enfilade] fire caught them they are 3 and 4 deep on top of each other, the shell holes are full of wounded and no hopes of getting them back...The Germans were now trying to force us out of their trenches, we got together what was left of us now and by collecting bombs from the dead

and what Jerry left behind we managed to hold on for another 2 or 3 hours, then the supply of bombs gave out and no more could be got, the Germans then gradually drove us back inch by inch through their superior supply of bombs, again someone gave the order to retire and again men started to retire, we stopped this as every man was wanted in the trench, We are a very small number here now and men are being killed and wounded in all direction, it is difficult to walk in the trench without walking on the dead...I have a terrible thirst caused by the fumes from the shells, the wounded are also crying out for water, but none is available...the sight is terrible, nothing but dead and wounded all around you...Our troops are gradually retiring leaving a very small garrison to hold the trench...now we have to retire to the German front line and try and hold that with the rifle and machine gun, but it is bombs we want, as Jerry is bound to advance up the communication trenches...This is getting pretty hot here now but our orders are to hang on to what we have until midnight, when we are being relieved, but we seem to be about the only British troops around here my party numbered 9 men. I think I can hold these people as long as the bombs last, but when they are gone, I don't know what we shall do...The

enemy artillery has now started and are dropping shells thick and fast all around us...We held on until relieved about 11 pm, an officer then said we may go back, we didn't need telling again, we had had our belly full...As soon as we started to go back jerry dropped a barrage in No Mans Land...The night got blacker and blacker after each blinding flash...I jumped from shell hole to shell hole, fell head-long over dead bodies and barb wire, my clothes was being torn to ribbons, I thought I should never reach our trenches and when I did I fell in sprawling not being able to see them in the dark. The next thing I saw was a form standing over me with a bayonet pointing in a threatening manner at me, I began to wonder if I had got into Jerry's trench, I should not have been surprised if I had, but it was OK, it was a British sentry, he thought it was a German came tumbling in, as he had received orders there were no British troops in front, I had a very narrow escape there from being shot by our own men."

Liz gave us a very professional and interesting talk that was enjoyed by everyone. Most of us leaving have learnt a lot of new information relating to our "local" regiment.

Items For Sale

We have a number of books and CDs that Paul Mansfield has kindly donated to the Friends for sale to help raise funds. We have the following titles.

Norris' Taunton Journal 1725 to 1727. Indexed and filmed by Paul Mansfield. A full facsimile of the original with an index on one cd-rom for £4.00 post free to the U.K. and £4.60 overseas.

Books

Bridgwater (St. Mary) Baptisms 1745 to 1799 - £6.00 including UK postage

A Catalogue of Unfortunate Incidents – Inquests and Death by Misadventure in 18th Century Somerset and Surrounds. - £6.00 including UK postage

Please make cheques payable to The Friends of Somerset Archives and send it to The Cottage, Manor Terrace, Paignton, Devon, TQ3 3RQ.

Thank you once again to Paul for this kind gesture

The mother's story – should we always believe it?

We all know the sinking feeling we get when we come across an ancestor's baptismal entry such as this: *Stogumber 14 April 1621 William Phelps base child of Elizabeth Phelps was baptized.* How do we find out the name of William's father if there is no bastardy examination or bastardy order in the parish records?

Turn to the Quarter Sessions rolls and order books held at the Somerset Record Office. Many of the rolls for the period 1607-1617 and 1665-1750 have been calendared in detail although there are some gaps in the 1670's and 1680's. The order books are not calendared in this detail so you need to search around the time of the parish register entry.

In the order book under the section for Taunton Sessions held in July 1621 is a copy of an order made by two of the Justices to the effect that they had found Lawrence Cridland of Stogumber to be the reputed father of Elizabeth Phelps' child. *"We do order that the said Lawrence Cridland, who in our opinions is the reputed father of the said child, which we are inclined to believe, partly because the said Cridland failed in making his purgation in the spiritual court and partly by reason of other circumstances... shall pay weekly...the sum of fourteen pence"*.

All well and good, you may think, but was it always the case that the men accused of fathering these children were, in fact, guilty? Did they have a chance to put their side of the case?

In April 1621 Katherine Rolston of Bishops Hull accused one Richard Lynde of being the father of her unborn child and went into some detail on where and when their encounters had taken place. The Justices examined Richard on the same day and he *"utterly denied the fact, and in discharge of himself appeached [accused] one Andrew Aplyn of Bradford...and produced certain witnesses against the said Aplyn"*

These witnesses included John Meare of Bradford who said that he has heard Aplyn say that Katherine should have his house after him and his

wife, Richard Waterman who had heard him say that he would be worth the said Katherine £20 (presumably that he would give her this amount), James Parsons who saw Aplyn kiss her at haymaking time and play with her in her Master's mead and Jane Torry who heard Aplyn say he had his wife's permission to beget a maid with child and would marry her when his wife was dead and there would be no shame.

Aplyn then had his say; his version of events was that the father of the child was Katherine's master, one Peter Davie. George and William Bullen of Bishops Hull gave evidence that *"Aplyn reported unto them at sowing of pease, where he did mark the ground as they ploughed the same, that Peter Davie did love his maid better than his wife and did lie with her in the hay sallet, in the barn, and in other places, and that he had begotten his maid with child and Richard Hynde should father it"*.

Whom would you believe in these circumstances? In this case, it was the expectant mother's version that carried the day. On 22nd December 1621, some eight months later, the Justices ordered Richard Hynde to pay 8d a week for the support of his child but can we really be sure they were right?

Or take the case of Isabel Hilpe of Wedmore who in 1612 named as the father of her unborn child a certain John Chapple alias Weaver of the parish of Mark. The Justices who heard the case were obviously of some doubt as to the truth of this and they called more witnesses to enquire further into the matter. As a result, they decided that one of two other men, Isabel's former master William Sachell and a fellow servant John Cocke, were equally likely to be the father. However as Isabel would not change her story they reluctantly had to order that John Chapple alias Weaver should pay 2d a week from the time the child was born into a fund which would be used to apprentice it when it was old enough. However, to make sure Isabel did not benefit, they ordered she was not to receive any of this money nor was she permitted to ask the Overseers for relief. They also ordered that *"for the example of others to avoyd the like offence" Isabel, once she had had the child, was to be taken*

to the nearest market town, “stripped from the neck to the guirdle and openlie whipped thorrow the same towne on the markt daie”.

There is definite evidence of a mother deliberately misleading the Justices in the examination of Mary Hill of Mark in 1683. She said “*one Thomas Williams of Mark...had carnal knowledge of her body twice about Christmas last past at the house of Mary Warman...and that noe man else had ever any carnal knowledge of her body, but the said Thomas Williams*”. However at the foot of the page is a note by the examining Justice, Richard Crosse. “*The said Mary Hill came before me [saying] that she had wronged the said Thomas Williams; when I rebuked her for it, she said that John Allen persuaded her to name the said Williams saying he should be undone if she did name him, because he had been once before in the like trouble & after threatened her if she did name him, which caused her to take a false oath...*”

Likewise on 17 February 1703 Mary Denmead of Frome was examined as to the father of her base son, born the previous Midsummer. She had been examined at the time and had refused to name anyone and was committed to the House of Correction at Shepton Mallet. The examination

goes on “*Having been there for some time she was brought before George Long Esq...before whom upon oath she did declare that Henry Wills of Westbury under the Plaine in the County of Wilts was the father of her said base child*”.

However, the examination goes on “*really he [i.e. Henry Wills] had never had the carnal knowledge of this examinants body but that Paul Denmead of Frome her natural and lawful brother was the true father...and also saith that the reason why this examinant did not name the true father...was because she was ashamed to own the real father thereof he being her own brother and therefore feared they would both suffer death ...and that this examinant doth further say that she hath highly injured the said Henry Mills in laying the said child unto him, and is heartily sorry for so doing*”.

The moral of these stories is that unfortunately you can't believe all you read in bastardy examinations and there must be many family historians tracing a male line that isn't actually their own.

Sue Berry

Future Events - 2007

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| Tues 15th May | Bridgwater & Taunton Canal with Tony Haskell, Somerset Record Office at 7.30pm |
| Sun 15th July | North Curry a talk and walk around the village with Angela Dix, local historian and author. Meet at North Curry Church at 11.00am. We will be having a break for lunch so bring a picnic or visit a pub. |
| Sat 8th September | A Walk around Trull with Tom Mayberry finishing at Chilliswood |
| Tues 31st October | The Shadow of the Workhouse with Pat Hase at the Somerset Record Office at 7.30 pm |
| Thurs 20th December | Non-Conformist Somerset – Tanya Begwell & Esther Ormerod. 7.30 pm at the Somerset Record Office |

Please book with Bernard Welchman at B@bdwfh.com or 01803 401371

New Accessions

Parish records and transcripts

Additional parish records for Bishops Lydeard (1896-1989), Burtle (1841-1993), Claverham (1906-1973), Curry Mallet (1838-1981), Doultling (2002), Lyncombe St. Luke (1881-2000), Mells (1995-2007), Rimpton (1824-1982), Stogumber (1978-1999), West Hatch (1980-2005)

Bridgwater St. Mary: transcript of parish registers 1745-1799

United Parish of Postlebury: parish records for Cloford, Marston Bigot, Nunney, Postlebury, Wanstrow and Witham Friary, with records of the Frome Deanery Synod, 1915-2006

Stanton Drew: digital images of parish registers (D\P\sta.d/2/1/1-7)

Withycombe: burial and grave index, [1605-2006]

Monumental inscriptions for 69 Somerset parishes (see DD\X\MDT/201-270)

Batcombe: monumental inscriptions, 2007

Nonconformist records

Cheddar Valley Methodist Church: preaching plans, 1952-1960

Station Road Baptist Church, Clevedon: marriage registers, 1967-2002

Badcox Lane Baptist Church, Frome: transcript and index of membership lists, [1807-1923]

Three boxes of records of Frome Baptist Church, 1696-1989

Three boxes of records of the Weston super Mare Free Church Women's Council, including their hostel for women and girls, 1911-1993

Local government records

Banwell Parish Council minutes and letter books, 1894-1971

Frome Town Council minutes, 2001

Goathurst Parish Council minutes and charity records, 1952-2004

Litton Parish Council records, 1839-1980

Winsham Parish Council minutes, 1984-1991

Drainage records for Axbridge Rural District Council, Portishead Urban District Council and Weston super Mare Borough Council, 1930s-1970s

Additional records of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary, 1900-1974

Electoral registers for Yeovil constituency, 1966-1983

School records

Records of St. Brandon's School, Clevedon, 1982-1986

Records of the Assistant Masters Association (of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers), 1955-1973

Business records

Large deposit (27 boxes) of deeds and associated papers from Bartlett, Gooding and Weelen Solicitors of Glastonbury, 18th-20th century

Clubs and societies' records

Minutes and associated papers of the Exmoor Rural Arch Chapter of the Royal Arch Masons, 1912-1999

Records relating to the Highbridge History Project, late 19th – early 20th century

Yearbooks and published history of the Somerset Beekeepers and Beekeeping Association, 1917-2006

Records of the Somerset County Bowling Association, 1914-2006

Large deposit (30 boxes) of Women's Institute records, 1924-2006

Military records

Index of 7th Battalion muster roll, [1914-1917]

Estate records

Additional estate papers of the Phelips family of Montacute, mid-19th – mid-20th century

Large deposit (30 boxes) of additional estate papers for the Harbin and Rawlins families of Newton Surmaville, c.1840-c.1950

Maps

Sketch map of the Dean and Chapter of Wells' lands at Woodborough Green, Winscombe, including mines, 17th Century

Map of Goathurst, showing lands of Sir Charles Kemeys Tynte, 1771

Watercolour by Harry Frier of a map of the Mendip mining area owned by the Somerset

Archaeological and Natural History Society, c.1875

Other records

Transcript of the casebook of John Westover, a 17th-century surgeon, with an unpublished account of his life, [1686]-1998

Exmoor Flood Memories: oral history recordings relating to the 1952 Lynmouth flood disaster, 2006

Research on the history of brewing in Rode, [late 19th century-2006]

Frome on Film DVD – a documentary of life in Frome, 2006

DVDs and interviews relating to the Somerset Home Guard, 2006

Contact Information

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Somerset Record Office Events

<i>Date</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Tuesday 17 April	Common Phrases in Latin and English	Tatworth Memorial Hall	10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.	£5(£4 concessions)
Monday 21 May	Sources for Family History	Somerset Record Office	10.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.	Free
Tuesday 26 June	How to Read Old Handwriting: a Palaeography Day Course	Coles Garden Meeting Room, Kilmersdon	10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.	£10 (£8 concessions)
Tuesday 3 July	Common Phrases in Latin and English	Somerset Record Office	10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.	£5(£4 concessions)
Monday 9 July	Sources for the History of your House	Somerset Record Office	10.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.	Free
Monday 10 September	Sources for Family History	Somerset Record Office	10.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.	Free
Tuesday 9 October	How to Read Old Handwriting: a Palaeography Day Course	Avenue Methodist Church, Minehead	10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.	£10 (£8 concessions)
Monday 12 November	Sources for the History of your House	Somerset Record Office	10.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.	Free
Saturday 1 December	How to Read Old Handwriting: a Palaeography Day Course	Somerset Record Office	10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.	£10 (£8 concessions)

For more information, and to book a place, please phone 01823 278805 or email archives@somerset.gov.uk

The Somerset Record Office is also holding – for one night only! – a Record Office Quiz. This will be on **Thursday 21 June**, starting at **7.30 p.m.** The questions will have a Somerset and West Country focus, and will include rounds on “then and now”, sport and leisure. For those of you who have braved the AGM quizzes, we are told that it will be easier than those! Entry is **free**, but donations towards the work of the Record Office are welcomed.

Friends of Somerset Archives New Project

Due to difficulties we are temporarily abandoning the parish register indexing project. However, we do have a new project to start and that is the digitisation of the “Settlement and Bastardy Index” that was compiled by Thelma Munckton, and others, a few years ago. This is an invaluable index for anyone interested in Social and Family History.

If you are interested in helping, you will receive a CD with images of the index cards for you to transcribe the information into a spreadsheet. It is quite straight forward, with no difficult early writing to struggle with!

Please volunteer to help by contacting me (Bernard Welchman) for further details at B@bdwfh.com or by telephone on 01803 401371. Alternatively, write to me at the address given earlier in the Newsletter