

**NORTH WANSDYKE
PAST
AND
PRESENT**



KEYNSHAM AND SALTFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

No. 2, 1988

NORTH WANSDYKE PAST & PRESENT

Journal of Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society

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EDITORIAL

The second volume of our *Journal* is concerned largely with the local history of Keynsham. This is not a matter of policy: it just happens that the papers submitted to the editor have covered subjects local to Keynsham. In future issues we hope to publish papers dealing with wider aspects of North Wansdyke history. So it is all the more welcome that Michael Bird's account of Jasper Tudor should set the Keynsham interest in the context of national and European history. It illustrates the value of local studies beyond their local interest. Thanks are due to Barbara J Lowe for providing at short notice her account of the excavations by Bristol Folk House Archaeological Society which located a tomb in Keynsham Abbey which is very likely that of Jasper Tudor.

Local historians continue to be concerned that the County of Avon does not have a Record Office. The need was urged at the time of local government reorganisation in the 1970s, but the politicians were unconcerned. It was obvious that this neglect would lead to a crisis in local government offices in the county. Users of Bristol Record Office will have been aware of the pressures building up. Wansdyke residents may have noticed reports in the press that some Wansdyke District Council records have been transferred to Somerset County Record Office at Taunton. Those records are now in safe hands, at least, but Wansdyke historians will regret the time and expense of travel and the further pressure of space for researchers at Taunton. Sooner or later provision will have to be made for the safe keeping of records in Avon. It has been suggested that Ashton Court would make a suitable centre for local history studies. If so, this might house some of the records to which local historians would like to have ready access.

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JASPER TUDOR, 1431-1495

A Medieval Enigma

Michael C E Bird

On December 15th 1495 Jasper Tudor, Duke of Bedford, Earl of Pembroke, Knight of the Garter, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Justice of South Wales, whilst at his Manor of Thornbury in Gloucestershire, made his will. He was quite specific as to the place of his interment: "My body to be buried in the monastery of our Lady at Keynsham, in the said county where I will that my tomb be honourably made after the estate where unto it has pleased God to call me and thereon to be employed C marks (one hundred marks, then the equivalent of £66)". He also said that certain lands in various parts of the country should provide an annual sum of £40 for four priests to sing perpetually in Keynsham Abbey for the wele of his soul and the souls of his father, mother, brother Edmund and the souls of others my predecessors. Among his other bequests was the instruction to sell his second gown of cloth of gold to have a cope or vestment made for use at the house of the Gray Friars at Harford East where his father was interred. To every parish church into which his body was carried between Thornbury and Keynsham, 20 shillings and two torches. He died, at Thornbury, eleven days later on Boxing Day, December 26.

In the following year, King Henry VII and his Queen paid an official visit to Bristol and thanked the Mayor and his brethren very much for their good offices at his uncle's funeral. The then Town Clerk of Bristol recorded that the Mayor, Willhelmus Regent and his brethren with 2,000 men on horseback and all dressed in black gowns met the cortege at Kingswood and escorted it to Keynsham for burial. So who was this Jasper Tudor who included in his coat of arms the English royal standard thought he had more right to use the French fleur de lys that he incorporated with it? And why did he choose, specifically, to be buried at Keynsham?

Jasper's mother was Katherine de Valois, the youngest daughter of Charles VI of France and his queen Isabeau of Bavaria. Isabeau was a woman of very easy virtue and Charles suffered bouts of madness and it was in the royal family's retreat, the Hotel de Saint Paul in Paris that Katherine was born on October 27th, 1401. She had a very hard life as the royal children were half starved, filthy and left to the mercy of staff who had no wages or money for food. The English Prince of Wales, later

Henry V, courted all of her sisters but it was Katherine that he eventually married and by all accounts it was a love match. So on 3rd June, 1420, Henry V married Katherine. She was eighteen, her husband thirty-two. On the 6th December, 1421, their son, later Henry VI, was born but within a year Henry V had died, just after his 35th birthday, and Katherine, not yet twenty-one, was left a widow with an eight months old baby. Soon the new baby King was put into the charge of a nurse and a governess and for the next thirteen years little is recorded of Katherine's movements. We do know, however, that during this period she was swept off her feet by a swashbuckling young Welshman, Owen Tudor, who had acquitted himself well as a soldier with Henry V. Although much was done to prove an heroic ancestry he was never sufficiently affluent to afford a knighthood. The liaison between them resulted first in the birth of Jasper's elder brother, Edmund, at Hadham in 1430 and a year later Jasper was born at Hatfield. There was also another brother, Owen, who disappears from the scene and became a monk. The liaison was an acute embarrassment and Katherine was sent to the Abbey of Bermondsey where she gave birth to a daughter, Margaret, in the late summer of 1436. Ill in body and mind, for Margaret survived only for a few days, Katherine whose secret association with the commoner had been found out and her little boys Jasper and Edmund, aged five and six being taken away from her, died on 3rd January 1437.

The two boys were looked after by Katherine de la Pole, the Abbess at Barking but were completely ignored by the court, so much so that Katherine de la Pole who was the sister of the Earl of Suffolk, petitioned the King in 1440 for some means to pay for their maintenance. Henry VI, who was a kind young man, came to their aid and arranged for them to be put in the care of priests and brought up as befitted his half brothers. Owen, their father, seemed to have no interest in them and on Katherine's death he had been thrown into Newgate, however, he escaped the same year and was to prove quite a thorn in the establishment's flesh. On the twelfth day of Christmas 1449, Jasper, who was then eighteen, and his brother Edmund, were knighted. On his twenty-first birthday he was made Earl of Pembroke and Edmund, Earl of Richmond and at the parliament at Redding they were both declared legitimate, so legalizing Owen and Katherine's marriage and regularizing both Jasper and Edmund's position. Henry VI had married Margaret of Anjou in 1445 and she turned out to be very strong willed which was just as well in view of Henry's inherent mental weakness. When Jasper was twenty-five his brother Edmund married Lady Margaret Beaufort who had been Jasper's and Edmund's ward. Lady Margaret was just twelve years old and the following year Edmund died leaving his young wife pregnant. Their son was born on 28th

January 1457 and was later to become Henry VII. Jasper returned to Wales to continue Edmund's unfinished task of strengthening the King's South Western base and to look after Lady Margaret, who was barely fourteen, and her infant son. He became more a father than an uncle to the baby. His military skills were beginning to become apparent with the rebuilding of the walls of Tenby in 1457. The political situation deteriorated in 1460. The King, who had become aware of the dangers wrote to Jasper, among others, on 9th August. The date of the letter is interesting because the King had already been defeated at the Battle of Northampton on 10th July. In this battle the Duke of Buckingham was killed and was succeeded by his grandson and it was this new Duke of Buckingham who later married Catherine Woodville who eventually became Jasper's wife after Buckingham's execution.

The Battle of Mortimer's Cross in the following year saw Jasper defeated and in flight into Wales. His father, Owen, was captured after fleeing to Hereford. when Owen saw the axe and block he realised that he was to be executed and saying "the head that is to be on the block was the head that had lain on Queen Katherine's lap", he made his peace with God and died bravely. His body was buried in a chapel of the church of the Gray Friars at Hereford. It was after the Battle of Twoton in 1461 in which, incidentally, Jasper did not participate, that Jasper was stripped of all his lands and titles; he was considered a rebel and Pembroke Castle passed into the hands of the Herbert family. Jasper with the deposed Queen Margaret made an abortive invasion of England from Scotland but had to withdraw and then went to Brittany where he organised guerilla activity in Wales. The French King, Louis XI, looked upon him as a first cousin so he was welcomed by the court and was made a member of the King's household.

In 1468 he sailed with fifty men in three ships from Honfleur and the ships returned to France whilst he rode through North Wales and by the time he reached Denbigh his supporters numbered 2000. They ransacked and burned the town. Lord Herbert, who had taken over responsibility for Wales sent his brother Richard to completely overwhelm Jasper and he was forced to flee again. This defeat almost certainly resulted in Harlech Castle, which had been under siege by the Yorkists, surrendering and reports suggest that among the prisoners taken from the castle was Henry (Jasper's nephew who later became Henry VII). Henry returned to Pembroke Castle with the Herberts. The siege of Harlech had been a long one and it was during it that the song "Men of Harlech" was written.

Jasper returned again to France and since he could not win by force of arms he tried to achieve his aims, to reinstate Henry

VI to the throne, by arranging an alliance between Margaret of Anjou, Louis XI of France and the English Earl of Warwick who had been displaced by the King Edward IV marrying Elizabeth Woodville. Warwick stirring up trouble by arranging a revolt under Robin of Redesdale initiated a defeat of the King at Edgecote Field on 26th July 1469. Lord Herbert was captured and beheaded and Henry VI restored to the throne. Jasper's title of Earl of Pembroke was restored to him now that Herbert was dead and he found his nephew, Henry, safe and well and being looked after by Lady Herbert who had watched over his education. Jasper took Henry to court in London. Within two years, however, Warwick was killed at the Battle of Barnet and Edward became king once more. On the day of the battle Queen Margaret had landed at Weymouth. The Duke of Somerset and Earl of Oxford, who had escaped from the battlefield met up with Jasper in South Wales. After a meeting with Queen Margaret they decided to continue the armed struggle against King Edward. Jasper made for Wales to rally support. The Queen moved to Bath where a considerable number of supporters assembled. This was a very clandestine operation until a place of battle had been chosen. The King, however, got to know of her intention to cross the Severn and join with Jasper's forces but in the event it all went wrong and the battle took place at Tewkesbury before Jasper's forces could reach her. Jasper had little option but to return to Chepstow. The Queen was defeated and her eighteen year old son, the Prince of Wales, was murdered by the King's men. Queen Margaret was taken to London and put in the Tower. She was eventually ransomed and returned to France where she died in 1482. Jasper was furious that he could not get to the battle. The King sent Roger Vaughn to capture or kill him. Jasper hearing of his impending fate took Vaughn captive and beheaded him: then Jasper made for Pembroke. Here Morgan Thomas besieged Jasper but Morgan's brother David was a friend of Jasper's and together with Henry they made their escape to France in a boat supplied by the Mayor of Tenby. Violent storms off the coast blew the ship to Brittany and Jasper and Henry, who was now fourteen years old, presented themselves to Duke Francis and outlined their reasons for being there. He made them welcome at his court but it soon became obvious that they were in protective custody. They continued to live there for the next two or three years. Representations from Henry IV however, who was clearly worried by their existence, ended in Jasper being confined, first in the Castle of Sucinio and then in the Castle of Joscelyn and Henry in the castle at Elven. They were later reunited at Vannes. In 1476, Edward IV securely on the throne and anxious to have Henry and Jasper returned to England, sent Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath, to Brittany offering Henry his eldest daughter in marriage and a handsome dowry and Jasper the restoration of his Earldom, if they both returned to England

as friends. Both Jasper and Henry were deceived into believing that the offer was genuine and it was not until they were at St Malo and actually on board ship awaiting a favourable wind that Francis, duke of Brittany sent his court favourite, Pierre Landois, to tell Henry that he would be murdered on board ship and that the whole thing was an elaborate bargain struck between Edward IV and the Duke. The Duke had only gone along with it until he had received the money that Edward had promised him. Henry had been taken ill and it was up to Jasper and some spirited loyal servants to get the sick Henry to sanctuary in the monastery of St Malo. Edward was furious at having been cheated. Henry was now a virtual prisoner and to while away the time he spent many hours learning latin and as many academic studies as he could. In 1477 Henry is on record as having a conversation with the French historian Philip de Commines, in which he said that since the age of five he had either been a fugitive or a prisoner. This was the time that he had shared with Jasper. Henry was then twenty. Edward IV died in 1483 and Richard III became king. So once again Henry and Jasper sailed for England, this time from Paimpol with fifteen ships and five thousand Breton soldiers in an operation timed to coincide with an uprising in England led by the Duke of Buckingham. The atrocious weather caused the mission to invade to abort and most of Henry's ships returned to Dieppe, the soldiers going overland to Brittany. Two ships, however, one with Henry and Jasper on board, reached Poole. They sent a boat ashore to see if the Duke of Buckingham's rising had been successful but disbelieving intelligence that it had been a success and fearing to be caught again, Henry and Jasper sailed to Plymouth and then back to Dieppe. In fact, Richard III had overthrown Buckingham and he was beheaded at Salisbury on Sunday 2nd November 1483, and it was sometime between this date and 1485 that Jasper was to marry Buckingham's widow, Catherine Woodville. John Morton, in England, kept Jasper abreast of all the news and warned Jasper at Rennes of negotiations to return Henry and Jasper to England so they made their way to Angers where the young King Charles VIII financed their trip, once more, to Wales. Whilst Henry and Jasper had been together Jasper, although a superb horseman, a lover of hunting and a good soldier, was fully aware of his educational limitations and he encouraged Henry to educate himself and mad him conversant with the Arts.

Henry and Jasper set sail on the 1st August 1485 for Wales, and it was this expedition which culminated in the Battle of Bosworth three weeks later. There is no doubt that the people of Wales rallied to Jasper as he was immensely popular there. With Henry now King, Jasper reaped the due rewards of his efforts. On 27th October he was created Duke of Bedford and it is most likely that he married Catherine Woodville at this time. He was

appointed Chief Justice of South Wales, was granted all the castles and manors of Glamorgan, Abergavenny and Haverford West. He was also granted the manor of Stoke Gifford. He was also on the commission to prepare for the coronation and must have been involved in Henry's setting up of the King's own personal bodyguard of fifty Welsh archers, the Yeomen of the Guard.

A year later Jasper was made governor of all the mines in England and Wales, supervising the payment to the King of 5% of the pure silver and gold mined. In 1486 he visited Wales with the King and accompanied by a great company of Lords, Knights and soldiers, Jasper was given Sudeley Castle and, at his own expense, he had the North West tower of Llandaff Cathedral rebuilt.

Henry had married Elizabeth of York on 18th January 1486, and after the safe arrival of their first son, Arthur, in September, Henry said that Elizabeth would be crowned at her own coronation. Jasper carried the crown at this very grand, expensive and happy occasion, in 1487. In this year a rebellion broke out and Jasper rode with the King to put down the Pretender, Lambert Simnel, at the Battle of Stoke on 16th June.

Five years later Jasper was made Earl Marshal of England and in the same year 1492 Jasper and John, Earl of Oxford, were made the two generals who sailed with the King to France.

In October 1494 Henry's son Henry (later Henry VIII) was proclaimed Duke of York and on Saturday, 1st November 1494, there was a royal procession with all the nobility crowned and coroneted and this was followed by a tournament at the King's Palace at Westminster. This four day event started on 9th November and ended with the prize giving on the 13th. The Royal ladies gave Sir Edward Borough a gold and diamond ring and to the Earl of Essex a gold ring set with an emerald. Feasting followed and Jasper and his wife, the Duchess of Bedford, attended.

This was the last recorded event in which Jasper took part. Twelve months later he died at Thornbury.

Jasper married in his fifties but had no issue although he was credited with an illegitimate daughter, Helen, who later married a William Gardiner whose son, Stephen, became famous as the Bishop of Winchester. No portrait exists of Jasper, but it was always claimed that the headless statue in garter robes at St Woollos in Newport was of him.

SIR JASPER'S WILL

Quoted from "Somerset Wills, 1383-1500", edited Rev F W Weaver, *Somerset Record Society*, 1901, vol 16, p.327.

"I, Jasper, duke of Bedford and Erle of Pembroke, make my testament and laste will in this forme following.-

I bequeath my body to be buried in the monasterie of our Lady of Keynesham in a place convenient, where I will that my tombe behonorable made after thastate that it hath pleased God to call me to And thereupon to be employed an hundred markes.

I will that certain of my manors and lands which I haue in fee simple as well in the Counties of Notingham, Derby, and Werwyk as in the Marche of Wales and elliswhere be amorteysed for the fyndyng of 4 preestes to syng perpetually in the said Church and Monastery aswele for my soule and for my faders soule, as for the ((lady of)) noble memorie Kateryne, some tyme Quene of Englund, my moder, and of Edmund, late Erle of Richemonde, my brother, and all other my predecessours.

Item, I will that in defaute herof oon or 2 benefices of the value of 50 or 50 poundes yerely be appropriated to thabbot and Couent of the said Monastery perpetually to thentente 5 or 6 preestis shalbe founde daily to syng in the said Monasterie aswele for my soule as the soules aforesaide. In defaute of bothe the premisses an Cli. shall be delyured to the said Abbot and Couente in redy money to thentente that 2 preestis shalbe perpetually founded in the saide Monastery to syng daily for me and the soules above rehersed, according to an offre made by the said Abbot and Couent in that behalf.

Item, I bequeith to the saide monasterie my best gowne of cloth of gold for vestmentes.

Item, I will that on the day of my intrement there be distributed emonges euery pouer man and woman that will take it 2d. a pece; and lyke wise at my monethis mynde.

Item, I bequeith to the monasterie of blessid sainte Kenelme of winchecombe toward the bilding of the same 20li. and my long gowne of Crymesyn velwett to make a coope there to the honor of God and the sainte.

Item, I bequeith to the church of Thornebury toward the reparacion of the same, 10li.

Item, to the seid church, a gowne of blak velwett for a cope to be made there, and vestmentes.

Item, for the vacary of the saide church of Thornebury, for tithes unpaid, and other dueties, 40s.

Item, I bequeith to the 4 Ordres of Frires of Bristowe 8li. to be equally departed.

Item, to the blak freires of Harford, 40s.

To the Gray Frires of Harford, where my Father is entered, 20li.

Item, to the 3 Ordres of Frires at Gloucester, 6li.

Item, to the 2 Ordres of Frires at Kaerdiff, 4li.

To the Frires of Newporte, 20s.

To the Frires of Harford West, 40s.

To the house of the grey Frires of Harford Est, my secunde gowne of cloth of golde for a Cope or vestmentes there to be made.

Item, to the vicary of the parish of Winchcombe, or the church there, 40s.

Item, I bequeith my jakket of cloth of golde to make 2 jakkets to the blessing Trinite of Crichurch.

Item, I bequeith my other blak velwet gowne to the church of Pembroke for a cope or vestmentes to be made there.

I will that myne executours content sir Thomas Okeley, parson of Sudley, for his duetie of tharbage of the parke there onpaied sith the tyme that he was parson all that shalbe founde yerely due unto hym for the same, with all such dueties and tithes of hey as to hym of right belongith.

To every pariss church that my body shalbe caries into bitwene this and Keynesham 20s. and 2 torches.

Item, I bequeith to the Crochfires of the gauntis of Bristowe, 40s.

Yeven at my manor of Thornebury the 15th day of December, A.D. 1495."

Proved 2nd July, 1496, and administration committed to Morgan Kydwelly, one of the executors.

JASPER TUDOR'S TOMB IN KEYNSHAM ABBEY

Barbara J. Lowe

It is possible that the late Perpendicular pier, still extant in the garden of 3 Abbey Park, marks the western boundary of the Bedford Chantry. This pier, originally attached to the substantial walling of the north side of the chancel of the abbey church, was discovered during building operations of 1865-75. A plan of the remains was published in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* for 1875. The original 240:1 working plan from which the published one was drawn is stored in the J T Irvine collection in Bath Reference Library. This master plan shows a 10ft by 6ft rectangle immediately east of the previously mentioned pier and labelled "Jasper Tudor, Duke of Bedford, died 21st December 1495. Vault under chantry chapel, Perpendicular date". No mention of this vault occurs in the published report, so we do not know upon what evidence it was ascribed to Sir Jasper.

A few years ago, Dr and Mrs Willis kindly allowed a small excavation to take place around the base of the pier in order to establish whether it was still in situ. We found that the foundations of the original massive walling and pier were still extant, and directly eastwards there was indeed a vault. The proximity of a greenhouse prevented full excavation of this, but we were able to expose its 7ft 6in length and 3ft of its width (N to S). It was 2ft deep, with internally plastered (whitened) limestone walls and two arched coping stones still in situ over the west (head) end. The vault contained Victorian building rubble but no human bones in the portion we excavated, although parts of a skeleton lay immediately north. These bones were rather frail and unlikely to have been those of Sir Jasper.

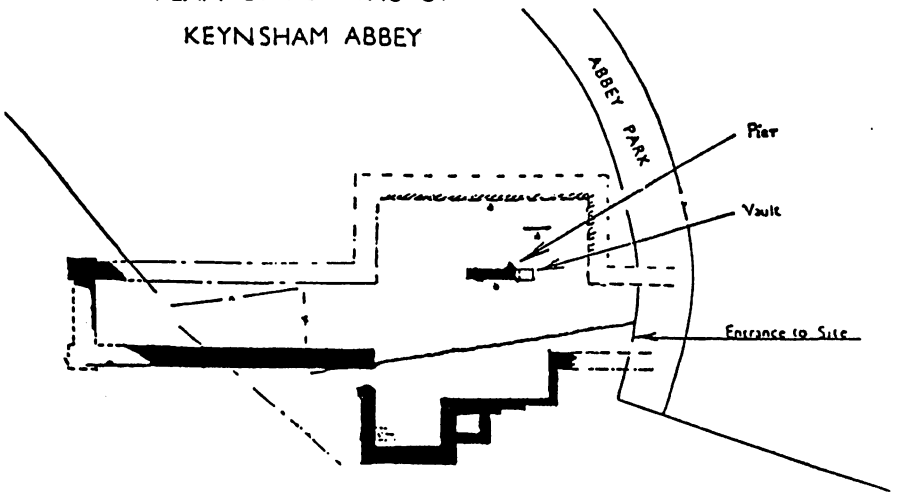
A further note in the published report mentions that much "tabernacle" work came from this area. We wonder if portions of a life-size effigy of a Knight, found gracing rockeries of the houses since demolished for the Keynsham by-pass, represent Sir Jasper. There is a shield, but it is quite plain. Maybe this was once painted with Sir Jasper's Arms and that this is the evidence which the Victorians omitted to record?

We wonder, too, if Sir Jasper was the central figure of another reference on page 98 of the same 1875 *JBAA Proceedings*? This relates that a Mr C E Davies of Bath, whilst excavating on the Keynsham Abbey site in 1874, came upon a stone coffin, the lid of which he opened and saw the remains of "some high dignitary with what appeared to be a coil of gold tissue about the neck".

This he "in no way molested and closed again as speedily as could be", merely contenting himself with marking the spot for future investigation. Annoyingly, no further information was published.

Some important peoples' remains were removed from Dissolved Religious Houses and reburied elsewhere, but no records exist of Sir Jasper being moved.

PLAN OF REMAINS OF KEYNSHAM ABBEY



Why was Sir Jasper Tudor buried in Keynsham Abbey?

The Abbey was founded by William, 2nd Earl of Gloucester; therefore throughout its history the Hereditary Patron was the current Earl of Gloucester or his direct descendant. The patronage passed through the De Clares (who owned Thornbury Manor) and came to the Staffords. Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, married Catherine Widville but was summarily beheaded at Salisbury in 1483 leaving an heir, Edward, aged six years. The Stafford estates were confiscated by Richard III, but

on his accession in 1485 Henry VII reversed the attainter, restored £1,000 a year to the Dowager, and awarded custody of the young Duke to Lady Margaret Beaufort, Henry VII's mother. She was then able to administer and exploit the estates.

He had first exercised a Patron's right in 1486 when he presented a new abbot at Keynsham - John Gylmyn. Although, in his will, Jasper refers to "my manor of Thornbury", this was "in right of his wife". Nevertheless, in spite of running a large and costly household, Jasper apparently managed his wife's dower lands as a separate unit and did not exploit her estates. Part of Thornbury Manor was referred to as "Bedford's Lodging" and, in 1983, after a tree fell down to the east of the inner court of the present Thornbury Castle (begun 1510-21), a small excavation revealed the foundations of part of a large room which may have been the Bedford Lodgings (Bristol & Avon Archaeology, 2, 1983).

Jasper Tudor was created Duke of Bedford in 1485 and married Henry Stafford's widow. Henry had been Hereditary Patron of Keynsham Abbey and his heir was under age, so Jasper was able to claim the honour of Patronage "in right of his wife", the late Patron's widow. One of the "perks" of this Patronage was the right of burial in the Abbey with all due Circumstance.

MARY FAIRCLOUGH REMEMBERS

Recorded by Len Coggins

Of the founder members of Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society no-one can have contributed more over the years in the form of photographs, anecdotes and folklore, than Mary Fairclough. Through her contacts with many influential local people she has become an encyclopaedia of information about her home town. I have recently been chatting to her about her family and their activities, her friends and favourite buildings, many now sadly destroyed.

No doubt she was influenced by Charles Abbott, a great collector of historic information and objects. These included the toll-board from the Newton Turnpike House, which was removed when the first dual carriage-way to Corston was constructed. This was given to our Society, and is now on long-term loan to the Postal Museum in Bath.

Through her grandfather, William Thomas, she was connected with Gould Thomas & Co, who operated the Albert Mill. He lived at St

Augustine's, now the doctors' house in Station Road. Her mother remembered, as a child, that he would sit up at night experimenting with samples of dyes. Later the firm produced chemicals such as ammonia and Glauber Salts for Ferris's of Bristol, in the outbuildings at the Mill. His brother, Alfred's eldest son, Keith, was also a keen chemist.

The firm owned, briefly, the small former paper mill at Chewton Keynsham. But this was inadequate, and a long haul for the drays of dyewoods from Bristol docks, so Albert Mill, with its powerful water-powered grinding machinery was purchased in the 1860s. It was justly famous for the variety of its products over the previous 150 years: corn, poultry food, linseed oil and lime. There was a plentiful supply of lime from the kilns at the town end of St Clements Road and in Park Road. In medieval times, under Keynsham Abbey, it had been a grist and fulling mill. In its more recent years special timbers from South America were first sawn into short logs, reduced to small chips by rotating knives, then ground into a fine powder forming dyes for the textile and leather industries. Despite severe competition from the new aniline dyes it survived for many years (the last in England) with a final "one-off" production run in the 1960s.

Happily the main building, until recently damaged by vandals, will be saved by the current development. Besides some of the heavy machinery to be protected there is the water-wheel with its unique curved spokes. It apparently failed to set a pattern, but is in remarkably good condition considering the years of neglect. Recently an enormous grindstone, used to sharpen the knives, was unearthed and could be seen by the entrance gate. Mary recalls being thrilled by the great showers of sparks during the sharpening process.

As a child in the 1870-80s Mary's mother, Rose Thomas, used to stay with her grandfather, Robert, father of William, up in Avon Mill Lane and was allowed to visit the mill with Isaac Taylor (or was it John Brimson?), a carter living in one of the cottages in the yard. She must have been very little for he used to carry her part of the way, with the red dye from his clothing staining her starched white pinafores to Grandma Thomas's annoyance. They were supposed to go down Gooseberry Lane, but she much preferred Pagham's Lane (Fourfield Terrace) a range of workmen's cottages, then a tough little slum, stretching from Bath Hill down to the river near Dapps Hill Bridge. The privies in the back yards being somewhat exposed to view, dear little Rose was amused to hear the tenants in loud conversation through the open doors.

Across the River Chew she could see the beautiful grounds with pool and fountains and strutting peacocks of "The Pines", an attractive mansion on the now wooded side of Dapps Hill. Our only pictorial record is a slide taken from an early water-colour painting. A Mr Sherwood Smith was an early owner, followed by two sisters who seem finally to have abandoned it. It was still standing, obscured by trees and shrubs in the 1960s, but its last days are mysterious; it seems simply to have been left to collapse. Its coach house cottage, with a delightful wrought-iron window opening onto the pavement at Dapps Hill, survived for a few years. It was approached through the present gap in the wall halfway down the hill.

Behind Albert Mill lies Conygre Farm, believed to be on the site of a rabbit warren belonging to Keynsham Abbey. Most of the buildings, and many of those in Chewton Keynsham, were built by Mr Courtney Warner in the 1860s. An interesting local feature is the use of black glazed roof tiles which he bought cheaply from a Bridgwater firm.

Moving on to Temple Street, Mary expresses great anger at the destruction of this whole neighbourhood, with its homely range of listed cottages, pubs, chapels and shops. A Mr Holt fought hard to prevent this but succeeded only in the case of the historic Ship Inn by securing the intervention of an official at Whitehall. Among Mr Holt's fine series of photos is one of the London Inn, only recently discovered. The name was transferred to the pub in the High Street, previously called the "Royal Oak".

At the "town" end of Temple Street (now "Kwiksave") was the workshop of Daniel Gilbert, the shoemaker, whose shop was round the corner in Cheapside. Greatly respected in his trade, he was Master of the Cordwainers' Guild. The shop was previously a cafe run by Miss Oxford who still lived recently in Heathfield Close. Adjoining the workshop was a small market flanked by a slaughter house run by Mr Brownsea, later by Mr Sherer, still living in Sherwood Road.

Turning now to the High Street, Mary's favourite is No.12, "West End House", now "Room Robes". Charles Abbott, whose wife's family once lived there, believed it to have been the Abbey Guest House, the Hospice of St John, built in 1347 by Abbot Nicholas. Its large oriel window was moved across Bristol Road to Dr Willetts' coach house, now demolished. Its two supporting sculptured figures are still in a local garden. In the 1900s George E Chappell started his grocery shop here. He had begun his career with Mr Cridland whose grocery was at the bottom of Rock Road (now "Gateway") and who commissioned the famous

Cridland Book of local photos, now a collector's piece and an invaluable record of Keynsham 90 years ago. Mr Chappell sold out to International Stores in the 1930s.

One of the best recorded buildings in the High Street is No.37. A splendid photo of 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, shows it as the Post Office with a smart posse of postmen. Successive tenants have been Mills & Mills (chemists), Indigo (drapers), Thornton's Travel Agents and Shaggers (hairdressers). Despite all these changes the upper storey remains unchanged after a hundred years.

At No.21, in the former Pump Court, the recessed eighteenth century building was originally a dame's school, then Mr Castle's plumbing business. The next tenants, the Midland Bank, moved across the road in about 1982 to be succeeded by Avon (Insurance) Associates. The pump, fed by a spring from Lockingwell Road, figures in photos to a surprisingly late date.

Although not connected with the Polysulphin works, Mary is well informed on its history. Founded by Herr Bartlett, it manufactured advanced soaps and detergents for the laundry industry. The factory was built on ground made level by the dumping of rubbish brought down by barge from Bath. The owner had the large house at Corston (now St Theresa's) built as his residence. Last year a local pensioner claimed that when production was in full swing he delivered their products by lorry to every hospital in England.

Finally a word about Keynsham Brass. The large bowls from Avon Mill were used by local farmers for cream making. Being almost indestructible they were exported widely for many purposes: to USA and West Africa for salt, India for tea, and Portugal for citrous oil. One of the Ollis family claimed that their bowl was so huge that it was used to bath the family. Another bowl found its way to Australia where it has been located by Mr Gascoyne Mills who hopes to return it to Keynsham for display in the museum. The famous Fray pan, c.1732, was left to Mary by its last Fray owner, Miss Doris, to be held for a future museum. For safety it has already been handed to the Keynsham and Saltford Local History Society.

THE WELLS OF KEYNSHAM

M. C. Fitter

It was a case of "all's well that ends well". In 1986 the interior of the Oxfam shop in the High Street was demolished and rebuilt, owing to its dangerous state of repair. The builder had been advised that there was somewhere on the site a well. When a stone wobbled on which the workman was standing, he moved with alacrity. The stone removed, the black mouth of a well was revealed. On hearing of the discovery I borrowed a spare clothes line, collected a white enamel bucket, and set off for Oxfam. Measuring revealed that the well was 22ft deep, with nearly 9ft of water. Thus was born my unusual interest in, and study of, what I term "Phrearology", etymologically derived from the Greek, "frear", a well.

Why were wells needed?

Accustomed as we are to an automatic supply of purified water, realisation comes as something of a shock that this amenity came to Keynsham only at the dawn of the twentieth century. Prior to that, it is true, there was plenty of water to be obtained from the rivers Avon and Chew. A number of Keynsham Senior Citizens have told me that they can remember going down Bath Hill for water with a bucket. Yet one wonders how pure that water was. Just on the town side of the Chewton Keynsham bridge, is the attractive Mill Cottage. Straight across the road from it is a path leading down to its stone privy of former years. From beneath the "bench", a channel had been dug for some two yards, allowing "waste" to fall straight into the Chew leat. Pure water? This leads onto our next question, as to where privies were placed.

Where were privies sited?

It would appear that in the gardens of the High Street and Temple Street, privies and wells coexisted. Admittedly, sometimes the gardens were long, with privies and wells on opposite sides or at the garden's opposite ends. Normally the well was near the back door, the privy further away. Despite the attempted separation of the two, rock formation could result in the well becoming infected. Local people were immune to their own germs: it was visiting relatives who succumbed to stomach upsets (Dreghorn 1967).

How were well sites chosen?

Prior to piped water, one had to use either the river or the well. Water was essential to life. So how would the Stuart/Georgian house-builder in Keynsham set to work? Often he would start by employing a water-diviner to locate the precise place to dig his well. "There is a lot of circumstantial evidence supporting water-divining", writes Brassington (1983, 25). So no well, no house!

Having located water, the builder could then erect his house nearby. According to a local centenarian, the builder would then employ additional labour to dig out and build the well.

The construction of wells

We can only touch on this vast subject. The patriarch Abraham dug wells some 4,000 years ago. Much of the Third World depends on them today. Keynsham relied on them till early this century. There is one old building in Keynsham whose inhabitants have told me that their well was their "sole source of water until 1970".

Brassington (1983) explains that "the traditional method of constructing a well was to dig a hole about a metre deep and wide enough to lay a cartwheel in. The spokes were knocked out of an old wheel which was placed in the hole as a footing for a stone wall. The inside of the hole was dug out, undercutting the wheel, so that the weight of the stones pushed it down". The first 3-4ft of the shaft was usually mortared, the remainder being built of our local lias limestone in dry stone walling technique, one layer of stones thick.

This thickness might seem insufficient, but the walls of many wells are remarkably straight after a few hundred years. Occasionally a slight bulge of a few inches can be seen in one wall at, say, 10-15 ft down, as in two of the wells in the Steel Mills area. These are no less than two to three hundred years old. Occasionally a water source is cut out of solid rock, hence the apposite name of Rockwell House, Wellsway, with its 29 ft well.

The wealthy could afford the best craftsmen, who would build a well with a beautifully straight wall with a smooth finish. Yet some wells are most crudely made, with irregular jagged walls. Surely this reflects not just poor workmanship but their great age? There is one like this near the High Street, which I believe to be medieval. I employed a diver to plunge the depths for coin evidence, but in vain.

While many wells have straight sides, a number are bottle shaped, with a short straight neck, which then widens out. The best example is the beautifully made 14ft well at Milward Lodge, the building dated 1600. It is a gem of a well, built with consummate craftsmanship. It is to be earnestly hoped that it will be saved in the forthcoming scheme of building and road widening.

The Old Well Cottage on Charlton Road reveals another well design. The sides are quite straight for the first 20 ft, only to bell out to some 6 ft width, after which the well plunges some further 20 ft, its shape undiscernible in the water. Likewise, the well at Rockwell House is neither rectilinear, nor shaped like a wine bottle, nor is its bottom circular; rather, it bellies out in the centre. It starts 3 ft wide, extends to 6 ft, then finally reduces to 3 ft again. It is not the only well this shape.

More vital statistics

"The water table is the upper surface of fully saturated rocks" writes Brassington (1983). The depth to which a well is dug will be determined by the local water table, which varies between summer and winter. The digger would rejoice when water was reached, but would continue his efforts for the sake of security. Drought conditions would try his well.

Wells obviously vary in depth. In this area the above mentioned 14 ft well is a rarity. Most range in depth from around 22 ft (Oxfam) to Keynsham Manor at 30 ft, River View at 35 ft, and Wellsway at 41 ft. Depths of 52-54 ft are to be found in four wells, two in Bath Hill, one at Abbey Park and another at Durley Hill. A little out of town is Park House Farm, with the deepest well of all. To look down it was frightening. Tragically, this Stuart well was filled in recently, despite my remonstrations.

At one time Keynsham could have boasted of at least two Roman wells, one at Durley Hill and the other at Cadburys. Now even the latter one has gone.

Well mouths vary in diameter, as one would expect. Sometimes a well with a 3 ft wide shaft, narrows towards the top and is then capped with a massive 3-6 inch thick slab of pennant stone, with a pre-bored central hole. A well in the Steel Mills area has a 13 inch wide mouth. One at Bath Hill is 18 inches. Another at Old Well Cottage has a diameter of 19 inches. Oxfam and River View each have a 2 ft 6 inch well mouth. "Kosikot" possesses the more common width of 3 ft. Yet beyond this, Keynsham boasts two wells with a five foot diameter.

Some wells are level with the ground; others have a stone wall some three ft high. Most have a heavy wooden cover. Three at least have the conventional red tiled pitched roof.

Drawing well water

The simplest, time-honoured method, with a standard 3 ft wide well, was to attach a bucket to a rope, then throw the bucket down upside down and sharply pull the rope when the bucket hits the water. There are those in the town who remember doing just that!

Wells with a narrow mouth necessitated the use of a specially constructed bucket. This consisted of two identical 12 inch galvanized buckets, placed mouth to mouth. The upper inverted bucket had its floor removed to form the mouth, then handles attached. Fascinating to look at, two still exist in Keynsham. I would love to know whether they exist elsewhere.

The Keynsham Well-bucket

*A sketch by Michael Hutchings,
from an original photo.*

*Height 17 inches, width at join
12 inches, neck 7.5 inches wide.*

*Mr Hickling thought that such
buckets might have been sold in
his father's ironmongers shop
in the High Street, Keynsham,
in the last century.*



Later the more affluent had pipes fitted down the shaft to the bottom of the well. These were connected to a pumping mechanism. Pump handles in Keynsham were some three feet long, with a beautiful curve, and a three inch metal ball at the end. At least three of these handles survive in sites in Keynsham today.

I have found but one well complete with a winding drum and chain, together with three driving cogs. Wooden doors cover the mouth of the well, and a tiled roof protects this sole surviving relic of a once common mechanism from a bygone age.

The proximity of wells

Obviously, large houses had their own wells. Keynsham Old Manor House has two, while Queen Charlton Manor had three. In terraced houses things were different.

The High Street

Oxfam's well was sited partly on Mr Joll's land. Clearly, many years ago it was used jointly by the two occupant families. Further along the street, Abbey Park chemist and the sports shop once shared a well. Hutton's Flower Shop and the Bath & West Insurance Brokers shared a well in the garden, with a handle for each household. If one side was pumped the handle on the other side also went up and down. "A dangerous business drawing water" commented an elderly man who had lived there and used the well. These three examples suggest a regular pattern of two-family sharing, for the High Street up to the late Victorian era.

In addition there was the village's central well in the High Street at Pump Court, next to the Old Post Office. As the name suggests, later a pump was fitted to this important well, and old photographs show together both the pump and the Post Office.

Temple Street

Supplies of water here would seem to be more sparse, for it appears there were not so many wells here. It is probable that Cranmore House had its own. There was one behind the present Robertson's Studio. White's the coal merchant (Jolyons) had a well. Four more would seem to complete those that side of Temple Street.

There were two additional wells in the Trout Inn itself. In the conveyance of the sale of what was in 1833 called "The Trout House", provision was made for those who lived in the cottage in the grounds "together with the free use in common of the Well of Water thereunto".

The Dapps Hill area

Even today, this area can boast five open wells, all of a different type.

Wellsway

I have seen two wells here, and know of at least two more. Councillor Miles had one in his back garden, but alas no more. Further up the hill, overlooking Chewton Keynsham, is the Homestead, where Captain Kinnersley lived earlier this century. His large well supplied more than water. The inside of the top of his well was used for the cold storage of dead game and poultry. Today, from the top of this filled well, tulips and aubretia bloom.

A bungalow almost opposite Uplands Farm once boasted the town's highest sited well, with an additional animal drinking trough facing the road. The well now lies below the tarmac car area. Assistance has been kindly offered should I desire to locate and open this well.

Bath Hill

Perhaps the occupants of the "Ten Houses" in Bath Hill East were the people worst off for water. They had but one well between them, sited at the bottom of the terrace. I think it was the Estate Agents who told the new owners that "though it was covered up, it was accessible".

There were at least four wells in both Station Road and Bristol Road. Charlton Road still has two that are open today. Charlton Park has one filled in that I know of.

Mrs R. Fray at one time lived in Queens Road, and commented: "there were a number of wells in this area". She had a terrier named Bob, which she always let out last thing at night. One night it never returned when called. Next morning her neighbour called and confessed that he had failed to cover his well the preceding night and Bob had tragically drowned in it.

This story illustrated that wells, like fire and the sea, can kill. But if wells are properly covered they can sustain life for centuries. It was the human element that was at fault. Do not blame the well. So please, if today a well is no longer required, do not destroy it by infilling but cover it up securely.

Obviously I have been unable to mention all the Keynsham wells

that I have visited. I am but a beginner in this field, and there is far more for me to discover. There must still be unrecorded local wells. If you possess or know of one, I would be delighted to hear from you on Bristol 864035.

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PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE KEYNSHAM AREA

Linda Horne

Linda Horne, BA, ALA, was appointed Librarian at Keynsham in 1983. Local historians appreciate her initiative in developing the Local Studies section of Keynsham Library, and bringing it to life with the local history roadshows and other events which contribute to the maintenance of local community traditions.

The earliest information on a library service in Keynsham comes from Bert Howe of Rock Road, who recalls that a Mr Bass loaned books for a penny per week from premises next to the Fear Institute. On the corner of Rock Road, Grimes' shop charged twopence per week. The manager, Mr Woods, known to the small children as "Bugs Whiskers" painted cartoons on the window.

In 1941, Somerset County Library was approached by some ladies living in Keynsham to see if a public library service could be established for the benefit of the villagers and the service personnel stationed in the area. The old Liberal Club on Bath Hill, which was owned by Keynsham UDC and used for council meetings, housed the library. The first librarian was Mrs E C Hartley, a school teacher by training. She was helped by a staff of lady volunteers from the WVS, among whom were Mrs Vera Grimes, Miss Emily Geare and Miss Mary Fairclough. Mrs Grimes worked downstairs in the children's library which was started with a gift of books, furniture and fittings from Walston and Jane Vowles (nee Corbett, the singer). They provided paint, pink and blue, for the shelves and woodwork, matting for the floor and the first 1,000 books. Mr Len Ellis, a local Library Committee member, remembers that Miss Geare, a retired headmistress, did not approve of Enid Blyton's books being included and tried to have them removed from the shelves. Miss

Fairclough was commissioned by the Vowles' to produce "something" to cover the wall over the gas fire. It was decided that a map of historic Keynsham would be appropriate and the Council produced the board. Canvas was impossible to afford or even obtain, so hessian from tea chests was begged from Carwardine's and Miss Fairclough and her father strained it over the board and treated it with undercoating until they had a workable surface. The historical details were mostly provided by Mr Charles Abbott, last Clerk of the Works at the Brass Mills. The map may be seen in Keynsham Library today.

Mrs Hartley's daughter, Mrs A C Alexander of Weston-super-Mare, remembers exhibitions by local artists such as the Gilliards, being held in the library, and displays of crafts such as marquetry. Play-reading groups were allowed to meet there. The library had a community role from its inception. The upstairs room, the adult library, was the room also used for council meetings, and the whole of the centre of the room was occupied by tables and chairs. The room was sometimes blue with smoke as the heating stove smoked. The balcony was not safe and the staff dare not open the windows to it. Another downstairs room was rented by the UDC to the Bath and Wilts Evening Chronicle as an office for the local newspaper.

The books were selected and purchased at Somerset Library Headquarters. When books were difficult to obtain in the war, Desmond Hardy of the BBC borrowed some Thomas Hardy books while preparing programmes. Miss Fairclough also remembers the near impossibility of having repair and maintenance done on the library buildings in the war years and immediately afterwards. "One afternoon, there was a sudden cracking sound and a large section of ceiling descended in chunks of plaster and a cloud of dust, over the desk: followed, after a moment's horrified silence, by one small mouse."

With the impressive post-war growth of Keynsham, it became obvious that the premises were inadequate. The library was only open for three days per week. When Mrs Hartley retired in 1958, Mr Michael Bird was appointed professional librarian and the opening days were increased to five. With his appointment came the end of voluntary help and soon paid staff were employed to help as the numbers of books issued rose rapidly. The branch was the busiest in Somerset; a peak issue of 168,135 per annum being achieved. The mobile library service was inaugurated in 1958, originally as an "independent" service supervised from Bridgewater. In the early 1960s it became part of the Keynsham library area.

The Bath Hill building ceased to be used as a library in 1965.

The new library was part of a civic development carried out by Keynsham Urban District Council, comprising council chambers and offices, shops and library. In respect of the library, the Keynsham Council acted as agents for Somerset County Council. The plan is L-shaped, one of the legs containing the adult library, workroom and librarian's office, the other containing the children's library, staff room and ancillary rooms. The shelves open to the public were designed to take 18,000 volumes, with storage space for another 2,230. The building cost was approximately £15,000, with furniture and equipment costing £4,500.

Mrs Jean Houldridge joined Mr Bird as First Assistant Librarian, with special responsibility for children's work. Exactly one year after moving in to the new building, Mr Bird reported that memories of the old library had quickly gone because working conditions were so much better and book issues had risen by 100,000. Mr Bird made a very significant contribution to the life of the community when, in 1965, he convened a meeting of interested people from which grew the Keynsham and Saltford Local History Society.

In 1974 the reorganisation of Local Government created a new County of Avon, which took over responsibility for library services. The ownership of the building, however, was with the newly-formed Wansdyke District Council, except for the section under the flat roof, a design feature which has always caused problems.

The seventies was a decade of steady growth in library use. By 1974 the people of Saltford were asking for a library building as an improvement on the busy mobile service. Problems of finding a suitable building were not resolved until 1978, when the former hardware shop on Bath Road was purchased and opened as a satellite library with part-time opening hours. A new book stock was purchased. By 1981 the library was busy enough to justify extra opening hours and staff time.

The tenth anniversary of the library in the present building was fittingly marked with an illustrated talk from Miss Fairclough. The library service was helped significantly by the voluntary sector in this anniversary year. Mrs Ann Lacey, from the Women's Voluntary Service, organised a housebound service. Volunteers took selections of books to disabled and elderly individuals in their homes on a regular basis. As well as providing welcome reading material very important social contacts were made. The service was well-established so that when Mrs Lacey left the area in 1984, new organisers were forthcoming, firstly Mr Idwal Jones and then Mr George Burrell. "Outreach" services were provided by the staff when, in 1979, they began to take loan

collections of books to the group dwellings for older people at Wick House Close and Iford Close in Saltford. Books were deposited in the communal lounge areas. The Red Cross, in the person of Iris Coombes, provided a similar service to the Hawthorns in Keynsham. It is a great tribute to the volunteers, and to Mr Burrell in particular, that the housebound service was able to take over the job of delivering to group dwellings and to extend it significantly. By 1987, eight group dwellings are served from the branch with another six being served from the mobile library.

In the mid 70s, in spite of a no-growth financial situation, the library was well regarded in the community. A children's poster competition was organised with the help of local schools. To mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, the Townswomen's Guild presented a flower-stand to the library in order to create displays that all the people of Keynsham could enjoy in a "vandalism-free" area. The Guild continues to fill the stand with beautiful displays at their own expense. There were "bouquets" in the local press as to the quality of the service under Mr Bird. The only controversy was caused by the temporary introduction of maintaining loan records by family name rather than by books issued. The categorisation of fiction was also unpopular initially. The ratio of registered readers to the population figure for Keynsham indicated that the library had a wide catchment area and issues were rising towards the 1979 peak of 395,911 per annum. In spite of this, economies made it necessary to close the library all day on Wednesdays (it had previously opened on Wednesday mornings). But the library scene was not all gloom as in 1980 and in 1982 two libraries opened at neighbouring Hanham and at Stockwood in fine new buildings with new book stocks, thus taking some pressure off Keynsham. Avon's cassette service was extended to Keynsham in 1980, whereby music cassettes were hired for one week. Careful "housekeeping" meant the greater use of paperback books and the introduction of the "book sale" shelves as a means of generating income by selling old stock for a small proportion of their original prices.

In December 1982 Michael Bird took early retirement at the age of 60 after 40 years in the library service. The Keynsham Chronicle paid tribute to "Mr Books" and acknowledged with regret the end of an era. Miss Linda Horne was appointed as successor in late January 1983 in the knowledge that Mrs Houldridge had also decided to take early retirement. Although Jean's work with children had been much appreciated this specialist element was not retained in the job specification so that when Sue Pickering joined the staff it was as First Assistant Librarian in all aspects of library work. Although Avon does not employ many specialist children's librarians,

there has been some county organisation and funding of children's summer activities in the early 1980's with activities organised around themes. Keynsham library has received visits from Radio Bristol's Captain Courage, a magician, a clown, a Punch and Judy show, a percussion artist and children's author Julian Killingback. There is always room for local initiative such as weekly story-times, pet-shows and teddy-bears' picnics. Since 1984 Mr R Dodd has played Safety Santa at story-sessions arranged in conjunction with the Road Safety Officer. Popular local author Dick King-Smith recently gave his services free for a story-time session.

The library continues to encourage displays which are usually much appreciated, but a note of controversy was struck in 1983 when a CND display high-lighted a conflict of interest between the District Council whose policy did not permit political displays in premises under its jurisdiction, and the County Council's majority view. To help encourage local writers, Avon appointed a Writer-in-Residence, Jean Stubbs, to give advice to aspiring writers. This was followed by a Poet-in-Residence scheme employing Pamela Gillilan.

A restructuring of Avon's services in 1985 brought the Community Leisure Committee's responsibilities, ie youth, library and community services, into a new department of Community Leisure and formally recognised the role of libraries in the local communities. Local libraries became available for hire by local groups after normal opening hours. The Twins Club, the Gramophone Society, the Adult Union School, a slimming club and the Keynsham and North Wansdyke Heritage Trust have all used the library for meetings. Library staff have organised two public meetings to promote crime prevention. The link has been maintained with the Keynsham and Saltford Local History Society with summer events such as a Local History "Roadshow", guided walks and an open discussion on the old doctors of Keynsham. The library's information role has been enhanced by bringing in other agencies to operate from the library. The Avon Careers Service visits weekly and the South Wansdyke Advice Network holds monthly advice sessions.

In 1987 book issues of 328,341 per annum compare with those of ten years ago and Keynsham library is one of the busiest local libraries in Avon, comparing favourably with areas such as Downend, Henleaze and Kingswood. The County Library's programme of computerisation means that catalogues are now produced in microfiche form as we work towards a time when users in any library will be able to see the listed holdings of all the County's libraries. Retrospective computer cataloguing is due to start at Keynsham in late 1987. Computerisation will also mean

that information from Avon's specialist services will become accessible at local libraries, eg information on clubs and societies. This should remind Keynsham users that their library service is greater than that operated from the Civic Centre building, and that the services of two major reference libraries, an art library, a music library, a commercial library and a schools library service are also theirs to use and enjoy.

FRANK MILLARD

Margaret Whitehead

It was over 30 years ago when Frank Millard and Betty, his wife, came to live in Keynsham and joined the Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society soon after its inception.

As a Chartered Surveyor Frank was able to use his valuable professional experience when he was happy to accept the post of Archivist offered to him on the 1st July 1977 when Mrs Connie Smith had to relinquish the position on moving to the Bath area.

I first had the pleasure of getting to know Frank and Betty early in 1985 when Betty and myself became joint authors of a History of Methodism in Keynsham, and I was most grateful for all Frank's help and advice in the research for this book.

I found Frank very much enjoying retirement and involved in many activities with Betty. He was particularly interested in the social history of our town and how people lived and worked. He never jumped to conclusions or made assumptions without first endeavouring to make sure of his facts and I suspect that not everyone who met him sensed his quiet sense of humour. When I agreed to take over the care of the Archives in March 1987 it was with the knowledge that Frank would remain on the Committee and be available for advice and help.

When he handed over the material to me, he was pleased that they were being removed from his house as he and Betty were greatly looking forward to two exciting holidays close together, one to Canada and another to Russia. It was with a deep sense of shock that his friends and members of the Society learnt of his sudden death in Russia in May 1987.

As a tribute to Frank, the members of the Committee decided to institute a Memorial Lecture to be held each autumn and the first one was held last October when those present stood for a minute's silence to remember someone who did his best to contribute to the community he lived in.

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