

Chichester History

No. 38

www.chichesterlocalhistory.org.uk

2022



Chichester Cathedral floodlit in blue light to support the NHS

THE JOURNAL OF THE CHICHESTER LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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The Society's annual season of lectures begins in September and ends in June. There is also a guided walk or similar activity in July. For more details and the latest information, head to our website at <https://www.chichesterlocalhistory.org.uk>

The lecture* programme for 2022-23 includes, for example:

Chichester and the 1921 census (Philip Robinson)
Ralph Ellis, Great War soldier and artist (Sue Hepburn)
The Vikings and Sussex (Paul Ullson)
What the Victorians did for Chichester (Alan Green)
The Chichester Harbour oyster fishers (Ian Friel)
Walter Hussey – patron of art and his legacy (Lewis Kent)
The history of cricket in Priory Park (Bruce Ruddock)
Georgian Sussex by the sea (Sue Berry)
Medieval life in the Cathedral Close (Hilary Sloan)
The history and heritage of Graylingwell – guided walk (Greg Slay)

*Whilst we would all like to believe the Covid-19 pandemic is behind us, and we 'need to live with Covid' moving forwards, there is always the possibility that in-person lectures may need to be replaced with online alternatives.

The Society's AGM will be held on 14 December 2022 and further details will be announced nearer the time.

Front cover: Chichester Cathedral floodlit with blue light by the Chichester Festival Theatre's lighting team on 30 April 2020 as a tribute to the NHS during the pandemic (Chichester Cathedral, Daniel Smith)

Back cover: As the Festival Theatre celebrates its 60th birthday, this blue plaque in Little London remembers some of the many who trod the boards there and who have also eaten out in the city for the fuller Chichester experience! (Greg Slay)

Chichester History

No. 38

Editor: Greg Slay FRSA

CONTENTS

Programme arrangements, September 2022–July 2023	Inside front cover
Editorial	2
About our authors	3
The Elusive Champion’s Court, Somerstown: <i>Alan H J Green</i>	5
Teaching at the Prebendal School in 1822: <i>Bruce Barker-Benfield</i>	14
Plantation Owners of Chichester: <i>Richard Childs</i>	19
My other life at TEK: <i>Brian Worsfold</i>	29
Bullion Shipments on the Canal: <i>Andrew Berriman</i>	32
John Spershott – A Moral Conundrum: <i>James McInnes</i>	36
Alf Ainger of the ‘Royal Oak’: <i>Andrew Shaxson</i>	42
The Turings in Chichester: <i>David Wilson</i>	46
A Festival Revival: <i>Barry Smith</i>	53
Chichester’s Covid-19 Awards: <i>Greg Slay</i>	55
About the Society	Inside back cover
Guidelines for Contributors to Journal No. 39 (2023)	Inside back cover

EDITORIAL

Whether royalist or republican, local or further afield, we have celebrated 2022 – a year of many anniversaries and celebrations – through all manner of street parties and other activities.

Locally for example, Chichester Canal celebrates its bicentenary, Chichester City Band its 125th birthday, and St Wilfrid's Hospice its 35th birthday. The Festival of Chichester and the Novium Museum are ten years old. The Chichester International Film Festival has made it to 30 years, whilst both Pallant House Gallery and the Consort of Twelve celebrate their 40th birthdays. And Chichester Festival Theatre opened its 60th birthday year with a world premiere debut play by local author Kate Mosse who adapted her own best-selling gothic thriller that is set in and around Chichester. Many of these anniversaries have been combined in Culture Spark, a district-wide and multiple venues celebration that got under way in March and ends in October. The 'Art of Chichester' exhibition (and accompanying book) at the Novium Museum shows how rich and diverse is the city's current artistic scene.

May I remind readers of the invitation in *Chichester History* 37 to document your own memories from this year's many events? Hopefully you will have been able to take part in some of the celebrations, and will have something to report to your own families and/or social networks. If you make notes of your reflections, local historians and researchers (through West Sussex Record Office, for example) would love to be able to read them in years to come.

As a result of the re-emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 attention has rightly been drawn to aspects of our past that may have been overlooked. Chichester's own history should not be immune to such inspection. Richard Childs has delved deep into the historical records and has provided both a lecture and an article for this annual Journal that should stimulate further research.

Sincere thanks to everyone else who has volunteered articles this year. I do hope you will make your own new discoveries about the Chichester you know or thought you knew. I am very grateful to Pauline Newton who continues to turn our efforts into the published format, to Katherine Slay for her proof-reading, and to West Sussex Record Office for assistance with sourcing photographs and other records – and for providing permission to use them.

I look forward to your feedback and contributions to future issues.

Greg Slay

ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

Andrew Berriman has been a member of the Society since 1985, and has been its Chairman, Secretary and Journal Editor. He has given regular talks to Society members, and written many articles for this Journal. His recent books are *In Search of Lavant* (2020) and *In Search of Fifty South Downs Villages* (2021); *In Search of Chichester* comes out this autumn.

Bruce Barker-Benfield was a curator of medieval manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for 44 years, and was also responsible for the Bodleian's Shelley collections. In 1992 he curated the Bodleian's bicentenary exhibition for P B Shelley's birth. In 2008 his edition of the 15th – century library catalogue of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury – 'a weekend task' – was published by the British Academy. In retirement, he continues to explore both medieval manuscripts and papers from Shelley's lifetime.

Richard Childs came to Chichester in 1993 when he was appointed as the County Archivist at West Sussex Record Office. On retirement in 2011 he became Chairman of the Chichester Society, in which role he continued until 2017.

Alan H J Green was born in Chichester and still lives in the city. A chartered civil engineer by profession, he has a deep interest in architectural history, particularly the Georgian period. He conducts guided walks around Chichester, gives lectures on the city's history, and has published a number of books about aspects of the city.

Andrew Shaxson is chair of Harting, and of Elsted and Treyford, Parish Councils. He was a district councillor for twenty years, and has been a parish councillor since 1987. He has always lived in Elsted, and enjoys researching and 'soaking up' all aspects of local history. He is old enough to have drunk at the *Royal Oak* with Alf Ainger.

Greg Slay moved to Chichester with his wife Katherine in 1991 and has pursued various interests in heritage, identity and place ever since. He works at County Hall in the city. Greg has been the Editor of *Chichester History* since volume 33 (2017); he was also Editor for volumes 22-26 (2006-10 inclusive). He has contributed a range of articles for this Journal over the years.

Barry Smith is the host of Open Mic Poetry at New Park Centre, Chichester. Together with Joan Secombe, he is the director of Chichester Poetry and editor of *Poetry & All That Jazz*, a magazine published annually in connection with the

Poetry & Jazz Café, the headline poetry event of the Festival of Chichester. It brings together emerging writers with established poets. As well as co-ordinating the Festival of Chichester, Barry is director of the South Downs Poetry Festival. His own collection, *Performance Rites*, is available from Waterloo Press.

David Wilson retired to Chichester in 2002. He has been involved in voluntary work for Fishbourne Roman Palace and West Dean Gardens and for several years was on the Chichester Society executive committee both as Secretary and Treasurer. He rapidly developed an interest in family history after a 'Long Lost Family' episode revealed a multitude of cousins in New Zealand. David reckons that he has walked or cycled more than 90% of the rights of way within 20 miles of Chichester.

Brian Worsfold moved from Hampshire to Sussex in 1985 when he joined Chichester Local History Society. He followed Garry Long as Secretary. Brian is an honorary Life Member of the Society. He has also contributed a range of articles to Chichester History over the years.



Sloe Fair is back! Undeterred by heavy rain, Chichester revellers return on Wednesday 20 October 2021 (Greg Slay)

THE ELUSIVE CHAMPION'S COURT, SOMERSTOWN

by Alan H J Green

I suspect few will recognise the address 'Champion's (a.k.a. Champion*) Court, Chichester' but that is not to be surprised at. In its possessive variant it sounds a very modern appellation – could it perhaps be a name recently bestowed upon new a development and intended to commemorate some local sporting celebrity? Well no; it actually dates from the early 19th century and was expunged nearly 60 years ago. Ever obscure, you will search in vain for it on maps for, even though it is plotted on the Ordnance Survey it is not named thereon, and its anonymity was perpetuated by its not being listed in directories before the 1920s. As if all that were not enough, it could have been difficult to find on the ground unless you knew precisely where to look. One must assume, however, that the GPO acknowledged its existence and that residents received their post!

Where and what was Champions Court?

Champion's Court was a close of eight dwellings in Somerstown, tucked away behind No 2 High Street and unseen because its only means of access was on foot via a gloomy 66' (20m) long arched passageway – a tunnel in effect – built through the southern terrace of High Street, between Nos 2-3.

Building of the east side of Somerstown commenced with High Street in 1811, and plots at its east end, near the junction with the New Broyle (now Broyle Road) including Nos 2 and 3, were developed by George Gatehouse. James Champion, a gunsmith whose premises were in East Street Chichester, bought the residue of a 1000-year lease on some High Street properties from Lot Adames and Sophia Battershell in May 1834, and in April 1836 the freehold of 10 Somerstown premises was released to his trustees by Lot Adames. From the descriptions in the release indenture these premises included 2-3 High Street and the eight dwellings built behind it, six of which are described as 'cottages'. These eight dwellings were to acquire the epithet Champion's Court.¹ Now the trouble with property deeds is that whilst they tell you what buildings were on a site at the time it was sold they don't tell you when they are built, so we can't be certain when Champion's Court was actually constructed, or by whom. In view of its name though it was most likely James Champion himself was responsible, either in whole or in part. That same year, 1836, James Champion was elected a member of the Common Council; his star was in the ascendancy.²

Sadly I have been unable to find any photographs either of Champion's Court itself or the entrance to it – but I live in hope.

* Both terms seem to have had equal currency. In directory entries and on Census returns Champion is used, but in property deeds and newspaper reports it is Champion's. Pearl Goodman also refers to it as Champion's Court suggesting that must have been the local parlance as well.



Fig. 1: An extract from the 1875 OS of Somers-town at 1:500 scale showing the east end of High Street and its junction with Broyle Road. The boundary of Champion's Court is indicated in red. The street to the south is George Street. (West Sussex Record Office)

Fig. 2: A corresponding (but unadulterated) extract from the coloured version of the 1:500 which distinguishes buildings and gardens more clearly. It can be seen that outhouses (including lavatories) at the ends of gardens in Broyle Road abutted the back walls of Champion's Court. The thick red lines here indicate boundary walls. The small building against the west garden wall is the communal lavatory for Nos 3-8. To help you get your bearings, the 'L' shaped building at the bottom right-hand corner still exists – it's now The Bell. (Author's collection)

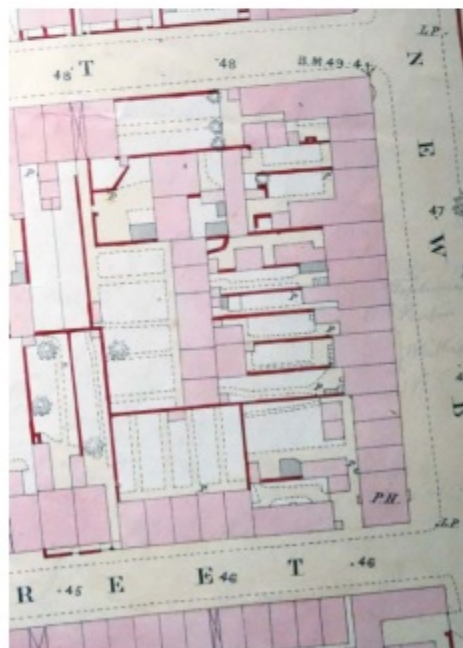


Fig. 1 is an extract from the 1875 Ordnance Survey on which I have marked the boundary of Champion's Court and numbered the dwellings. The passageway through the High Street terrace is indicated by the crossed lines. You will see that the close consisted of two larger dwellings (Nos 1-2) at the north within a walled garden, followed by a further six (Nos 3-8) having common gardens to the west, and abutting garden outhouses of Broyle Road on the east. The first two dwellings had a much smaller footprint than was the norm for High Street, and the other six were positively miniscule. All had been built on what was previously garden ground, and the passageway was originally intended to give access to the rear of High Street, probably for the night soil men. Similar passages can still be seen in Cavendish and Washington Streets. Whoever built it had created sub-standard dwellings for renting to the poor – slums for the future in fact.

Nos 1-2 Champion's Court were sold at auction in August 1889 and the sale particulars tell us that No 1 consisted of a sitting room, kitchen and three bedrooms with a back yard and front garden, whilst No 2, offered a sitting room, wash house, two bedrooms and a back yard. Both had sitting tenants who paid weekly rents.³ They were obviously two storeys high and we can assume they were of brick with either slated or tiled roofs.

No such information is available for Nos 3-8 but we can glean something about their form from the 1911 Census for then, unlike in 2021 when we only had to state the number of bedrooms, all 'habitable' rooms had to be recorded by the enumerator*, which definition included kitchens but not bathrooms (as if!). All six had only two rooms each and hence must have been single storey. An insurance certificate for 1900⁴ records that they were of brick with tiled roofs and the latter suggests that they were of lean-to construction, built against the garden wall separating the close from the houses in Broyle Road. On the other side of this wall lean-to outhouses and lavatories had also been built. This is where a photograph would be so useful. We can see from the OS that a communal lavatory block was provided on the far side of the garden, and from its proportions this probably housed three 'thunderboxes' – one for each pair of dwellings.

Scaling from the 1:500 OS, the footprint of each of these measures 4.8 m deep x 4.0m wide (15'6" x 13'1") which, after deducting for the thicknesses of the walls, gives a floor area of only 16.4m² (176.53ft²). These dwellings were equivalent to what today would be termed a bedsitting room intended as cheap, unpretentious living for one person and comprising just a living-cum-bedroom and a kitchen.

*The enumerator had obviously been made aware of Champion's Court despite its anonymity.

James Champion died in 1854 in Bursledon, Hampshire, and his various Somerstown properties underwent several changes of ownership both before and after his demise. In June 1889 No 2 High Street and 1-2 Champion's Court were conveyed to Douglas and C J Henty of the famous brewing family who, two months later, included them in an auction of a number of their properties across Chichester. This auction was held on 8 August 1889 by Hobgen Bros, and Lot 21, comprising 2 High Street and 1-2 Champion's Court, was knocked down to William Butler.



Fig 3: The best I can come up with photographically. A 1950s view along High Street from Broyle Road with No 2 High Street indicated. By referring to the maps at Figs 1 and 2, No 1 High Street and its garden wall can be identified. Everything in this view has been lost. If you stand here now you will be facing a high brick wall enclosing the architecturally-challenged 1970s Somerstown development. (The Novium Museum)

In September 1896 William Butler also bought Nos 3-8 Champion's Court from Mary Ellen Ellis of Selsey and the conveyance usefully records the width of the passageway (4'8') and that it was arched. William Butler now owned the whole of Champion's Court and his portfolio included several other houses in High Street.⁵

Life in Champion's Court

Champion's Court certainly did house the very poor, and in overcrowded conditions. At the 1911 Census 28 people were inhabiting the eight dwellings;

the two rooms of No 3 being inhabited by five persons and those in No 6 by four. For this to happen there would have to have been beds in the kitchen so the conditions can only be imagined. Only No 8 had a single occupant. Of the two larger dwellings, the five rooms of No 1 were occupied by three persons, but the four of No 2 housed no fewer than nine. The wretchedness would have been compounded by the back walls abutting the lavatories of Broyle Road thus providing interesting noises – and possibly smells – off. It was, in short, a shanty town.

The occupations in 1911 of those of working age are recorded as being labourers (4), hawkers (2), a porter, a delivery boy, a blacksmith, a gravel digger and a bricklayer. Two boys are listed as being pupils. Interestingly 16 of those 28 had been born in Chichester.

The Court's reputation became unsavoury and it seems that most other Somerstown residents preferred to draw a discreet veil over it. Pearl Goodman (née Turner) was born and brought up in Somerstown and in her memoir, *A String of Pearls*, she paints a vivid picture of her childhood there in the 1920s and has this to say about Champion's Court:⁶

Opposite was Champion's Court, almost a ghetto for the poor and rejected, peopled only by their own kind.

She always dreaded passing its entrance:

I turned the corner, clutching in my hand a hair ribbon and comb for my aunt to tie a butterfly bow. This alone segregated me for all time, as I had to pass Champion's Court where children, some with only dresses and no underclothes or shoes, belonged to the very poor families who lived side by side with the well fed. One did not go into the Court, but I longed to see inside and ask them what they had for their dinner – if any! When I passed they laughed and called out, and I screwed my detestable ribbon tighter in my hand...

Having said that though, there was one aspect of Champion's Court life she envied:

I know I was known as 'the kid who never got dirty'... The little girls of Champion's Court made me feel a privilege I never wanted. I longed to take off my shoes and socks and run bare-footed down the street. Once in the allotment I tried to walk on water like Jesus, and was lifted out covered with slime. I walked the whole of High Street in this state; I had never been so happy.



Fig. 4: A charming illustration from *A String of Pearls* shewing the entrance to Champion's Court. Pearl Goodman drew all the illustrations for the book and here she depicts herself facing some of the residents at the entrance to their 'tunnel'. Drawn from memory over 60 years on, the passageway is shewn as much wider than its actual 4' 8", but to a small child's eye things always appeared bigger than they really were, so she has recorded the impression she gained. Note that the name Champion's Court was displayed on the brickwork above the arch.

(Courtesy of Michael Anselm, executor of the late Pearl Goodman)

Champion's Court was obviously a no-go area. At the time of which Pearl was writing its residents were often reported as being up before the Beak; in May 1924 Charles White was fined 7s 6d for keeping a dog without a licence, and in September that year Joseph Ferren, a jobbing gardener who lived at No. 8, was charged with stealing jewellery valued at £60 from a house in Apuldrum. In November 1927 that same Joseph Ferren was sharing his home with his 19-year-old nephew who broke into the gas meter, relieved it of 15s 10d and then pocketed his uncle's Ingersoll watch. Ferren shopped said nephew to the police who pleaded guilty and was bound over for £10.⁷

Joyce McKenzie, another past Somerstown resident, published her evocative *Memories of Somerstown – A Tribute to a Community* in 2008, but makes only one brief mention of Champion's Court, which she describes as 'much maligned by some'. When gathering material for the book a lady wrote to her about her aunt, Mrs Williams, who had lived there with her family of nine and worked as a cattle drover, even when heavily pregnant.⁸ The 1937 *Kelly's Directory* lists an Ernest Williams at 2 Champion's Court so at least she had one of the larger

dwellings – but with eleven in its four rooms it would still have been uncomfortably overcrowded.

In the single-storey section adjacent, dwellings were intermittently annexed to form larger accommodation. In Fig. 1 it can be seen that in 1875 Nos 5-6 are indicated as one, but by the 1911 Census they had reverted to being individual dwellings, whilst the 1926 *Directory* lists a Mrs White as occupying both Nos 3-4. This perhaps hints at the substance of the party walls if openings could be so easily created and resealed for this purpose.

A final change of Ownership and the beginning of the end

Champion's Court eventually came to the attention of the Corporation's Medical Officer of Health who reported to the Sanitary, Drainage and Waterworks Committee on 26 June 1929 that Nos 3-8 'are in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation'. The Committee resolved to write to the owners drawing their attention to the problem and pointing out the need for urgent remedial work. By August 1930 nothing had obviously been done for the Medical Officer of Health reported to the Sanitary Committee that month that representations for closing (i.e. condemning) Nos 3-8 had been put in hand and owners and occupiers would be invited to attend the next committee meeting to put forward any cause or just impediment why closure should not happen.

Whether any such causes were put forward is not recorded, but at the Sanitary Committee's September meetings it was resolved that Nos 1-8 Champion's Court along with Nos 2-5 and 68-71 High Street should be purchased by the Corporation and Nos 3-8 Champion's Court demolished.⁹ All these properties were in the estate of the now-late William Butler.

William Butler had died on 1 November 1924, so in 1931 the Corporation bought the properties in High Street and Champion's Court from his executors. The 16 properties netted just £900 for Butler's estate which is equivalent to only £59,220 today and a mere £3,700 per property on average. Equivalent properties to High Street on the west side of Somerstown now change hands for over £400,000!

The conveyance, dated 2 May 1931, records that the Corporation had exercised their rights under Part III of the Housing Act 1925 to acquire land and houses for the provision of housing accommodation for the working classes, and they had doubtless used this to drive a hard bargain.¹⁰

They had bought these houses to increase their stock of council housing, but the pestilential Nos 3-8 Champion's Court were beyond redemption and were duly demolished in June 1931; from now on Champion's Court consisted of only two houses, Nos 1-2, which were renovated and let for 8 shillings per week. An offer to purchase the paving from the demolished area of Champion's Court raised a useful £5 for the municipal coffers.¹¹

The Ultimate End

In 1957 Chichester City Council decreed the east side of Somerstown to be a slum area and resolved to undertake compulsory purchase of all 171 properties for demolition: the 1931 purchase of Butler's High Street properties having given them a head start of course. The outrage was bitterly opposed by the populace since, although many of the houses were in a run-down condition owing to inattention by uncaring absentee landlords, they were capable of being renovated and modernised as was to happen on the west side which got a reprieve. Councillors also claimed that they lacked modern amenities, but so did so many smaller Chichester houses in the 1950s. Stanley Roth, a local architect, campaigned for their retention and restoration and no less a personage than Sir Laurence Olivier staged a supporting campaign in the national press. Sadly all fell on deaf ears and the Council embarked on a disgraceful and unforgivable act, an act which still sticks in the throats of older Cicestrians.

The demolition took place during Chichester's *annus horribilis* of 1964 and everything, save for two pubs, *The Bell* and *The Rainbow*, was flattened, including the remains of Champion's Court. Two thirds of a community was obliterated. However, whilst High, George and Cross Streets were to be fondly remembered and lamented, Champion's Court was quickly forgotten. Few today have ever heard of it.

Envoi

Poor is a relative term. The wealthy residents of Summersdale in their vast houses in Lavant Road, The Avenue and Brandy Hole Lane would have regarded Orchard Street, where I was brought up in the 1950s, as a poor area. We were a household of seven – three generations – living in a small, three-bedroom Victorian terrace house with only one heated room and no bathroom. For our first few years there our ablutions were carried out in tin baths before the open fire in the living room until my father installed a proper bath – in the kitchen! We also had no car and no telephone, so by comparison with Summersdale, we were poor, although we certainly did not consider ourselves such.

We in turn though thought the residents of Somerstown were poor as they lived in even smaller houses than ours, often with larger households and many having no electricity. Joyce McKenzie's book paints a portrait of a community which, although not wealthy, was still proud, displaying crisp net curtains at sparkling windows, whitening their doorsteps and exhibiting the spirit of true neighbourliness.

Those living out of sight, crammed into decaying Champion's Court however were the truly poor of Chichester – poor by everyone's standards.

Acknowledgments

In closing I would like to thank Michael Anselm, executor for the late Pearl Goodman, for kindly granting permission for Pearl's drawing at Fig 4 to be used, and Philip Robinson for, once again, sharing his work on the 1911 Census of Chichester which has thrown much useful light on the matter.

References

- 1 WSRO AM 628/5/1 Ten bundles of deeds and other documentation relating to properties in High Street including Champion's Court 1811-1931
- 2 Pigot & Co's *National and Commercial Directory: Sussex*. 1839
- 3 WSRO AM 628/5/1 *op cit*
- 4 *ibid*
- 5 *ibid*
- 6 Pearl Goodman *A String of Pearls: Somerstown with love, and other stories* Belfry Books, Chichester, 1991
- 7 *Portsmouth Evening News*, 26 May and 9 September 1924, *Chichester Observer* 2 November 1927
- 8 Joyce McKenzie *Memories of Somerstown – A Tribute to a Community* Purbeck Books, Wareham, 2008
- 9 WSRO Chichester City Archive CA/22 Committee minute book 1929-1930
- 10 WSRO AM 628/5/1 *op cit*
- 11 WSRO Chichester City Archive CA/23 & CA/24 Committee minute books 1930 -1932 and 1932-34

TEACHING AT THE PREBENDAL SCHOOL IN 1822

by Bruce Barker-Benfield

Note from the Editor: A longer version of this article, together with a transcript of the letter, scans of the original letter, and the original letter itself, has been put on deposit at West Sussex Record Office. The catalogue reference there is AM 1603.

A new Assistant at the Prebendal School, Chichester, describes life and teaching there, in a letter to his brother dated 20 February 1822. The writer, R. Thompson, is a young man from the North of England. He feels uncomfortable and isolated, far from friends and family, as he is plunged into full teaching duties on the morning after his arrival. By the time he writes home, a few weeks later, he is finding his feet and noticing differences between North and South. He intends to stay until reaching the minimum age for ordination (twenty-three to twenty-four), for which as an evangelical he thinks it safest to return North.

Thompson's first name, identity and dates remain a mystery, but more is known about his correspondent. William Dawson Thompson (1781-1844) must be some twenty years older than his brother, and has helped him with 'unavoidable expences' for the move south. 'George' and 'Thomas', mentioned without surnames, are probably also their brothers. William is a clergyman, married with children, and deputizes as minister at the Horton Parochial Chapelry, Northumberland. He is also Head of a boarding academy at Crow Hall, Cramlington – hence his professional as well as personal interest in Chichester's famous school.

The Head Master of the Prebendal School is George Bliss (1782-1856) – 'Mr B' in the letter – now nearing the end of his reign there (1808-24). The Head Master is *ex officio* a prebendary of the Cathedral – the formal source of the school's endowment – but Mr Bliss combines this with the post of Perpetual Curate of Funtington, nearly five miles away, and rides there every Sunday on his excellent horse. Thompson is in awe of him, both admiring and critical, declaring his language elevated but his manner less graceful than that of a well-regarded northern headmaster, Mr Moises [of the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle]. Mr Bliss does not socialize, and spends most of his time in his study. As an explanation for this aloofness, the reported death of his wife in childbirth 'has I think quite alienated his affections from the world'.

The other Assistant, 'Mr D', just a few years older than Thompson, is more friendly: he is John Davies (1795-1861), a clergyman and (from 1820) Stipendiary Curate at Chichester's Subdeanery church of St Peter the Great. The two Assistants have shared wine and fruit at Davies's lodgings on Saturday

afternoons, when Davies has recited his own poetical translations from his native Welsh. He has already published a volume of poems (not readily identifiable). On Sundays, Bliss and Davies are away at their churches, leaving Thompson in sole charge: 'I can assure you I am not a little proud at the head of the Table surrounded by so many young nobles all obedient to my nod'.

Thompson is anxious about his own social position, having been warned that Assistants in Southern schools might be considered as mere upper servants – but he is reassured by what he finds. The actual servants treat him well, anticipating his wishes and providing excellent meals, warm every day, with cocoa morning and afternoon. His evenings are solitary but comfortable, as he reads alone in the parlour with a good fire and two candles – and his bedroom has a commanding view of the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace.

He boasts of the high status of his pupils: sons of noblemen; two sons of the Bishop of Gloucester, the younger sharper than the older; and half a dozen sons of generals in the army, who speak French well after long stays in France. The ages of the boys when specified go from ten to fifteen, though perhaps this was not the full range. No distinction is made between day boys and boarders, though the latter were presumably those whom Thompson supervised on Sundays. The boys are kind to Thompson, praising his handwriting and calling it an honour to lend him their own books.

Glimpses of the school's curriculum and schedule are provided, though not a complete picture. The boys have two lessons in classics before breakfast; Mr Bliss appears for the second of these, at a quarter to nine. There are classes in Latin (Virgil, Cornelius Nepos) and Greek (Homer, Demosthenes, Herodotus), that is, both verse and prose writers, with special emphasis on learning rules of grammar and parsing texts. Thompson has about 18 boys in his Virgil class, many only ten or eleven years old. A beginners' class of about 20 boys are starting on Greek grammar and construe.

Thompson's Homer class includes a nobleman's son, only about twelve years of age; and many boys aged around thirteen to fifteen have already read 'all Homer' and are now studying Demosthenes and Herodotus. Each morning the boys are given gobbets of text to analyse – a standard 80 lines of Virgil – and every Wednesday morning they revise and repeat their whole week's work to Mr Bliss. Discipline is strict, but keeps them active and attentive: 'the least mistake renders them liable to such a flogging as is rarely heard of in the North'.

Standard textbooks for Latin and Greek are mentioned. Mr Bliss swears by Richard Lyne's *Latin primer* (1795) as best for beginners, along with Eton Greek and Latin Grammars. Thompson persuades him to order copies of Richard Valpy's *Delectus sententiarum Graecarum* (1815), a selection of elementary extracts in Greek. The emphasis on parsing – analysis of the grammatical structure of each sentence – would have encouraged mental discipline and

logical thought. Other exercises mentioned, requiring knowledge and skill, are Latin verses – metrical compositions, most likely in hexameters or elegiac couplets – and ‘themes’ or prose essays in English or Latin.

The classics are studied in the morning, before dinner; and, given the early start, there is also time before dinner for Mr Bliss to take the boys out for a walk of about an hour and a half. Other subjects are reserved for the afternoon, but only two are mentioned: Mathematics, including Euclid, and Handwriting: ‘they look upon my writing almost as Copperplate’. Thompson’s letter does indeed start in fine, formal copperplate, but rapidly descends into more cursive style, with dense cross-writing. One young gentleman is learning the pianoforte, and Thompson rather fancies learning it too – provided his brother approves.

Besides schoolwork, the three teachers share their other life of church duties or attendance, preaching, and the study of theology. Mr Bliss ‘gets most of the best books in Divinity that come out’, and generously offers Thompson the run of his library; he subscribes to hefty periodicals such as *The Christian Observer* and *The Christian Guardian*. Thompson has heard Mr Bliss preach twice – ‘not naturally eloquent, though he uses great exertion and is very animated.’

Every Sunday, Thompson ‘has the blessing of hearing three excellent Gospel sermons’, and another on Thursday evening. The Reverend Stephen Barbut delivered the Sunday morning and evening sermons at the Chapel of St John the Evangelist. Thompson takes the boys with him there, rather than to the Cathedral: Mr Davies of the Subdeanery Church gives the Sunday afternoon sermon. There is no mention of any participation by boys of the School in the Cathedral choir; nor indeed of any charitable function for the school, or outreach to poorer children.

Although Bliss, Davies and Barbut each hold a curacy – and Bliss as a Prebendary preaches occasionally in the Cathedral – they are all evangelicals, to whom, Thompson believes, the near-nonagenarian Bishop (John Buckner) and his clergy are very hostile. With his preference for ‘Gospel sermons’ Thompson is also an evangelical, which is why, he says, when he reaches the right age he will bypass the ancient Bishop and return North to be ordained. But maybe Thompson exaggerates the Bishop’s hostility. In January 1824, the Reverends Bliss, Davies and Barbut will be listed together as founding members of the Chichester and Western Sussex Auxiliary Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews – Patron, the Lord Bishop of Chichester.

George Bliss receives scant notice in histories of the Prebendal School. ‘In 1818 he had forty boys, boarders and day boys included; the former at 60 guineas, the latter at eight guineas a year. Mr Bliss seems to have fallen on lean years’ [Victoria County History of Sussex, 1907, volume 2 page 409]. The rental income from the prebend’s land – endowment was too low, due to slow turnover of lease – renewals with long – lived tenants. Bliss’s successor Charles

Webber (1824-40) – a pluralist, Archdeacon of Chichester since 1808 – is said to have revived the school’s fortunes, nearly doubling the number of boys to some seventy or eighty, half of them boarders, and enabling it to become ‘the fashionable place for children to be educated ... patronised equally by the gentry of both county and city’ [Neville Ollerenshaw, 1984, *A History of The Prebendal School*, page 14]. But under the next Head Master, Thomas Brown (1840-79), the school ‘fell to pieces’; it was down to 18 boys in 1866, all under 14 years of age. The fortunes of the school evidently waxed or waned with each Head Master.

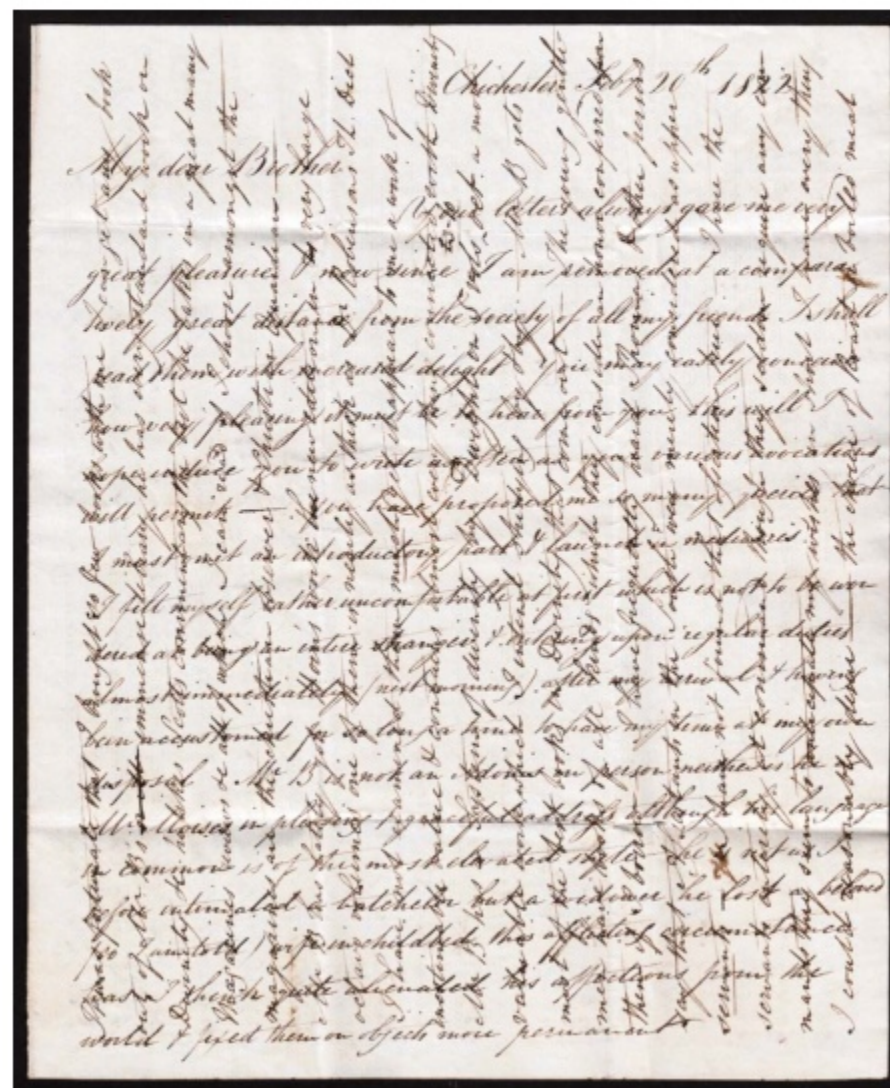


Fig. 1: Thompson’s letter to his brother, dated 20 February 1822, page 1. (Author’s collection)

Thompson's letter helps to flesh out and perhaps redeem the picture of the school under George Bliss. Whatever its size, the school appears to be flourishing, under a stable regime. In 1822 Thompson reports that the boys are receiving an excellent classical education, even if flogging was integral to the method: 'I never heard boys read Virgil so well ... they parse and quote all their Latin rules to admiration'. He does not record the total number of boys, but the class sizes he mentions (18 or 20 pupils) seem respectable. The daily classes will have been provided mostly by the two Assistants, but weekly repetitions to the Head Master also form part of the routine. There is no shortage of books, whether textbooks for the school or new theology for the Head Master's library; and the boys have their own books of all kinds.

One signal that all might not be well might be the sudden reception of Thompson himself: barely 20 years old, the new Assistant is rushed headlong into the classroom. This sounds like a hasty appointment; and Thompson's evangelical leanings might have influenced his selection. Only one other teacher, the Welsh-speaker John Davies, is mentioned alongside Mr Bliss himself. By contrast, William Dawson Thompson's academy at Crow Hall even had its own resident dancing-master, named as such in the county gazetteer.

At Chichester, Thompson's solitary evenings suggest he is the only resident teacher, apart from the Head Master. Davies must have left the Prebendal School soon afterwards: in 1823 he became Vicar of St Pancras, Chichester, got married, and set up his own boarding school with his wife at his new vicarage. Their daughter, Emily Davies (1830-1921), became the co-founder of Girton College in Cambridge.

All these schoolmasters – Bliss, Davies, Thompson's brother – make their livings by combining teaching with paid livings in the Church of England. Their income could be precarious, and partially dependent on school fees from their upper-class pupils. At the end of this letter, Thompson commiserates with his brother over 'the inconveniences occasioned by Mr Messenger's neglect'. This was the Reverend Robert Messenger, Perpetual Curate of Horton, whose duties were farmed out to William Thompson as stand-in minister: accusations of neglect were surely inevitable.

This long letter provides a flavour of what it was like to teach at a cathedral grammar school with dwindling income in the late Georgian era, and to aspire, even as an evangelical, towards a life of teaching and preaching within the established church.

CHICHESTER'S SLAVE OWNERS

by Richard Childs

Note from the Editor: A longer version of this article, together with a copy of the illustrated lecture of that article, has been put on deposit at West Sussex Record Office. The catalogue reference is MP 8780.

Background

In 1807 the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act came into force. It made the trans-Atlantic trade in slaves from Africa to the British colonies illegal. However, it did not abolish slavery: this would take a further 26 years to achieve. To combat illicit transportation following the 1807 Act, many British Colonies began keeping registers of slaves who had been so-called 'lawfully enslaved'. In 1819 the Office for the Registry of Colonial Slaves was established in London and copies of the slave registers kept by the colonies were sent to this office. The registers continued until 1834.

After decades of campaigning, the Slavery Abolition Act 1833 provided for the immediate abolition of slavery in most parts of the British Empire. This Act made the purchase or ownership of slaves illegal within the British Empire, with just a few exceptions.

The Slave Compensation Act 1837 was the first act of compensated emancipation. It authorised the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt to compensate slave owners in the British colonies of the Caribbean, Mauritius, and the Cape of Good Hope in the amount of approximately £20 million for freed slaves. As slaves were considered to be property, their freedom could not be achieved without their owners being compensated for their loss.

The sum of £20 million compensation constituted 40% of the Treasury's annual tax receipts or approximately 5% of British Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The £20 million would be worth the equivalent of £1.5 billion today.

Some 47,000 awards to slave owners were issued. Some of the payments were converted into 3.5% government annuities. The final payouts were made as recently as 2015.

Half of the £20 million went to slave-owning families in the Caribbean and Africa, while the other half went to absentee owners living in Britain. The names listed in the returns for slave owner payments show that ownership was spread over hundreds of British families, many of high social standing. The majority are listed in a Parliamentary Return. The account of all the payments awarded by the Commissioners of Slave Compensation was published in the *Parliamentary Papers* 1837-8 (215) volume 48.

The University College London (UCL) Project

University College London's Legacies of British Slave-ownership project developed in two phases. First, the project identified those who claimed compensation for the loss of their 'property' – totalling about 670,000 slaves in 1833. For this phase the published record of the slave compensation claims were used. Second, the Slave Registers held at The National Archives were consulted. These enabled the project to document the names of slave owners in the British Caribbean between 1817-1833, the location and names of estates, and the numbers of enslaved. This information, supplemented by a range of other sources, was used to build a database that gives the most comprehensive documentation of slave ownership in the British Caribbean between 1763-1833.

At the core of the project is a web-based *Encyclopaedia of British Slave-ownership* containing information about:

- (1) every slave-owner in the British Caribbean, Mauritius, or the Cape at the moment of abolition in 1833;
- (2) all the estates identified in the British Caribbean in the period 1763-1833; and
- (3) all the slave-owners, attorneys, mortgagees, and legatees identified to date for the estates between 1763 and 1833.

Entries for individuals include information about the activities, affiliations and legacies of these men and women, with a particular emphasis on the 'absentee' owners based in Britain. What follows are the biographical details of the individual recipients of compensation who at some time were resident in Chichester or its immediate environs.

Martha Baker

Martha Baker was born in Chichester in 1756, the daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth Baker. She was baptised in the Unitarian Chapel, Baffins Lane. Martha was a mortgagee with other members of the family of John Baker, on Baker's estate in St Vincent from 1803 to at least 1809. She appears to have been the niece and daughter-in-law of John Baker, having married her cousin Joseph Baker of the East India Company, in the Sub-deanery, Chichester, on 12 August 1782 (Joseph died in India in 1789).

In 1810 an indenture rehearsed the background of the estate on St Vincent called Bakers, which George Maitland had mortgaged in 1803 to Martha Baker, Joseph Baker, and John Richard Baker amongst others to secure £16,000, of which – on 31 March 1809 – £13,563 was outstanding. Maitland had also mortgaged 50 'negroes' in 1800 to secure a further £3,000. The mortgagees gained possession of the estate and conveyed it to John Wilson Carmichael

subject to the mortgages. The Baker family group agreed to leave their mortgage in place for another six years.

In the 1841 census Martha Baker, aged 80, was living in West Pallant with her servants, the husband and wife team of James and Elizabeth Bridger. Martha Baker died in 1845. She left personal effects and monetary legacies to family members and an annuity of £100 to James and Elizabeth Bridger. In her will she also stated that she wished to be buried in Chichester Cathedral beneath the monument to her husband.

Edmund Bryan

On 30 November 1835 and aged 27, Edmund Bryan was awarded £6,603 15s 6d compensation for 387 slaves on the Bog estate and Shotover Pen in Portland, Jamaica. He had previously been awarded £5,362 6s 5d for 280 slaves on the Muir Town Estate and £4,104 13s 1d for 215 slaves on the Reach Estate both in St Thomas-in-the-East in Jamaica.

Edmund Bryan was born in 1808. In the 1851 census he was living at 19 North Street with his wife and daughters. In 1853 he is recorded as being an overseer of the poor at St Peter the Less on North Street. By the time of the 1861 census he had moved to London. He died in 1870 and his will valued his effects at under £1,500.

The Duer Family

The Reverend Rowland Duer was the eldest son and heir of Major John Duer of



Fig. 1: The memorial to Joseph Baker in the north nave aisle of Chichester Cathedral. (Author's collection)

the Duers estate in Antigua and his wife Frances, daughter of Colonel John Frye of Antigua. There is a barely legible floor slab dated 1791 to the Reverend Rowland Duer by the southwest tower of the nave of Chichester Cathedral – he was one-time chaplain to the Bishop of Chichester.

He was owner of the 400-acre Big Duers estate in Antigua and was mentioned in his children's counterclaim for Big Duers inherited by his eldest son, Rowland Duer junior. The claim for £3,306 6s 9d for the Big Duers estate was made on 21 January 1839 in respect of 244 slaves.

His daughter, Mary, married Charles Creswell on 17 January 1797 in Chichester. Mary Creswell was bequeathed a £50 annuity by her brother. Her sisters Theodora and Elizabeth were both awarded compensation based on identical annuities, but Mary did not make a claim. She was however named as the co-beneficiary of the will of her sister Theodora.

Elizabeth Duer, together with her sister Theodora, were awarded compensation for the Big Duers estate on Antigua. They had been identified as counterclaimants under a deed of settlement and as annuitants under their brother's will. In the 1841 census Elizabeth was aged 70, of independent means, and living in West Street. She died in 1844 and was buried in the Cathedral Close – in the specific area of the cathedral precincts now referred to as 'Paradise'. An inventory of the goods at her West Street address, dated 14 February, valued the contents at £46 10s.

In the same census Theodora Duer was shown as aged 65, of independent means, and also living in the Cathedral Close, but in a lodging-house. She died on 18 December 1846 and was buried in the Cathedral Close. Her address in the burial register is however given as North Street. In the will, she left her estate in trust with half the income to go to her sister Elizabeth Duer (sic) and half to her sister Mary Creswell, widow.

General Sir James Duff

Born in 1753 in Keith, Aberdeenshire, he was commissioned into the army in April 1769 and served as brigade major in 1780 during the Gordon Riots. He was knighted in 1779. As general officer commanding the Limerick district from 1797, Duff helped to crush the Irish rebellion of 1798. Duff died in 1839 at Funtington House, near Chichester, and is buried in Funtington parish churchyard.

On 12 August 1785 he had married Basilia, the daughter and heir of James Dawes of Rockspring, Jamaica. Marriage brought him financial independence and shared ownership in a sugar plantation. On 25 January 1836 he claimed £4,101 0s 1d for 202 slaves on the Grange Sugar Estate, Jamaica.

Charles Rose Ellis, Lord Seaford

Charles Rose Ellis was born in St John, Jamaica, on 19 December 1771, the second son of John Ellis, an estate and slave owner, and his wife Elizabeth. Ellis's father had died at sea in 1782, dividing his property between his two sons, but leaving Charles both estates and enslaved people in Jamaica: these produced an income of around £20,000 a year. After the emancipation, he settled in England and had a country home in Bedfordshire. He bought the Claremont estate in Surrey [now owned by the National Trust] in 1798 but later sold it in 1816. He wasted little time buying his way into Parliament, becoming MP for Heytesbury in 1793. Apart from a short interruption in 1806-07, he remained in the Commons until he was elevated to the peerage, representing Seaford 1796-1806, East Grinstead 1807-1812, and Seaford again from 1812-1826.

Ellis 'owned' over 1,000 slaves and he worked for their moral improvement, but he did not support the abolition of slavery and was an anti-abolitionist MP. Between 1835-37 Lord Seaford claimed compensation for five estates in Jamaica, including the Montpelier Estate, and totalling some £18,000 in respect of roughly 1,000 slaves.

His first wife had died in 1803, aged 22, and he later married the widowed Anne Louisa Emily Hardy on 2 October 1840. She had known Woodend in West Stoke, near Chichester, when a girl – as she had been brought up there by her parents, Admiral and Lady Berkeley. She was also related to the owner, Lady Georgina Bathurst, and it was perhaps her influence that led to the Ellis family



Fig. 2: The Montpelier Estate in Jamaica. (Author's collection)

moving to Woodend. In his will, written on 7 September 1843, Ellis said '*And it is my will that my said wife shall have the option of residing in and occupying the house and lands of Wood End which I have lately engaged to rent from Lady Georgiana Bathurst...*' It was at Woodend that Lord Seaford died on 1 December 1845. He was buried in Esher, Surrey.



Fig. 3: The actress Lilly Langtry – Lady de Bathe from 1907 – inherited Woodend.
(Author's collection)

Reverend William Woollams Holland

William Woollams Holland was born and baptised in Birmingham. He was ordained into the Church of England in 1808, and in 1817 became Vicar-Choral at Chichester Cathedral. He was also appointed as Rector of St Andrew's and of St Martin's, Chichester (now the Oxmarket Centre and the site of a walled garden respectively). In 1809 he married Jane, the sister of the publisher John Murray, at Bridgnorth, Shropshire. They had at least one son who followed his father into the ministry.

The 1851 census records Holland aged 65 and living in Cathedral Close. He is also recorded as the Rector of St Andrew's and lived with his wife Jane, aged 70, and three female servants. He died on 17 January 1855 and was buried at Chichester Cathedral six days later.

Holland counterclaimed for compensation for the Norwich estate in Portland, Jamaica as assignee under the marriage settlement of Charles Forbes and his wife. The claim, dated 8 November 1838, was for £3,017 0s 11d for a total of 182 slaves.

Edward Long

Edward Long was the fourth son of Samuel Long. He was born in England in 1734 but his family had owned property in Jamaica since the early days of colonisation. He became a barrister at Gray's Inn and accompanied his brother-in-law, Sir Henry Moore, to Jamaica, as secretary, following the death of his father in 1757. He was rapidly promoted to the post of a judge in the Vice-Admiralty Court. In 1758 he married Mary Ballard Beckford, the daughter and sole heiress of Thomas Beckford. Mary was also the widow of John Palmer. This created a union between the Long, Beckford and Palmer families. The couple had six children, four of whom were born in Jamaica.

Long's brother Robert gave him a share in Longville in Clarendon – one of the family's properties in Jamaica. Later, he also had the Lucky Valley Estate conveyed to him. In 1769 Long left Jamaica owing to poor health. Long is best known for his three-volume *History of Jamaica* published in 1774. His son Robert Ballard Long (see below) was born in Chichester in 1771. Long's wife predeceased him but he himself survived until 13 March 1813, dying at Arundel Park, the seat of his son-in-law, Henry Howard-Molyneux Howard. Long was buried on 20 March in the chancel of Slindon parish church, where a memorial slab commemorates him. His Lucky Valley Estate was passed to his son Edward.

Robert Ballard Long

Robert Ballard Long was one of the six children of Edward Long, and was born in Chichester on 4 April 1771. He died in London in 1825 and is buried in the family vault at Seale, Surrey. His education included a course in military instruction at the University of Göttingen. On 4 May 1791 he was appointed cornet in the 1st King's Dragoon Guards, in which he became Lieutenant in April and Captain in November 1793. For £2,000 his father bought him the Lieutenant-colonelcy of the Hompesch Mounted Riflemen from the regiment's proprietor, Baron Hompesch. Robert Long became Lieutenant-colonel of the regiment on 3 March 1798 and commanded it in Ireland against the 1798 uprising.

He had been named by his brother, Edward Beeston Long, as a trustee of the Moore Hall Estate, St Mary, Jamaica – but predeceased him.

Thomas Pink

Thomas Pink was baptised at Harting on 19 July 1801. He married Mary Mittin on 1 June 1830. His occupation according to both the 1841 census and the 1851 census was as a 'woodard to Lady Featherstone' respectively with his wife Mary. A Woodard would be a wood reeve or wood warden, and the Lady Featherstone is presumed to be at Uppark, the estate [now owned by the National Trust] just to the south of Harting on the South Downs.

His brother John Pink was a slave-owner of St Ann, Jamaica, who paid Thomas an annual annuity of £40, increased to £100 in his will proved in 1835. The will showed Thomas to be from South Harting. The will also gave £50 to each of Thomas' children. On 26 September 1836, £961 11s 6d was awarded to the executors and trustees of John Pink, and to the executor and trustee of Rebecca Hiatt. This was in respect of 49 slaves on the Up Park Pen estate, St Mary, Jamaica.

Charles Ridge

Charles Ridge was the son of William Ridge (Mayor of Chichester in 1787) and his wife, Sarah. Charles was born on 21 February 1788. By the time of the 1841 census, he was recorded as a banker, aged 50, and living in East Street with his wife Tryphena aged 40, their son John aged 2 years old, and three female servants.



Fig. 4: An 1840 banknote from Chichester Old Bank and signed by Charles Ridge.
(Author's collection)

Charles Ridge was part of the bank of Ridge & Co., of Chichester. This private bank had been established in 1774 as John Chaldecott. The firm had several partnership and name changes and by 1841 was trading as Ridge & Co. It was also known as the Chichester Old Bank. The bank failed in 1841 with liabilities of £140,000. Immediately following this failure, the London & County Banking Company moved in and opened a branch in East Street [on the current site of NatWest Bank].

Charles Ridge had unsuccessfully counterclaimed for compensation for Little Duers in Antigua as a judgement creditor against John Duer by assignment for £5,466 19s 6½d. He died in 1853.

Sir William John Struth

Struth was born in 1763. He was an unsuccessful claimant of the Fancy and Prospect estates on St Vincent and an unsuccessful counterclaimant on Richmond Hill, St Vincent. He was the former owner of the Endeavour estate in Trinidad. He was Mayor of Bristol 1815, partner in Brooke Struth & Company until 1823, and was acting Governor of St Vincent 1829-1831.

Sir William's death was registered in Chichester and he is buried in Middleton parish church [east of Bognor Regis]; no will or probate has been traced for him.

John White

John White was a slave-owner on St Kitts who came to Britain where he later died in Yapton, West Sussex, on 6 February 1776 aged 75. His estate on St Kitts is unnamed in his Will but is inferred to be 'Whites'.

In his will, he made monetary bequests of £4,800 to family members, and annual annuities of £10 each to two mulatto women, Sarah and Frances, whom he had freed before he left St Kitts. He also instructed that they be provided with two 'negro girls each of them about sixteen years'. Subject to his marriage settlement he entailed his estates on his son George. White declared his enslaved people 'heirlooms', so that they could not be sold. His will also stated,

'I will and direct that my Slaves be at all times used with as much Humanity and Tenderness as the nature of their situations and business will admit of and not be treated with any cruelty and that all such slaves as are grown old in my service be well lookt (sic) after and fed and taken care of in a proper manner.'

Conclusion

Until the publication of the UCL project's findings this was part of Britain's hidden history, though arguably it was hidden in plain sight as the information was readily accessible in *Parliamentary Papers*. This UCL database is a mine of information that will provide historians – national and local – with endless opportunities to explore this extraordinary period in history.

Acknowledgements

I would particularly like to thank Katherine Slay for suggesting that I study this fascinating subject.

Additional sources of information

The University College London database, the Legacies of British Slave-ownership, can be accessed online at: (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs>).

Census information has been extracted from Ancestry and Find My Past.

West Sussex Record Office holds a collection of title deeds and papers relating to the Duer family and their Antiguan estate (Add Mss 3211-3250).

The Record Office also holds various deeds and papers relating to John White and his St Kitts estate (Harris Mss 757-799).

The Will of Charles Rose Ellis, Lord Seaford, is held at The National Archives: PROB 11/2023/163.

The tombstones in the area known as Paradise in the Cathedral precincts were probably removed in the late 1950s or early 1960s. It is unclear when precisely, and it is also unclear whose names and details had been recorded on which tombstones. I am currently undertaking further research on this matter.



Also hidden in plain sight? A number of these pictorial way-finding map signs have appeared in the city centre. Why not have a look next time you pass one and see if you can spot any errors.

(Greg Slay)

MY OTHER LIFE AT 'TEK'

by Brian Worsfold

Note from the Editor: The first part of these reminiscences was published in Chichester History in 2021.

Following my National Service banishment to No.2 Base Workshops at Tel el Kebir (TEK) in Egypt I just had to knuckle down and 'get some in' as it was called and complete my two years inside. My task was to repair about a hundred Type 31 wireless sets. They were what you would now call portable walkie-talkie sets. Over the years the lads from the electrical workshop also undertook to keep TEK's cinema running.

At first I worked part time. I would repair Type 31s during the day, take a few hours off in the midday heat, then in the evening I worked as one of the projectionists. There were a few perks associated with the job. I was excused morning parade and enjoyed a few 'arkers' (Egyptian pastries) for collecting up the dumped empty lemonade bottles after the film show.

I was told that some years earlier as a training exercise the Egyptian commandos had broken into Tel el Kebir – no mean feat – and had stolen the two cinema projectors. No doubt these were on sale later in Cairo. Once new projectors had been installed, security was improved. The raised cabin containing them became a steel box: it had a heavy metal door with padlocks and steps from there down to ground level. It was all lit up at night – a veritable Fort Knox. The sergeant-in-charge lived nearby (as we did). After the evening performance all the keys were returned to him. His own quarters were another steel box totally covered in wire mesh; it had windows, of course, but they too were covered with mesh. The only way in and out was through the metal door, again complete with a padlock. In the winter the cinema itself was indoors and during the summer it was outdoors under the stars. We have no appreciation in this country of the magnificence and majesty of the night sky.

Modern cinema complexes are light years away from the equipment that we had to operate. Our films were delivered in large boxed reels which when shown on the screen lasted about 20 minutes. Throughout the performance while one projector was showing the film the second projector would be being loaded with the next reel. As the light source for projection was a carbon arc whose rods eroded during operation we had to keep the arc at the mirror focus point to ensure a bright and even illumination on the screen. There was an automatic mechanism that helped with this, but one had to keep an eye on the screen through a small peephole.

A diesel generator was kept running throughout the performance to provide

the current required for the arc. You may have noticed on old black and white films on television that every 20 minutes or so a little white cross flashes on the screen in the top right hand corner. This tells the projectionist when to start the changeover routine. Teamwork is required!

The lad I worked with (let me call him Harry) was, I am sad to say, a few pence short of a shilling and proved to be not particularly careful. Moving the cinema seating outside in the summer and the transfer of the projectors and equipment took a few days. I was told my help was not required so I could tend and water our little garden. Harry was responsible for splicing, joining and rewinding and preparing the films for showing. Others moved all the seating outside. Opening day arrived as did Harry, but the sound system would not work and he was in a panic. 'OK, so where is the drawing you made of how everything is connected?' I asked him. Well, he had not made one. My heart sank.

The key thing was the large amplifier chassis. I looked underneath at the wiring. A number of previous lads had added their own 'improvements' and there was the odd detached condenser hanging down. These I investigated but there was still no sound. Fortunately I noticed that one valve did not have a glowing heater. The valve was replaced and the sound system worked. Panic over.

Now I cannot avoid this – there were very few women on the base, maybe some in the out-of-bounds married quarters. There was a story – true or not I don't know – that on return to the UK one serviceman disgraced himself, and when the court case came up the defence argument was he had been 'at the notorious army camp at TEK' and had not seen a woman for a year or more.

Questions were supposedly asked about the matter in Parliament, and one MP suggested that all men serving at that base should on return to the UK be forced to wear a yellow arm band for some months. (*Hansard* would need to be consulted to check whether this story was hearsay.) Generally, the only women seen at TEK were those on the silver screen at the cinema. Although I do remember we did have one concert party visit and the show was held in the indoor cinema. The women taking part all had a 24-hour armed guard with them.

One starlit night we were showing a film that had long been talked about. It had arrived! Attendance was at an all-time high. Although the local beer – 'Stella' – was not on sale on site, it was obvious a number of our customers arrived slightly the worse for wear from the NAAFI. The much-talked-about scene came on the screen. The young, beautiful, and well-known actress arose out of the sea wearing a minuscule bikini. As she swept back her long hair, the sun glistened on her brown sun-tanned body. The cheering and wolf whistles of the audience increased, then there was a stunned one-second silence followed by howls of rage, as lemonade bottles hit the screen, the crowd turned and shook their fists at the projection box. I quickly locked and bolted us in.

In one frame of the film she was wading in the water and in the next she had

already appeared on the beach. In a second or two the shot was over. We both knew what had happened. At the inquest later that night with the sergeant (who was in the audience), Harry swore he had not cut any frames from the film. He was adamant. I reckon at every cinema in the Middle East where the film had been shown, frames were removed. Hence her long 'jump'. The sergeant enclosed a letter when the film was returned but nothing more was heard. It nearly caused a riot.

Could anything more go wrong...? Yes, it did. I must admit I cannot recall the name of the film. It was a detective thriller. All went smoothly. I had the second reel passed to me by Harry and soon it was running. I must confess the change-over seemed a bit disjointed, and I could not follow the plot...Then Harry shouted '.....! I have given you the wrong reel!' Crisis. Instant decision: let it run and quickly get the right reel in the other projector and onto the screen. Between us we had never worked so fast. A bemused audience left the cinema that night. To have stopped the programme would have caused yet another riot. Picking up a handful of sand to get the grease off my plate after having eaten at the cookhouse, I heard someone say, 'I could not follow that film last night and I'm sure I saw some of it twice.' I washed my plate under the tap and crept away.

My final memory was a close call for both me and for the sergeant. The film was rolling, all running smoothly, and the projection room door was open to keep the temperature down. Then I saw and heard the sergeant staggering into the cinema singing at the top of his voice. He was dead drunk and could only just about stand. Shouting at Harry to take over, I rushed down the stairs, turned the sergeant around and got him out of the cinema quickly. I got him back to his sleeping quarters, put him on his bed and then I locked him in. I rushed back to continue the show. When we had finished I tore back once more to release the sergeant from his security. He was screaming and shouting and thumping the locked door to his quarters. I let him out and he rushed to his private latrine for a pee. I waited on his return: he could make life very difficult for me. He said 'You b..... Worsfold'. I told him if I had not got him out of the cinema there and then he would be on a charge and maybe busted down to a lower rank. I didn't want him to get into trouble. He was now, thankfully, almost sober and saw the error of his ways. His job in charge was a cushy number, wandering around keeping us in order in the morning. In the afternoon he would go to the sergeants' mess and in the evening there was the free entertainment to enjoy.

Well, maybe we were not up to our neck in muck and bullets as some were, but we played our little part in the history of the British in the Suez Canal.

BULLION SHIPMENTS ON THE CANAL

by Andrew Berriman

In 2022 Chichester Canal is celebrating its bicentenary. The Basin at Southgate was opened for use in 1822. The story below is about one unusual cargo which was carried during that decade on the Portsmouth and Arundel Navigation.

What cargoes were on view in the Canal Basin in Chichester back then? Well, it was mainly coal for the gasworks, with some timber, grit, corn, even wine; all to be expected. But not in very large quantities, which was a real disappointment to its shareholders, as the Canal then was in its first flush of trading. As the years passed, prospects for the commercial success of the Canal became increasingly unlikely.



Fig. 1: Mike Codd's evocative illustration of a busy working day on the Chichester Canal in its heyday (West Sussex Record Office)

However, just two miles south of the Basin, at Hunston Junction, there were regular cargoes along the main Portsmouth and Arundel Navigation of a very expensive item. This was gold and silver bullion, mined in South America and Mexico, about 25-30 tons during each month of 1825. And in February it was 72 tons no less, worth about \$2.5m. Goodness knows how much that would be worth in today's money, either in dollars or sterling?

This cargo was a mix of gold and silver bars, and specie (gold or silver coins). It had been brought across the Atlantic from the United States on the *Aurora* to Portsmouth, and then been transferred to two canal barges. These were the *Union* and the *Portsea*, for the inland journey up to the Queenhithe Wharf in London, and thence to the vaults of the Bank of England. We know about this cargo as its safe passage was reported in the *Hampshire Advertiser*. It does seem a peculiar piece of news to be made so freely available to the public, as surely the authorities – the Government, the Bank – wouldn't have been too keen on this. Surely such information would have been of great interest to the forebears of the 1963 Great Train Robbers?

Remarkably, these reports were commonplace. In the previous year, 1824, *Saunders' News-Letter* [sic] had reported that bars of silver, to the value of £300,000, originating in South America, had been similarly carried in a lighter from Portsmouth to London. In May 1827 a report in the *Kentish Weekly Post* stated that HMS *Tweed* had brought 94 tons of specie from Mexico, worth \$1.7m, which was then carried to London 'by way of the Portsmouth Canal'. Over half of this amount was 'on account of the Government of the United Mexican States, for the payment of forthcoming dividends, and the rest for private merchants'. The ship's manifest also had reference to a cargo of 394 carrones of cochineal, dried bodies of insects reared on cacti in Mexico and used to make scarlet dye.

A few years later, in 1831 the *Hampshire Telegraph* reported that the barge *Fly* had passed the Chichester Canal – presumably at Hunston Junction – with 18 tons of specie which had been brought to Portsmouth in HMS *Eden*.

Exactly why was the canal used for these transports? The main reason is referred to in a most revealing account taken from the *Hampshire Telegraph* (8 March 1830). It deserves to be quoted in full:

'A great quantity of gold and silver, and specie (dollar coins), of nearly 30 tons arrived in two small craft on Wednesday at the Salterns Lock, Birdham, from Portsmouth, where it was re-shipped on board Tew's barge, and immediately proceeded towards London, under the usual escort, by the Portsmouth and Chichester Canal. This route will be followed in future cases. The exorbitant demand made, and in recent instance complied with, for the transfer of specie from the craft at Arundel, is hereby avoided.'

So, here we have mention of those escorts, armed guards who slept on board throughout the journey. Mike Codd's illustration, with the Redcoats on duty, is essentially splendid even if it is rather whimsical and romanticised, with a fair amount of artistic licence. The vessel is shown as a sailing barge with a fixed mast, which might have been quite problematic when passing under the low

brick-built arches of the bridges, such as the one in the distance, through which it has supposedly just passed. Masted vessels were OK on the canal up to Chichester as its swing bridges could be opened, unlike on this stretch, with fixed bridges, from Hunston to Ford. This barge would not have had a mast and would previously have been towed across Langstone Harbour by the Canal Company's steam-tug *Egremont*, before being pulled by a horse, on the towpath.

As for the background view in the painting, is that the Trundle, or maybe Vesuvius, belching steam and lava? If so, then surely the heavily-laden barge is going the wrong way, westwards back to Portsmouth, not eastwards towards the Arun? But no matter, stop being pedantic, it is still a striking image. And the artistic representation of the Canal by our old friend JMW Turner wasn't without its curious aspects, unless in his day the sun did set due north.

Back to the newspaper report. What is so interesting to note is that use of these barges avoided payment of the dues demanded by Port Commissioners along the south coast. The bullion could be transferred from ship to barge in Portsmouth Harbour, thus bypassing a port. Confirmation of this can be found in an incident in 1829. A frigate, the *Druid*, arrived off Portsmouth in September with 1.3m dollars worth (£270,000), brought from the Spanish Main 'on private account'. However, because part of the Portsmouth and Arundel Navigation was dry – interesting to note, by the way as regarding the canal's poor construction – the ship had travelled along the coast to Littlehampton Harbour, and transferred the cargo to a lighter, the *Elizabeth*. The master of the *Druid* went to the Collector's Office to pay the required harbour dues for the transfer of specie. He was horrified to be told that these dues (assessed for precious metals imported into the port of Arundel, at 7d for every £10 value) amounted to £787 10s. He refused to pay, so the Collector confiscated one of the packages of specie. Within days, a special meeting of the Commissioners of the Port of Arundel was called to consider the issue, and upheld the Collector's demand, and so the dues were paid, under protest.

However, this was not the end of the matter, as the master of the *Druid* took the case to the Court of King's Bench in London, with the involvement of the Attorney General, no less. One detail in the *Morning Post* report of this case, dated 29 April 1830, differs from the earlier account, in that the reason for this vessel putting into the port of Arundel was that 'he met with bad weather in the Channel'. On balance I suspect the earlier reason is the more likely. Tantalisingly, as is so often the case with local historical research, the denouement of this story is unknown, left in the air.

But it does explain why the preferred route was by inland canal across the flat, calm Sussex countryside to Ford, and then up the rivers *Arun* and *Wey* to London. Both rivers had been partially canalised to straighten and shorten the journey. Certainly, the reason had nothing to do with fear of French naval attack,

or latter-day North African Barbary pirates or corsairs looking for rich pickings in the Channel.

Note: The 'bullion run' did not, of course, ever progress up the canal from the Hunston Junction to the Basin... unless those Redcoats fancied a sneaky night off?

Whatever happened to the Assembly Room's statues?

On 8 October 2018 the *Chichester Post* published an article about the history of the Assembly Room at the Council House. The article included several photos – one showed statues in the niches on the walls. Richard Childs was unaware that there were ever statues in the niches, though it was obvious to him that if you have got niches you might as well use them. When and why however were the statues removed?

Richard's enquiries led to the *Chichester Observer* for 17 January 1942 where there is a report of a New Year party held by the Mayoress in the Assembly Room. The report states: 'The interior of the Assembly Room has recently undergone an interior "brush up" one noticeable feature of the improvements being the substitution of graceful evergreen trees for the statuesque figures which formerly occupied wall niches.' In the *Chichester Observer* for 7 February 1942 there is a report of the City Council meeting held on 4 February. A section of the report refers to various issues relating to the Council House. This includes: 'Councillor C.D. Herniman raised a question about the Assembly Room having been re-decorated and certain alterations carried out without the knowledge or consent of the Council. The Mayor said the decorations were necessary maintenance work and the alterations were to meet Government requirements at Government expense.'

What were the 'Government requirements' that necessitated the removal of the statues and why did the Government pay for it? The mystery continues as to what happened to the statues. More research is needed...



A Freedom of the City ceremony, held in the Assembly Room in 1934. (Anne Scicluna)

JOHN SPERSHOTT: A MORAL CONUNDRUM

by James McInnes

On the headstone of John Spershott in the churchyard of St Nicholas Church, Mid Lavant is this poignant inscription:¹

*He is gone, he is gone,
the dear Boy at whose birth
I hail'd as a Stranger, and pilgrim on earth
The sojourn is ended, the journey is trod,
We hope that his spirit is happily with God.*

Clearly the family is distraught at the loss of their beloved son, but this is no ordinary tale of the death of a young man in 19th century England.

The Spershott family

The Spershotts were a highly respected family living in Mid Lavant. John Spershott, senior (1765-1838)² was sufficiently well off to be able to buy the long-term tenancy of the windmill on Hayes Down, Lavant for £500 in 1808 and was at various times Constable for the Hundred and Overseer of the Poor.³ John Spershott, senior and his wife, Susanna Beater (1771-1849) had eight children – all of whom lived into adulthood and were able to read and write.

John Spershott, junior was baptised in St Nicholas Church in 1816 as all his older brothers and sisters had been before him. Unfortunately there is no further documentary evidence about John Spershott, junior until an indictment for trial which states that in Lavant on Thursday 9 July 1835 he had 'feloniously wickedly diabolically and against the order of nature, had a venereal affair with the said George Howard and him, the said George Howard, then and there feloniously wickedly diabolically and against the order of nature, did carnally know and that detestable horrid and sodomitical crime called buggery with him.'⁴

1 All the gravestones in the graveyard of St Nicholas Church in Mid Lavant were fully recorded between 2017 and 2019. The inscription was taken from the gravestone.

2 On-line transcriptions of the Parish Records of births, marriages and deaths were used initially for births, marriages and deaths. These were all checked against the original documents in the West Sussex Record Office.

3 The lease of the windmill by John Spershott, senior is recorded in West Sussex Record Office: Goodwood Mss E2844-2860. The other posts are in The Quarter Session Rolls: WSRO: QR/W728/5

4 Indictment of John Spershott: The National Archives: ASSI 94/2915

The Trial

John Spershott's case was heard in Lewes by the highly experienced Sir James Alan Park (1763-1838), one of the three Justices of the Court of Common Pleas. The foreman of the 22-man Grand Jury was Lord George Lennox (1793-1873). He was MP for the western division of Sussex and was the second son of Charles Lennox, 4th Duke of Richmond (from whom John Spershott, senior, leased the Lavant windmill).⁵

The case was heard at eight o'clock on the morning of Wednesday 5 August 1835. The *Brighton Gazette* reported that 'The evidence, which is unfit for publication, was so conclusive, that the Jury, without hesitation, pronounced a verdict of Guilty'.⁶ This suggests that the trial was a very short one, but the reverse of the indictment document stated that there were 'Three sworn in Court': namely 'George Howard, younger, Mary Howard and Abraham Duke (surgeon)'.⁷ Abraham Duke (1809-1877) was a physician who worked at the West Sussex, East Hampshire and Chichester General Infirmary and Dispensary in Chichester. Whether Dr Duke gave oral or written testimony is not known, but it seems probable that he had examined George Howard on or soon after 9 July. Abraham Duke's elder brother, Charles Duke (1799-1860), was the tenant of the Duke of Richmond at East Lavant Farm (later known as Manor Farm). Members of the Howard family worked for Charles Duke and George Howard was probably known to him.

John Spershott's trial was probably very short as the Grand Jury went on to hear twelve more cases that day (three of the men found guilty were transported and four were imprisoned). In passing the death sentence, Judge Park made it clear that John Spershott could hope for no mercy and he went on to remark on the enormity of the offence, 'never, in the whole course of his life, had he met with so shocking a case'.⁸ Sir James Alan Park had been judging cases, including rape, infanticide and murder, for 29 years and yet he called this his most shocking case.

One other man was also sentenced to death at the Summer session of the assizes in Lewes. Richard Sheppard was a 33-year-old footman who had committed four burglaries on four successive nights, stealing goods to a very high value. Sheppard and Spershott were sent to Horsham gaol to await execution. A petition was set up for Richard Sheppard to receive a royal pardon as his offence had only involved property. This received a great deal of support, but Lord John Russell, the Home Secretary, refused. There was no campaign or support for John Spershott to have his penalty reduced.⁹

5 There was widespread coverage of the trial in the newspapers. The details of the trial are taken from their accounts.

6 The *Brighton Gazette*, Thursday 6 August, 1835.

7 Indictment of John Spershott: The National Archives: ASSI 94/2915

8 The *Brighton Gazette*, Op. Cit.

9 The *Brighton Patriot*, Tuesday 25 August 1835.

The executions were very widely reported in the press. At 11 o'clock on Saturday 22 August 1835 Richard Sheppard and John Spershott, who was wearing drab trousers and a sailor's jacket, were taken to the prison chapel in Horsham gaol and after the service the prison chaplain administered the sacraments. They were led to the scaffold and at 12 o'clock they were hanged in front of a crowd of 200-300 people. The newspapers noted that the silly custom and belief that passing the hands of a dead man over a glandular enlargement on the neck would affect a cure was carried out.¹⁰ John Spershott's body was placed in a black-lined coffin and given to his friends who took it away for burial.

Two days after his execution, John Spershott was buried in the churchyard of St Nicholas, Mid Lavant. By 1835 there was no legal reason why someone who had committed a capital offence other than murder or treason could not be interred in a churchyard, but commemorating them on a memorial was extremely unusual.¹¹ Spershott's grave is on the north side of the church, but it was not hidden away in some far recess of the graveyard. It is just a few feet away from that of Henrietta Poole (1747-1827). She was noted for her literary connections. She was associated with Amelia Opie, best known for anti-slavery work, and was a close friend of William Hayley and his protégé William Blake. Indeed, it was the view from Mrs Poole's house in Mid Lavant that Blake looked out across 'England's pleasant pastures seen'.¹²

In August 1835 the perpetual curate at Mid Lavant and the man who conducted the burial was Charles Buckner (1807-1871). He had only been licensed to perform the office on 12 June 1835 by Edward Maltby, Bishop of Chichester, on the nomination of Henriette Anne Dorrien. She was the widowed, illegitimate daughter of the 3rd Duke of Richmond and Gordon and was of significant standing both locally and nationally. It is likely that the 28-year-old curate who had been in post for only two months would have discussed with his patron the burial of such a controversial figure as John Spershott.

Spershott's coffin was placed under a brick vault. This was either to stop any interference with his body by the superstitious and curious or it was simply a choice of fashion. When his father, John Spershott (c.1765-1838), was buried on 22 December 1838, he too was placed in a brick vaulted grave. It is not known when the headstones to the two John Spershotts, father and son, were put up (although it must have been before 1849 when Susannah Spershott died).

¹⁰ *Sussex Advertiser*, Monday 24 August, 1835.

¹¹ Personal comment by Professor Sarah Tarlow, University of Leicester.

¹² There is a considerable body of evidence to support the contention that Blake's lines in Jerusalem were inspired by the view from Henrietta Poole's house in Mid Lavant.

The Aftermath

It is difficult to assess the impact on his family and on the community of John Spershott's trial and hanging. John Spershott, senior, had made his will in 1833 and did not update it following his son's death. In it he left John £100, which was more than his siblings. In the June 1839 probate copy of the will, there is an annotation in the margin in pencil next to John Spershott's name which says 'died in Father's Life'. John Spershott did sell the remaining years in his lease of the Lavant windmill in August 1835 to Charles Duke of Manor Farm (the brother of the physician who had testified in the trial).¹³ Less than a month later, the 5th Duke of Richmond took back the lease of the windmill. It is not known whether John Spershott gave up the mill because of his son's trial and hanging or simply because he was about 71 years old.

The family's position in Lavant does not seem to have been affected by the events surrounding John Spershott. The members of the family who lived in Mid Lavant continued to do so: his father until his death in 1838 and his mother until her death in 1849. In 1837 one of John Spershott, junior's sisters, Sarah, married a relatively wealthy local farmer indicating that her brother's fate did not make her an unacceptable match.

Perhaps the strongest indication that John was still held in great affection is the action taken by his brother Caplin. When Caplin Spershott was baptised on 7 June 1807 he was given no other names. In 1834 Caplin Spershott called his own son John Caplin Spershott. By 1851, when he was living in Havant and working as a cordwainer, he called himself John C Spershott.¹⁴ This was a deliberate choice to add his brother's name to his own. John Caplin Spershott continued to do this throughout the 1850s and 1860s, but by the time of the 1871 census he was called John Spershott. He continued using the name of John until his death in the Havant workhouse in 1892.

There is no indication that any of the close relatives of John Spershott were shunned by the local community or had to change their way of life as a result of the trial and execution of John Spershott, junior.

The Other Party

The indictment stated that the other person involved in the crime was 'George Howard, younger' and this was repeated on the reverse of the document. George Howard was called 'younger' to distinguish him from George Howard the elder, who would have been his father if he were still alive or possibly his grandfather if he was living with him. There are two other names on the reverse of the document 'Mary Howard' and 'Abraham Duke (surgeon)'. It would seem probable that Mary Howard was the mother of George Howard, younger.

¹³ WSRO: Goodwood Mss E2844-2860

¹⁴ The census for Havant, 1851



Fig. 1: The grave of John Spershott.
(Author's collection)

The Howards were a very large family of agricultural labourers in Lavant. They first appeared in the 1760s and most of them settled in Mid Lavant, but there was also a branch in East Lavant. The parish registers for both East and Mid Lavant, which were kept fairly well in the first quarter of the 19th century, together with estate documents from the Goodwood Archives in the West Sussex Record Office and the 1841 census, have been used to establish who George Howard was. There was only one George Howard living in the vicinity of Lavant, who had a father called George Howard and a mother called Mary Howard. Following an extensive search of all the local records, there can be little doubt that

this is the George Howard named in the indictment.

George Howard was baptised in Funtington, Sussex on 17 September 1826. His mother, Mary Rodgers, had married George Howard in St Mary's Church, East Lavant on 12 February 1825 and their eldest son was George Howard. George and Mary Howard went on to have ten more children and lived in East Lavant from at least January 1829 until the 1850s. The indictment did not state where George Howard lived but this George Howard, his parents and siblings all lived in East Lavant, within a 10-minute walk of the Spershott family home.

George Howard, the younger, had the banns for his marriage to Mary Anne Mitchell (1831-1901) announced in St Mary's Church, East Lavant in October 1849 and the couple married there on 1 January 1850. According to the 1851 census the Howards were living in East Lavant.

At the time of his marriage, George Howard was described as a sailor and this might help to explain why, according to the 1861 census, he was working as a coastguard in Reculver, Kent. He had moved there in 1859 and stayed long enough for three children to be born there. He then moved to be a coastguard at Selsey. In all George Howard had at least eight children. He had retired by 1881 when he was a Greenwich pensioner living in Sidlesham. He was still there in 1891 when he was working as an agricultural labourer, which is what he had been in 1851. George Howard died in 1900, a year before his wife.

The fact that George Howard was only eight years old at the time of the offence probably helps to explain the outrage expressed by Judge Park at the trial and why there were no attempts to gain clemency for John Spershott. It is worth noting that the next case heard after John Spershott's trial was that of Charles Elderton (1817-1874). He was an 18-year-old illiterate labourer who was found guilty of 'Unnatural misdemeanour' and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.¹⁵ At the time, the term 'Unnatural misdemeanour' was used to cover crimes such as sodomy and bestiality, and this sentence was the customary one for the offence in the 1830s.

Conclusion

The Spershott case was extremely unusual. There are some issues surrounding it which cannot be resolved. The newspapers all said that John Spershott, junior was a 'labourer', which would have been extremely unusual for the son of a relatively wealthy miller. All his older brothers had a trade, such as miller, and it is noteworthy that he effectively had none. The newspapers also said that Spershott seemed to be 'apparently unconscious of his awful situation'.¹⁶ It is possible that Spershott had accepted his fate, but it is also possible that he did not really understand what was going on. A question is also raised by the fact that John Spershott, junior was left more money in his will than any of his siblings and that an uncle on his mother's side left him a house (although he died before he could inherit it). All this coupled with the Church and local community's seemingly complete acceptance of the events leads one to wonder whether John Spershott, junior was of fully sound mind.

¹⁵ WSRO: Goodwood Mss E2844-2860

¹⁶ The census for Havant, 1851

ALF AINGER OF THE 'ROYAL OAK'

by Andrew Shaxson

Alfred William 'Alf' Ainger was born in Limehouse, East London in 1881. His father and mother, Alfred and Elizabeth, having been born in Sidlesham and Bosham respectively, were probably working in London at that time. By 1901 the family had returned to Birdham. Alfred senior was the lock keeper of what was then called Lower Lock (now Salterns), as well as being a general labourer on the Chichester Canal, living in the lock keeper's cottage. His younger brother George was the lock keeper of the Upper (Casher) Lock, so this might have encouraged Alf to return to Sussex. 'Young Alf' was an agricultural labourer in Birdham in 1901. On 2 July 1903 Alfred senior took over the licence of the *Royal Oak* at Hooksway from William Woods. The electoral register indicates that 'Young' Alf moved at the same time, lodging at 18 Treyford (now Springfield) and milking for Henry Sampson at Treyford Manor Farm.

He married 22-year-old Caroline Eliza Cribb at Birdham on 3 February 1906. 'Carrie' – as she was always known – was born at Birdham, and was one of the six daughters of Barnabas and Emma Cribb. He was the miller at Birdham Tidal Mill, which stood next to Lower Lock, and ceased to operate during the 1930s. Her ancestor Tom Cribb (1781–1848) had been the undefeated bare-fist boxing champion of England and the world. As close neighbours Alf and Carrie had known each other as youngsters; before she was married, Carrie left Birdham to work as a kitchen maid for the Carnegie family at Fair Oak, Rogate. One of her recollections of that time was plucking pheasants that had been hung too long and were full of maggots.

On 5 December 1907, 26-year-old Alf Ainger took over the licence of the *Royal Oak* at Hooksway from his 60-year old parents Alfred and Elizabeth. Could anybody who dropped in for a first drink with them that evening have foreseen that they would still be there 63 years later as Alf died 'in harness' on 17 December 1970.

Many people remember paying a visit to the *Royal Oak* at Hooksway during the time the Aingers held the licence. Indeed so well known did it become that in the last years of Alf's tenancy a visit was a 'rite of passage' for anybody with any interest in the sort of country pub that was rapidly becoming a memory. Consequently it isn't just older locals who have memories and anecdotes from that time – but a much wider public.

Only one room in the pub was available for drinkers. This was the lower bar on the northern side of the building. The rest of the ground floor was the Ainger's living rooms. The beer, for it was only a beer house, was served from a hatch opposite the entrance, and when the pub was full one frequently had to walk over the low table that blocked the way.

Alf had his own seat on the left hand side of the fire, and woe-betide anybody who was sitting in it when he wanted to. There was no electricity, the light being provided by paraffin lamps and candles. Lamp wicks needed constant trimming, and as this wasn't done frequently enough they were often guttering, sending out black smoke. This, combined with smoke from the fire and cigarettes, meant that the room was filthy dirty: but nobody objected, as that was part of its character. On the wall was a print of Queen Victoria surrounded by soldiers from the Empire. Where did it go?

Alf and Carrie were the most wonderful pair, a couple of characters the likes of which have gone for ever. Carrie always wanted to know what people were doing. She had a soft spot for children – John Saunders had to 'present' each of his offspring to her and she gave them each a Christening present. As a small child my sister Joanna would often ride her pony from Elsted to Hooksway, and be given a drink or an ice-cream. The next time my parents went to the pub they paid off my sister's tab.

My own first visit was in about 1956. Father, Fred Dalton, Bill Stacey the Elsted shepherd, and I were returning from Findon sheep fair with two rams. Father reckoned that I must experience the atmosphere, as it would surely be gone before too much longer. My father was wrong – because I was legally able to drink there before Alf died. It must be pointed out that latterly nobody with any taste buds went for the beer, as in Alf's final years it became a Watney's house, selling the notorious Red Barrel.

No country pub, especially one as isolated as the *Royal Oak*, could provide a living from beer sales. The brewer Charles Henty, whose business operated out of the Westgate Brewery in Chichester, had bought the pub in the 1880s, and with the pub came a smallholding of about eight acres. Alf retained the use of some of this land to the end of his life, and kept animals and grew vegetables and animal fodder on it.

Carrie looked after the pub during the day, and for a short time Alf continued to milk cows for the Sampson's – walking to Treyford and back twice a day. He then ran a wood business, which entailed him getting up at 5am to feed his cart horse and pony before feeding and hand-milking his four cows. He would stop for tea and biscuits between 6.30pm and 7.00pm and then either cut wood on the West Dean Estate or take a load of the cut timber by horse and cart to such places as Lavant, West Ashling and Fishbourne. He would regularly visit Fishbourne Mill to pick up horse and cow feed on his way home. Every three weeks he would take a load of wood faggots to West Wittering, an 11-hour journey which he would break to refresh himself and his horses at the *Wellington* public house in Chichester. How many of the 11 hours were accounted for by that stop? He also took faggots to the *Black Boy* public house in Fishbourne. He would prepare these loads on Thursdays and he followed this routine for some eight years.

The West Dean estate then employed him sawing timber. He got to the woodyard at West Dean by 9am, having milked his own cows and walked the four mile journey. In 1918 Henry Sampson offered him a five-year lease on land at Philliswood Farm, and Alf recalled that in the dry summer of 1921 he grew oats, which were thrashed by the machine belonging to Mr Ricketts of Littlegreen. The coal strike of 1926, and the resultant shortage, made wood more attractive, and Alf purchased, cut and distributed 25 acres of timber with the help of Mr Stubbington from Harting. No chainsaws in those days, it was all cut by axe and hand saw. His hard work must have borne financial fruit, as Alf was one of the earliest owners of a car hereabouts, buying a Belsize. His brother-in-law taught him to drive.

Realising that using a horse and cart had become an inefficient way to run his haulage business, he bought a Ford lorry from D Rowe and Company in 1930 for £220, which he used until June 1940. It enabled him to haul loads much further afield, including to Portsmouth. Many people he met there turned up at the *Royal Oak*. During the war he broke up 'his' land for crops, and said that he had personally dug out 24 acres of potatoes. He only stopped such hard physical work when he was 78 years old, on firm 'doctor's orders'.

Towards the end of Alf and Carrie's tenure, and once Alf's prostate problem began to bite, they were helped by Fran Evans, who I understand was the widow of a Portsmouth publican. She was more than happy to enable them to carry on as they had always done, noting for instance that even though the pub was wired up for electricity, Alf and Carrie never used it. The ceiling rose light fittings gathered grime.

John Russell, the oldest son of Bertram Russell, who became the 4th Earl on the death of his father in 1970, used to walk down to the pub as a boy to escape from the mental torture of the high expectations his father had for him. He became a 'Bevan boy'; when 'called-up' for military service, he was allocated work in the coalmines. This undermined his already delicate mental health, and he convalesced for quite some time with Alf and Carrie, who treated him like the son they had never had.

Two stories are often quoted of Alf – the first concerns his reply to the chairman of the Brewster Sessions in Midhurst. When asked what toilet facilities there were for ladies, he replied along the lines that they were welcome to use his several acres of land behind the pub. He also recalled both King Edward VII and the then King of Spain coming to the *Royal Oak* for lunchtime refreshment when shooting on the West Dean Estate. More importantly, he said that he remembered the day when the King and Mrs James were noticeable by their absence, and nine months later Edward James was born. Edward James was known to play on the doubts concerning his parentage; even if this is what happened, Alf was probably farm-working in Treyford, as Edward James was

conceived the year before Alf became publican.

Alf's funeral at Birdham church on 22 December 1970 was attended by a very large number of people from very varied backgrounds, including a large number of gypsies. Doreen Shaxson recalls that she has never been to a funeral where it took so long to leave the church. This was because Carrie was sitting in the porch and clutched everybody leaving the service to her ample bosom, thanking them at great length for coming. Carrie stayed on at the *Royal Oak* for a short time before moving to live with a relative. She was buried at Birdham on 14 March 1974, aged 90.

These are just some of the many stories told about Alf and Carrie, and the institution that was the *Royal Oak* during their tenure.



*The public house at Hooksway, photographed by John Fletcher in 1913.
(West Sussex Record Office)*

Note from the Editor: For more information on Alf Ainger, there is an oral history recording dating from December 1969, held at West Sussex Record Office (catalogue reference OH33). The first part of the recording consists of Mr Ainger's recollections of his working life in a conversation with Mr Ted Ayling, formerly miller at Terwick Mill and a friend of Mr Ainger. The second part of the recording comprises a series of anecdotes by Mr Ainger about the Royal Oak told by Mr Len Lintott, a well-known Sussex entertainer, and recorded by Mr Ayling.

THE TURINGS IN CHICHESTER

by David Wilson

Note from the Editor: A longer version of this article has been put on deposit at West Sussex Record Office. The catalogue reference there is MP 8779.

Most people will be familiar with the story of Alan Turing, one of the leading cryptographers at Bletchley Park in World War II. Less well known is the presence of the Turing family in the Chichester area. The last of the Turlings to live in Chichester were Alan's third cousins. This article sets the background to the Turing family with its inherited baronetcy, and looks at the details of that part of the family who settled around Chichester.

The Turlings of Foveran

The Turing baronetcy dates from 1638 when John Turing was ennobled by Charles I for having *'warmly espoused the cause of the King in the North'*. The first two baronets were royalist and fought for Charles II at Worcester. This earned them the enmity of the locally strong Covenanted movement and they were forced to sell the Foveran estates. As the second baronet had no children, the title passed to a parallel branch of the family who were not soldiers, but ministers, and served in parishes both in Scotland and overseas. After three generations of churchmen, the next in line, Robert, entered the service of the East India Company as a doctor in about 1770.

The Turlings as merchants

Robert made money through side trading; on becoming the 6th Baronet on the death of his unmarried brother in 1792 he returned to Scotland, married a rich heiress, and bought the estate of Banff Castle. Here he and his wife were noted for their lavish entertaining. Sir Robert also successfully applied to the Lord Lyon King of Arms to revive the unused title. However, his plans ended with the premature death of his only son.

The next branch of the Turlings were traders between Aberdeen and the 'staple port' of Veere (also known as Campvere) in Holland where they lived: the staple port had exclusive rights of trade with Scotland. Although their children were born in Holland, the Turlings kept British nationality. Thus the head of the family, James, Sir Robert's distant cousin, could succeed to the title of 7th Baronet as Sir James Henry Turing (1791-1860) after Sir Robert died in 1831. He made the career move of marrying the daughter of the British Consul in Rotterdam, becoming Consul in turn when his father-in-law died.

The Turlings return to England

For a few generations, the Turlings treated the consulship in Rotterdam as hereditary! Sir James' oldest surviving son, Robert Fraser Turing, became vice-consul in 1852 when he was 25. On his father's death, Robert became Sir Robert Fraser Turing (1827-1913), the 8th Baronet, and at the same time Consul in Rotterdam. When Robert retired, his brother Henry took over to preserve the Turlings' control of the Dutch trade.

After retiring in 1874, Sir Robert came to live at Chilgrove House in West Sussex. The previous owner, the barrister Sir James Wickens, had died the year before so it is likely that the Turlings moved in between 1874 and the census of 1881. Although many internet sites say he lived at West Dean, Chilgrove was included as a tithing of West Dean for census purposes. The original manor house of Chilgrove was just west of the *White Horse Inn*. Photos indicate that it was extensively re-modelled in the 1880s. Sir James Wickens had, in 1865, invited tenders for its enlargement.

In the census of 1881, Sir Robert is shown living at Chilgrove with his wife Catherine and four daughters. There was a staff of 12 including a Swiss governess to look after the youngest daughter, Julia, aged 12. Virtually none of the staff were local Sussex people. His son, James, was schooled at Eton, and subsequently boarded with the Reverend Rowley Lascelles at Graffham with other young men and a teacher. Presumably they were being 'crammed' for Oxford. James was successful, and he matriculated at Christ Church in 1882.

Sir Robert purchased the Lordship of the Manor in 1893 to add to his ownership of the house. But there is a mystery about the 1891 census. Sir Robert is not to be seen in Chilgrove – nor anywhere else in the UK. Was he travelling abroad? His wife Catherine was Head of Household, and their four unmarried daughters were still living there. In the 1901 census, Sir Robert was at Chilgrove with his wife and the two youngest daughters, but the staff now included a hospital nurse as Lady Catherine had been in poor health for some years: she died in 1905 and was buried at West Stoke.

Sir Robert re-married in 1906 at St George's Hanover Square [London], to Ethel Sophia Perry-Ayscough, widow of the Reverend Herbert Ramus. Sir Robert was aged 79 and she was 37, and thus younger than Sir Robert's children. Robert at least at first was fairly active – he took Ethel to tour the ancestral areas in Banff in 1908 – but by the time of the 1911 census they were back in Chilgrove and again a resident nurse was included in the staff there.

Sir Robert was active in local voluntary organisations such as the NSPCC [the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children], the Red Cross, the West Sussex County Nursing Association and also the local Conservative party. He took steps to have the baronetcy re-registered and approved by Lord Lyon King of Arms.

Sir Robert died in 1913 and was buried in West Stoke churchyard with his first wife. After his death, Chilgrove House was put up for sale. It was advertised as a freehold property with a residential and sporting estate of 232 acres. It was bought by William James of West Dean as an investment and after various uses was trashed by the Canadians billeted there in World War II. The West Dean Estate collected the war damages compensation and then demolished the old house. (The present Chilgrove House is an entirely separate building half a mile away.)

Sir Robert Fraser Turing's daughters

Sir Robert's children were all born in Holland during his Consulship there. The oldest, Catherine Antoinette (1854–1936) married Reverend William Frederick Shaw in 1895 in Westbourne. Shaw was Rector of West Stoke – hence the series of Turing burials there – and Prebend of Chichester Cathedral. (Catherine gave birth to twins in 1897: Blanche and Dorothy. The twins did not marry and were living in Foxbury House, Westbourne in 1939.)

The second of Sir Robert's daughters, Anne Eliza, died as an infant in Rotterdam.

Sir Robert's third daughter was Blanche Amelia (1857–1944). She married the land agent Robert Wordsworth in 1886 in Kensington, from her father's London town house, 36 Queen's Gate Gardens, before leaving for a honeymoon in the Lake District. The couple settled in the village of Perlethorpe in Nottinghamshire, and had two children: Blanche and Robert. Blanche did not marry and died in Pendean Nursing Home, Midhurst in 1976. Robert became a land agent, like his father, and worked in north Wales. After her husband's death, Blanche Wordsworth returned south to Haslemere, Surrey, where she was living with her daughter in 1939.

The next two daughters, Florence Ellen (1859–1947) and Julia (1869–1948), never married and lived together all their lives. They moved to London in 1911, after their father's second marriage, and lived at 6 Sloane Terrace until they died in the same nursing home in New Barnet. They moved out of London in 1939 and lived for a time with their nephew Robert (see below) in the Warren Farmhouse, Brandy Hole Lane.

Sir James Walter Turing, and Lady Mabel Rose Turing

Between the last two daughters, a son and heir was born, which must have been a relief to Sir Robert. James Walter Turing was born in 1862 in Rotterdam and died in 1928 in Marseilles. He was the 9th Baronet. He married Mabel Rose Caldecott, daughter of a banker, in 1891 at High Wych, Hertfordshire, and they had moved to North Lodge, Lavant, by 1901. Their twin sons were born in 1895 in Pimlico [London]. Robert ('Bobby') Andrew Henry Turing later became the

10th Baronet, whilst John Leslie Turing had to wait until Robert's death in 1970 to succeed him as the 11th Baronet. At North Lodge in Lavant the Turings kept a staff of three and a nursemaid to look after the twin boys. In 1901 the census recorded the nursemaid and the boys visiting Bognor Regis. From at least 1916 Sir James and Lady Mabel lived at Crockerhill House, Boxgrove – and had a telephone there, the number for which was 'Eastergate 4'.

Sir James Turing served on various public bodies. After coming down from Oxford he joined the 2nd Sussex Rifle Battalion (Volunteers) as 2nd Lieutenant in 1883, but he resigned his commission two years later. He was a Commissioner for Income Tax from 1904, and also a Commissioner for Land Tax. In World War I he was a member of the National Service Tribunal examining those who claimed exemption to conscription. Although Sir James supported the British Legion, his wife was less successful in raising money on Alexandra Rose Day in 1916: the total for her village, Easthampnett, was the smallest of any Chichester village at just 4s 2d.

Sir James died in Marseilles in 1928 of malaria and was buried at West Stoke. The provisions of his will are skewed in favour of the older twin, Robert. After his death, his widow Lady Mabel moved to 43 North Street [Chichester] and by 1939 she had moved out to The Warren, Brandy Hole Lane. This is a different property to The Warren Farmhouse, though both were likely part of the breakup sale of the Halsted estate when land was sold off in three-acre plots in the area around Brandy Hole and Plainwood Close. Lady Mabel died in Chichester in 1952 and is buried in the same grave as her husband at West Stoke.

After her husband's death, Lady Turing appears to have lived quietly. Newspaper accounts make brief reference to her interest in the NSPCC and the Red Cross, but more frequently to gifts of produce from her to the Royal West Sussex Hospital. The produce would have come from the garden of 43 North Street [the area where the Regnum Court housing development now stands].

Lady Turing also appears at formal social functions including a ball at Fontwell, and at the opening of the Lavant Church fete. Perhaps the most illuminating cutting is an advertisement in the local paper in 1945 for a cook and a house/parlour maid. Inducements include 'a good bus route' and a 'modern house and appliances' but Lady Turing could obviously only afford one dual-purpose maid: staffing difficulties meant that she was even prepared to allow the cook to have a child living in with her.

Sir Robert ('Bobby') Turing

Sir Robert was educated at Eton and then the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. He went straight into The Rifle Brigade and arrived in France in August 1915, attaining the rank of Captain. He was Mentioned in Despatches. All the battalions of the Rifle Brigade were extensively deployed on the Western

Front in World War I, and Sir Robert probably saw action with his unit both at the Somme and at Passchendaele.

After the war, he ran a plantation in Egypt and Sudan, both under British control. His parents visited him overseas in 1928 but his father disastrously caught malaria, dying at Marseilles as they returned home. Robert, now Sir Robert, returned home the following year, to his mother's new address at 43 North Street, Chichester; on arrival he immediately announced his engagement to Miss Elspeth Malcolm. The engagement lasted just one week! Elspeth's mother, Lady Malcolm, was quoted as saying it was all for the best as the couple had immediately realised they had made a mistake. Elspeth later married in 1935. Sir Robert never did.

In the 1939 census Sir Robert was recorded as a farmer living at Warren Farmhouse, Brandy Hole Lane, and was living there with his maiden aunts Florence and Julia, a cook, and a servant. He also re-enlisted in the Rifle Brigade but whether this involved active service is doubtful. Later still he was a regular at *The Hole in the Wall* public house in Broyle Road. He died in 1970 and was buried at West Stoke next to his parents.

Sir John ('Jack') Leslie Turing, and Lady Nina

Sir John was educated at Wellington College but left there in 1913 to go into fruit farming at Walhachin, British Columbia.¹ In 1916 Sir John returned to Europe where he joined the Seaforth Highlanders as 2nd Lieutenant. He arrived in France in February 1917, and in August that year he was awarded the Military Cross. The date coincides with the Battle of Pilckem Ridge – an opening clash in the third Battle of Ypres – in which the Highlanders were engaged.

The citation for the Military Cross reads:

2nd Lieut. John Leslie Turing, Seaforth Highlanders, Special Reserve. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during a raid upon enemy trenches. This officer was in command of two sections acting as "moppers up". He had a very difficult piece of ground to cross to get to the enemy lines, but in spite of the platoon in front of him losing direction, he led his men with remarkable precision and judgement. He captured three prisoners, ascertained valuable information as to the enemy trenches, and returned to our lines without loss of any kind, having displayed splendid coolness and sound leadership.

¹ Walhachin is now a ghost town but in its heyday, from 1909 until 1914, it was an affluent colony of English settlers and was often termed 'Canada's Camelot'. Its developer, Charles Barnes, sold the land as suitable for fruit growing and mounted a campaign aimed at gentlemen farmers, primarily members of the English aristocracy. It boasted luxurious amenities that were nearly unheard of in other towns of the era. Many of the townspeople lived in fine stone homes with high ceilings and large fireplaces and had servants, maids and valets. In town, there was a Chinese laundry, a polo field, a swimming pool, a skating rink and tennis courts.

After the war he returned to North America where he again worked as a farmer. In 1935 Sir John returned to England and joined his mother at 43 North Street, Chichester, but by 1939 they had moved to The Warren in Brandy Hole Lane. At this time and again after World War II he worked as a schoolmaster. (There appears to be no record of him being in the military in World War II.)

After his brother's death in 1970, he became the 11th Baronet. A few years later, at the age of 80, he married Irene Nina Shirley-Rollison (née Tatham), widow of Captain Shirley-Rollison RN. They settled at Hillcrest, Heatherwood, Midhurst, where Sir John died in 1987. She died 10 years later in Chichester. Sir John was buried at West Stoke with other members of his family.

The current branch of the Turings

As none of the Chichester Turings had left any male heirs, the title then descended through John Robert Turing, brother of Sir James, the 7th Baronet. John Turing had been born in Middelburg, Holland, in about 1790. He had trading connections with London where he married Jean Fraser in 1822, and in Batavia, Java, where his son, also John Robert, was born in 1826.

The younger John Robert returned to England after his father's death in Java in 1828. In 1861 he married Fanny Boyd – who like him had been born overseas, in Cambridge. He had trained for the ministry and became vicar of Edwinstowe, Nottinghamshire. Their eldest son, Arthur, was killed fighting on the North West Frontier of India in 1899; he had never married.

The second son, Julius Mathison Turing, was born in 1873 in Edwinstowe and was thus next in the male line. Julius joined the Indian Civil Service in 1896. He married Ethel Sara Stoney who was the daughter of the chief engineer of the Madras Railway Company. Their oldest son, John Ferrier Turing, was born in Tamil Nadu in 1908. The family briefly returned to England for the birth of their second son, the cryptographer Alan Turing, who was born in Maida Vale, London, in 1912. John Ferrier Turing and Alan Turing were third cousins of Sir Robert and Sir John, the 10th and 11th Baronets.

John Ferrier Turing was a London solicitor and had one surviving son born in 1961. This son was alive in 1987 and thus became the 12th Baronet, Sir John Dermot Turing. He too also became a solicitor, working first for the Government and then privately. He specialised in financial matters.

Did Alan Turing visit Chichester?

Sir Dermot says that his father, John, and uncle Alan made at least one family visit to the Chichester Turings as Sir Dermot's father vividly remembered Sir James' splendid red car with its twirly horn and squeezey bulb! These visits would have been about 1920, when the Turings were still young boys: they do not appear to have continued after Sir James' death.

Alan Turing is known to have had a sailing holiday in Chichester Harbour in 1939. He and his friend Fred Clayton – from King’s College, Cambridge – co-sponsored two Jewish boys² who had been brought to the UK as a result of Kristallnacht³ in November 1938. The two men from King’s College took the boys on holiday: obviously the group could have visited Chichester itself as tourists at this time.



Fig. 1: Alan Turing at Itchenor jetty, Chichester Harbour, in late August 1939. With him are the two refugee boys, and behind them and facing the camera is Fred Clayton
(Reproduced with permission of Sir Dermot Turing)

Alan Turing was briefly engaged to Joan Clarke, another cryptographer at Bletchley Park, in early 1941. Joan later married Lieutenant-Colonel JKR ('Jock') Murray in Chichester Cathedral on 26 July 1952, but her family had no contact with Chichester until her father, William Kemp Lowther Clarke, became a residentiary canon at the Cathedral in 1945, a post he held until 1968. Joan, Jock and Alan all worked at the Government’s cryptographic centre. Joan was reportedly on good terms with Alan until his death in 1954 notwithstanding that she had been informed by him of his homosexuality when their engagement had been broken in 1941. In 1952 Alan Turing had been convicted on a charge of gross indecency. This charge would have been regarded with disgust in the 1950s, so it is unlikely that he would then have been welcome at a Cathedral wedding.

² Clayton had spent time studying in Vienna and Dresden between 1935 and 1937, and knew of the Jewish experience in Germany and Austria at that time. He persuaded Turing, then aged 26, to help when they learnt of Jewish boys at a refugee camp at Harwich, who had been brought to the UK by Quakers’ Relief Action. In February 1939 the two men cycled to the camp and agreed to sponsor two boys who showed educational ambition. Clayton sponsored Karl Schneider from Dresden and Turing took responsibility for Robert Augenfeld from Vienna.

³ Note added by the Editor. On 9-10 November 1938, 267 synagogues and over 7,000 Jewish-owned businesses were among the many premises destroyed throughout Nazi Germany. The name comes from the shards of broken glass that littered the streets.

A FESTIVAL REVIVAL

by Barry Smith

Everyone who cared for the cultural life of the city was devastated when it was announced that the 2012 Chichester Festivities would be the last. Having promoted such a wonderful range of arts-related events over many years, the Festivities had become a Chichester institution. A dreadful gap suddenly loomed in the cultural life of the city.

For some of us, this thought was too much to bear. Chichester is a city of culture – this could not be allowed to happen! Something had to be done. And so it was that at a public meeting held in the Council Chamber the Festival of Chichester came into being as the natural successor to the late, lamented, Chichester Festivities.

With the active support of the *Chichester Observer*, the Cathedral’s Dean and Chapter, Chichester City Council, West Sussex Library Service and local arts organisations, a voluntary committee set about filling the gap. Serving on this founding committee were Anne Scicluna (the then Mayor), Anthony Cane (Chichester Cathedral), Felicity Masters (West Sussex Library Service), Roger Redfarn (a theatre director), and Helen Watt (Johnson Press). Also serving were Phil Hewitt (arts editor of the *Chichester Observer*) who took on the role of chair, and Barry Smith (director of Chichester Poetry) who became Festival co-ordinator.



Fig. 1: Members of the founding committee receiving a Community Award for Contribution to the Arts from television presenter Fred Dineage. (Author’s collection)

A flood of entries for the first Festival in 2013 ensured there would be continuity and no missing summer, no empty year in the Chichester Festival's calendar. We even had star names with former poet laureate Sir Andrew Motion, the brilliant Hanover Band, and legendary pop icon Geno Washington. It was a bit of a miracle really, as the first Festival was launched and run entirely on goodwill.

As a registered charity (1167936), the Festival has been grateful for the support of its sponsors from the business community, particularly its long-standing headline sponsors: Henry Adams, Chichester City Council, and the *Chichester Observer*.

We like to think there will be something for everybody in our annual Festival, whatever their age or interests. A quick glance at the event categories gives a sense of the scope: classical music, jazz, blues, folk, rock, pop and light music; spoken word; theatre; art and craft; cinema; walks and tours; food and drink; dance; church events; open days, fetes and much more. With hundreds of events on offer, there is a fantastic choice. We are now one of the largest community festivals in the south. A flip through our brochures brings up the names of our stalwart local participants – names like Chichester Singers; Chichester Symphony Orchestra; St Richard Singers; Chichester Jazz Club; Chichester City Band; Pallant House Gallery; the Novium Museum; the Oxmarket Gallery; classical cross-over cabaret performers All That Malarkey; world music Klezmer and Balkan band She'Koyokh; and many more.

And each year there are our distinguished visiting performers. Over the first decade these have included the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; the London Mozart Players; piano maestro Victor Ryabchikov; cellist Leonard Elschenbroich; saxophonist Jess Gillam; jazz legends Courtney Pine, Zoe Rahman, Julian Stringer and Jo Fooks; rock musicians Georgie Fame, Paul Jones and the Manfreds; folk luminaries Martin and Eliza Carthy and Martin Simpson; authors Louis de Bernieres, William Nicholson, Helen Dunmore, Victoria Hislop and Jim Crace; poets Don Paterson, Jo Shapcott, Roger McGough, Grace Nichols and John Agard; and even the legendary American pianist Steven Kovacevich raising funds for the Chichester Cathedral Restoration and Development Trust in a truly memorable performance of a Schubert piano sonata...

We've been delighted to have the support of our most distinguished Festival Patron, Dame Patricia Routledge. Chichester novelist Kate Mosse has also been a regular presence, launching the Festival on Cathedral Green each year alongside the Mayor. The city is blessed with considerable artistic talent. As we celebrate our tenth festival as part of Culture Spark, we hope to be able to continue to bring a truly unique and thoroughly enjoyable festival celebration to our audiences for years to come.

CHICHESTER'S COVID-19 AWARDS

by Greg Slay

In 2020, Chichester City Council created a new Covid-19 Civic Award to acknowledge the contribution of individuals, groups and organisations towards the wellbeing of the people and city of Chichester during the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. The award scheme was intended to recognise individuals as well as groups and organisations that had gone above and beyond to ensure that friends and neighbours were supported and cared for, vulnerable people were looked after, and that life could continue during difficult times. It was only ever intended as a one-off scheme.

The scheme was initially developed by Richard Plowman, Town Crier, who had been Mayor of Chichester for 2019-20. One of the promises he had made to local residents when Mayor was to hold a big thank you party for the community for stepping up during the pandemic, with a special emphasis on frontline workers and the NHS.

Nominations were sought from members of public. Decisions about who should receive awards were then made by Members of the City Council in August 2021.

The Awards were presented by the Mayor and Mayoress of Chichester, Councillors John and Cherry Hughes, at a specially arranged celebratory 'Over the Rainbow' event held in Priory Park on 30 September 2021. The party included a number of other elements including a children's parade; a heroes' parade of NHS and frontline workers; music by Chichester City Band, Chichester Big Band, and singer Dawn Gracie; food by UK Harvest; and a torchlight finale. This event was filmed for posterity by Clive Hand, and was subsequently premiered at a reception held in the New Park Centre on 19 February 2022.

The full list of recipients was:

- Marjory Greig – *Volunteer retired microbiologist at St Richard's Hospital*
- Susie Jerwood – *Senior microbiologist at St Richard's Hospital*
- Satoko Suzuki – *Nurse on the Covid-19 ward at St Richard's Hospital*
- Paula Chatfield – *Work with the Parklands community*
- Liz Woodsell – *UK Harvest*
- Greg Slay – *Establish and operate a new statutory hub for West Sussex County Council (a separate community hub was also established by the Council)*
- Joanne Kondabeka – *Chichester Foodbank*
- Matthew O'Shea – *Work in the community*
- Joyce Loten – *Distribution of excess food to the needy*

- Nick Sutherland – *Supplying hot meals from his restaurant*
- Declan Moody – *Senior Community Warden*
- Piers Taylor – *Community Safety Manager*
- Sarah Hughes – *Seconded from her role to organise, cook and deliver meals for rough sleepers*
- Gina Jelley – *Travelodge homeless accommodation*
- Chichester District Council – *Group award for not missing one collection of household rubbish*
- Adam Hewitt – *24-year-old doctor son of Phil Hewitt (Chichester Observer newspaper) and working in Intensive Care*
- Ash Pal – *Chairman of Chichester Community Network*
- Clare de Bathe – *Mayor's Hardship Fund administration*
- Ruth Taunt – *Mayor's Hardship Fund verification*
- Lynne and Bruce Brechin – *Mayor's Hardship Fund, mask production and fundraising*
- Chris Spink – *Helping the homeless*
- O'Hagan's Sausages – *Supplying sausages for the St Pancras breakfast for homeless*
- Debbie Carter – *Special help in her electoral ward despite her own vision disability*
- Farley Glue – *Baby born during lockdown*
- Martin Hopkins – *Carer for his parents and also had to 'shield'*
- Linda Hicks – *Mayor's Hardship Fund and helped a friend and then needed help for herself*
- Matine Carver – *Helping others then needed help for herself*

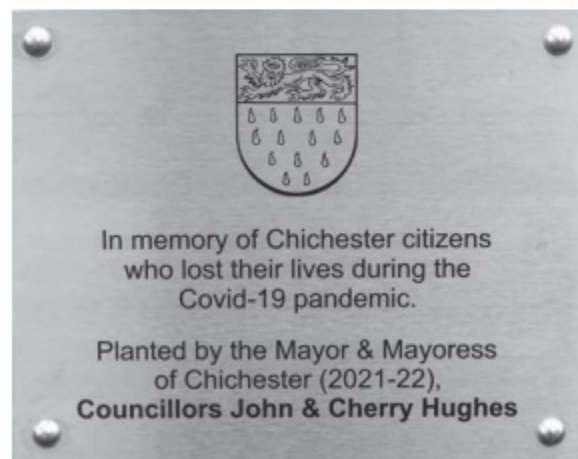


Fig. 1: The plaque attached to the commemorative tree planted in the Litten Memorial Garden, and dedicated on 8 November 2021. (Author's collection)

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Chichester Local History Society was formed in 1985 to bring together people with a common interest in the history of the city and its outlying districts. The Society exists to promote research, talks, publications, and visits to places of historical interest. An annual Journal is issued free to members in late summer.

If you would like to know more about the Society, please visit the website (<https://chichesterlocalhistory.org.uk/>) or contact one of the officers listed below for more information:

Chairman: Philip Robinson, 01243 816595

Vice-Chairman: Anne Scicluna, 01243 789065

Treasurer: Bernard Adkins, 01243 790724

Membership: Roger Thomson, 01243 790160

Programme: Alan Green, 01243 784915

Copies of the Journal, both current and previous editions, can be accessed at Chichester Library in Tower Street and at the West Sussex Record Office in Orchard Street. A full set is also held at the University of Chichester, Chichester City Council, and the Chichester Cathedral Library. A copy is put on deposit each year with the British Library's Periodicals Collection.

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS TO JOURNAL 39 (2023)

Articles for this Journal, whether long or short, are welcome from anyone. Contributions from members are especially welcome. Articles for Chichester History 39 need to be submitted no later than 31 May 2023. Text should be digitally generated using Microsoft Word, but typed or written submissions are also accepted. Text should be sent by email to the Editor at: theslays.gk@gmail.com or by post to: Greg Slay, 7 Dolphin Close, Fishbourne, Chichester PO19 3QP. Illustrations should be in electronic form, and jpegs should be at 300 dpi or higher; alternatively advise on or submit original images for scanning. Please submit illustrations separate from the text. Captions to every illustration must credit the copyright owner.

The Editor reserves the right to edit each article; edited versions will be discussed with the author prior to publication. It is understood that the views expressed in each article are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Society. We trust, however, that none of our contributors would deliberately seek in an article to cause offence to anyone else.

SIR JOHN
GIELGUD

1904 – 2000

DAME ELIZABETH
TAYLOR

1932 – 2011

LAWRENCE OLIVIER

1907 – 1989

Fabulous people
who dined here

THE BARN'S LARDER, LITTLE LONDON