





*The*  
ANNALS  
*of*  
KINGSWOOD  
1725 - 1749

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We hang little thieves and take off our hats to great ones  
18th century proverb

Our end was.....singly thus, to save our souls, to live  
wholly to the glory of God.  
John Wesley, 14.10.1735

My love to the colliers  
George Whitefield, 25.3.1741

Foreword.....	5
Bibliography/Sources/Abbreviations.....	6
Annals of Kingswood 1725 - 49.....	7
Appendix 1.....	77
Appendix 2.....	77
Appendix 3.....	78
Index of Names.....	79



(PEAR TREE PLANTED BY MR. WESLEY AT KINGSWOOD.)

## WITHOUT LAWFORD'S GATE

being the Annals of Kingswood Forest for the years 1725 - 1749

the third volume of the series, a period when Kingswood gained countrywide notoriety, for sundry "riots" which in turn directly led to the arrival of a world figure, John Wesley. As a former member of the Hanham Road Congregational Chapel, who marched behind the banner with the best on Whit Monday, I was bemused by the unfolding of events during 1739-40, which reminded me of the "Beatlemania" of my youth. I apologise to those who are as shocked as I was by some of the antics of the major participants which are detailed here. I hope that no offence is caused. It has been a struggle to refer throughout to Kingswood's other evangelist as Whitefield - which is the spelling by which his name is most often rendered in manuscript and in print. As far as I am aware, in Kingswood, then and now, he was always George Whitfield, and pronounced accordingly.

Whilst the double excitements of riots and religion were in progress, "ordinary" life continued: the sad family crises brought about by "removal orders"; the goings on of the Newton tenantry; offences, both petty and serious, many of which ended similarly in squalid executions; and the sheer breathtaking courage of the 1735 rescue, for which I would award posthumous citations if it were in my power.

The matrimonial experiences of the likes of Ruth Phipps - whatever her name was - and Sarah Morris, may explain why so many marriages are missing from my own family tree! That irregular celebrants such as the Wick innkeeper were now and then brought to book is shown by an item in Samuel Farley's Journal of 11 February 1727: "To Newgate Monday last was committed John Burrows, a famous corncutter, who made it a practice to marry people for so small a price as 18 pence."

As usual, this book has been written with family historians in mind, and I have named as many local people as possible. Where I could, I have allowed them to speak for themselves. Please note I have not included wills. Most of the Kingswood area with the exception of Mangotsfield was within the Diocese of Gloucester, and wills of the inhabitants were proved in that court. Indexes to the wills are at Bristol Reference Library but the actual wills are at the Gloucester Record Office. Mangotsfield was in the Diocese of Bristol, and its wills are at Bristol Record Office.

I would like to express my thanks as usual to those who have helped me: the archivists and staff at Bristol Record Office and Gloucester Record Office; the librarians at Bristol Reference Library and the Bristol University Library, where I spent a thrilling afternoon in the basement absorbed into John Cennick's world through his diary. [Despite his often cringe making utterances and cast iron certainty, Cennick, though the least known, is by far my favourite of the Kingswood Three.] To Valerie and Alan Britton, my publishers; to Alan Bryant for allowing me to borrow the transcripts made of Mary Dafter's letters by my friend the late Mollie Ashley. Finally to George L. for cups of tea; and Aramis L. an elderly French gentleman for his constant companionship.

D.P. Lindegaard  
September 1996



1725

5 January

Rev Mr Henry Berrow, vicar, and founder of the Charity School at Pucklechurch was buried, and also in this year, Rev John Wells became vicar of Siston in place of Jonathon Luffingham. He was incumbent for 28 years until his death. [PRPuck 5.1.1724/5 & PRS]

20 January

Mary Dafter worked as steward to Sir John Newton of Barr's Court, and reported frequently to him at his London address. An explanation of her life and work appears in Appendix 2.

On this day, she wrote about the Dunn family's difficulties: "as relating Dunn's lifing, they have took up the mortgage out of [Sir Abraham] Elton's hands in November last, though much ado, and their land is sold off and what money was wanting, Squire Edwards lent to them, being the children's great friend. Elton did tell me he would give them £20....but Squire Edwards and Mr Offield could get but five guineas from him; so now the children says they hopes in a year's time [to] throw all their mites together and full staté it themselves, returning your Honor thanks that Sir Abraham is dismissed of his ends.

"As relating to the coalwork that will come into Dunn's ground, they be not come up to it, for they be sinking a pit by the rock in the Common which is at Creswicke's Liberty".

[The Dunn family is mentioned in previous letters, as in July 1724 that they "have sold part of their lands which came to £320 and have tendered it to Sir Abraham Elton in part of the mortgage of £500, but he won't have it unless he have all, so they waits for Mr Edward coming home to sell the rest to pay him all. He is very desirous to have the leasing and to turn those children out, which most people thinks is very hard". It is pleasing to hear that Elton "is dismissed of his ends", but they were not completely out of the wood.....]

26 May

Many of the letters in this year refer to the "navigation" presumably an early attempt at canal building: "The navigation will not begin at Sydenham Hill until after the crop is off for they have a hard rock at Hanham Mills". [MD]

20 June

Richard Davis of Oldland parish died aged 85. [Bigland]

[He was the father of Mary Dafter, and on 23 June, she wrote "My dear father I have lost this last Sunday which was aged 87 years, had but three days sickness, the tenderest father that ever a child had, and as good a Christian: in that I do comfort myself that he have reaped what he sowed for from his youth." Bigland may have erred when transcribing his age from the tombstone. In the same family plot lie Thomas son of Joseph and Mary Long and grandson of Thomas and Mary Dafter, died Feb. 7 1761 aged 41; Mary Bartlett, daughter of Joseph and Mary Long, died Oct. 15, 1760 aged 46;

Joseph Long son of Joseph and Mary Long died Oct. 13, 1759, aged 43, and Richard's two wives: Sarah, wife of Richard Davis died September 6, 1671 and Eleanor, wife of the said Richard Davis died May 12, 1696. Mary Dafter is not recorded.]

30 June

"I have advised with Squire Trye, which I think to be the fittest person relating to this navigation and his opinion is the land they cut through cannot be valued less than 40s per acre by reason the taxes and payments will wholly lie on the estate and a great deal of damage on each side. Some of those persons concerned in making the river navigation have made choice of him to be one of the commissioners and they intend to summon the commoners to meet sometime this next week. His opinion is that Mr Good.....is the fittest to act in this affair. Mr Offield is chosen Sheriff and Dr Lane is one of the subscribers, which is his great friend, so he will be of no service to the commoners, so if your Honor think well of Mr Good, I shall desire him to act upon it.

"I have sent two dozen of Bristol water by Benjamin Tarrant the horse carrier, and it will be in London a Tuesday next at the Three Cups in Broad Street, directed as usual, carriage paid". [MD]

[Bottled water is evidently not a new idea!]

10 July

"The commissioners will sit at Bath, Friday next to determine the damage [of the navigation]. Squire Trye have gone into the woods this week to take the particulars for there must be a way made a thurte [sic] to come to the lands the other side of the bridge....

"We have a very wet hay harvest." [ibid]

26 July

Squire Trye, Squire Creswicke and Captain Hart all signed the agreement about the navigation, and Mr Offield signed on behalf of Sir John Newton, "thirty years purchase and 40 shillings per acre of all the land they make use of.

"We be mighty busy in our hay harvest. We have had no good weather till the latter end of this week." [ibid]

16 August

Mary had been "very ill", and apologised for not writing sooner. "There will be a jury called the 25th instant for measuring the ground in Sydenham and Homemead on the navigation." [ibid]

25 August

"We have had a great flood this week. It have been all over the meads and have done a great damage to the navigation." [ibid]

13 September

Mary was "very busy in our corn harvest, it being a very catchly time...." Mrs Ann Dunn "desires your Honor's forbearance for they have taken up some



money of Squire Edward to help pay Sir Abraham Elton, and when he is paid, they will endeavour soon to renew". [ibid]

20 October

And good news....."I shall write very soon in relation to the coal coming into Dunn's ground, for they be almost come up to it." [ibid]

23 October

"They have landed some coal.....but it was such great expense Squire Trye and Captain Hart have bought their partners out, and they now desires a lease of your Honor and Sir Michael for 30 years to go through Dunn's ground and John Smith's which is both your land, paying 2s 6d in the pound and tennants damage and making good the ground. I have advised with Mr Good, and he says that if it comes to a work it will be to your advantage, for no-one can work it but them, for they have put up an engine and brought up a level on another Lord's land, which is a great expense.....I think whiles Squire Trye liveth there will be nothing but justice done for he is a man of honor. I seed in an old lease granted by Sir Richard Hart by my old master for the coaling of Dunn's ground which time is not expired into three years and my old Lady had four broad pieces of gold gave her, so I believe you may get the same for my lady of these gentlemen." [ibid]

29 October

John, son of John Nutt, grandson of William Nutt, died aged 16, buried at Bitton. [Bigland]

24 November

Edward Keynes, and Sarah his wife, from Batheaston, settlement certificate at Bitton. [BRO P/B/OP/6a/7]

1 December

The lease was granted by Sir John Newton, and the partners, Captain Hart and Squire Trye "intend to go on with the work presently and not to stop...." but "Squire Trye is off from working the hills as yet, for he says he have lost £120 by his own." [MD]

11 December

James Pidding, a baker from "without Lawford's Gate" offered half a guinea reward, no questions asked: "Stolen or stray'd out of a ground in Barton Regis on 7 November last, a black strong grown mare about 14 hands high, having a streak of white down her face, the near foot behind white." [SamF]

13 December

William Atkins, his wife Anne, and child were at Bitton with a settlement certificate saying they belonged to Keynsham. [BRO P/B/OP/6a/8]

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In addition to the navigation and coal workings, Mary Dafter mentions many leaseholders and tenants in her letters, and as they are of considerable genealogical interest, their names are appended below:

20 January 1724/5

Mrs Barker's lifing, and her misfortunes since her father's death.

23 February, 1724/5

Elizabeth Flower's, Thomas Saunders', Tyler's and Evans' leases.

13 March

Henry Willis's, late Warne's; Mrs Barker;

7 April

Payment of £22 10s to Mrs Hopkins; Mrs Barker's lease.

26 May

Mr Fisher to put a third life on Mrs Rowsall's leasing, "for if he do not, his grandmother says she will".

[This is possibly Joan Rosewell, died 1734; her daughter Susanna was married to Will. Yorberry - see Bigland].

23 June

Leases of Henry Willis, Tippet, Barker, Rogers, Widow Reed; "Nicholls the Quaker, though much ado have agreed to the terms your Honor granted him in renewing for two lives" - Mr Nicholls would continue to cause "much ado" and became a thorn in Mary's side in the months to come.

10 July

Agreement with Joseph Nicholls to give "£35 to put in two lives at seven years purchase and one broad piece to my lady, and the old Lord's rent of 6s per year, and 1s for a herriot. To give a bond if required to indemnify if his brother should be a life, [as] I have been informed, he is dead".

16 August

Tippet's lease; Mr Lamb; Joseph Nicholls "he have lost the original [so] I must desire your counterpart to be sent down"; Mrs Ann Dunn.

25 August

Mr Raymond, steward of the Stafford Liberty, and an intimate acquaintance of Mr Good; Joseph Willcox, to change one life in the cottage in Kingswood, now John Brook's; John Brook agreed to change this life which is Robert Browning's - and a domestic drama is revealed: "the writing was made, but Brook absented and left his wife and family and never signed them, but his wife have found where he is, and have agreed to the selling of it, and her to have the money for her relief".

13 September

Robert Barrett, the carrier; Tippet's lease; Willis's fine; Mrs Ann Dunn asks forebearance "for they have taken up some money of Squire Edward to help pay Sir Abraham Elton"; and again - "be pleased to send Nicholls his counterpart, for he have lost his".

1 December

Browning relating to Harding; "the bit of ground that came in hand by the death of Edward Jones".

1726

8 January

The coalmining at Dunn's ground hit problems "the water is so quick and full that they cannot go on but have begun a level from Newlands wood...which Squire Trye says will cost them a thousand pound...." [MD]

3 February

A stray: Mary Drake, the daughter of Jonathon & Mary Drake, of Barton Regis was baptised at Croydon, Surrey. [PR]

5 February

Still problems with coaling, and "I hear from the workmen and Mr Good it will be a great while before they bring it, the rock being so hard to go through but I am satisfied they have good prospects or else they would not be at this charge....Squire Trye received the money for the navigation and disbursement for your tenants. Your part comes to £66 12s 9d and what damage more that is done by the floods. I shall pay this money in with more very soon." [MD]

19 February

The partners asked "if your Honor please to let them try for small coals on a vein called Bush's which lieth at the bottom of the hills by Cadberry Heath leading to the windmill. Squire Trye have an engine....which he will put up on this, if granted....it will be some years before they bring this level up to Dunn's ground and....[they wish]....to try on this small coal vein for the other lieth so near the cupole that it will pay off soon....Small coal is now very scarce and bears a good price; that makes them willing to try it." [ibid]

[Mary had negotiated Newton's share at 2s 6d in the pound, plus tenants' damage, and to make good the ground, "also a couple of broad pieces for my lady."]

16 March

"Mr Good have sunk a pitt in Pragmoors for Mr Woodward and the partners have been often soliciting to sink a pit within the walls, but did not tell where, so now they be just off the other side of the wall. This made him doubtful whether they might not be in your land....he have landed coal this week or ten days. There is the wall that parts the two works but they be the deeper, which while they works they will dry this." [ibid]

9 April

"Squire Trye have drawn a draft for Mr Offield to make to send to your Honor for the liberty of coaling at Hanham....and likewise for the small coal vein from Bush's leading up to the windmill." [ibid]

23 April

"I have sent two dozen of Bristol water by Robert Barrett, the carrier, and it will be in London on Tuesday next at the Bear in Piccadilly, carriage paid." [ibid]

15 June

Richard Haynes, Lord of the Manor of Wick and Abson died. He was succeeded by his only surviving child, Thomas [born 1699]. Five other children of Richard and his wife Ann, nee Cole, died in infancy, and a sixth, Christopher, died when a law student at the Temple, London.

27 June

Mary Dafter writes: "I have drained the pond by your Honor's command and took 8 brace of carp that was ordered, but could not keep them alive in the cisterns, so I got a store pot and put them in the pond, and while my family was out at harvest, the store was robbed, so Sir Will. Manson and Madam Polham had of carp and tench about five brace apiece which pleased them very well...." [MD]

12 July

"The gardeners and florists had a very splendid entertainment on Thursday last. The Glory which crowned the whole was a seedling of Mr Miller, painter, of without Lawford's Gate, of his own raising which he named 'Flora's Birthday' and allowed to be Queen of the Feast." [SamF]

27 August

A letter "from Mr Good in answer to the level Squire Player have stopped. He brought me the good news yesterday, that I should acquaint your Honor that the level is blown up, and your adventurers have him again." [MD]

17 October

Mr Good and Mary talked to Squire Trye about his level, and the length of time and expense of such a speculative venture. The Squire thought he would not have been at such vast expense had he begun his level 800 yards farther out; he thought it would be ten years before it would be brought to work, and the rock was so hard that it had to be blown with powder, and the partners "be out already near £1,000". However, as Mary said to Sir John Newton, "it will be a great advantage to your works on this side of the wood and for this vein of coal that headeth from Bush's, is enclosed ground as far as the windmill and then comes to Caddemoor. This place by all that ever tried to work it gave but 2s 6d in the pound and it is such a vast watery place....Edward Gifford had it and [his] partners gave no more, and since [it] was let by my husband to others for the same t'would not answer the working, so Squire Trye desires the grant of this for 21 years, or to have the liberty of renewing his lease when expired, for there must be an engine or two put up presently which will be a great expense, and if this will dry the ground, it may be the terms of years he thinks above mentioned a working....coal is likely to be more scarce and his long venture will be many years before it can be brought to work." [MD]

19 October

"I have here sent the copy of that agreement which is made between your Honor and Squire Player and your venturers at the level. They desire your perusal and if you agree to it, to have the writing made with you, or here, as you please. Mr Good have done all he could in this affair, and the work would have been lost if not agreed. He says it is to your Honor's advantage to agree to it, for the partners is to pay the £100 and as to Lord's rent, that is mentioned because this is a close copy, it is to be paid as usual.....because some veins Squire Player have but 2s in the pound. They

desire your answer as soon as possible and Squire Trye desires an answer to this as soon as possible." [ibid]

30 October

"The partners.....have agreed with Squire Player about the use of your level at the North side of the Causeway". This agreement, dated 13 October is amongst the Newton papers; "An agreement was signed between Thomas Player of Cleeve Hill, Mangotsfield, esquire, Sir John Newton of Barr's Court, Bitton, Baronet, Samuel Potter, Thomas Potter, Nicholas Read, Elizabeth Batt, Dorothy Smith, John Stibbs, Elizabeth Stibbs and Francis Tippet, to dig coals on a level in Kingswood. Reference also made to a level on the North side of the Causeway used and granted to Thomas and Jacob Punter by Sir John Newton. [GRO, Newton papers]

Meanwhile Squire Trye still awaited Newton's answer and had stopped work on his level, Mary is on his side, and says "he have been very kind in taking the second view of the navigation in Sydenham and Homead for the towing paths. We have hauled 25 more stones to be put up and then it will be measured exactly and the money paid". [MD]

30 December

"Abraham Caynes, a notorious robber and housebreaker was apprehended and taken by Mr Shatford, clerk to Justice Trye and John Stock who met him on the highway in the parish of Hullavington. He is impeached by Owen Gane\*, one of the gang, which consists of eight or more before in custody, of being concerned with him and other in 8 or 10 robberies, in particular of stealing two sheep from Mr Pinker in Bitton and a furnace from Josias Robbins [sic] of the same.

"It seems he made all Endeavours possible to prevent being taken: he broke over the hedge from the highway and made to a farmer's house where they found him in an Ox's stall covered with hay or straw. He begged heartily for mercy owning his life to be at the disposal of Common Justice. There are warrants out for several more of 'em whereof some are his own brothers." [SamF]

[\* afterwards called Aaron Gane. He turned King's Evidence and went free. The Caynes (Caines, Cains) family, a century later, would become notorious in Kingswood as the leading members of the Cock Road Gang. This is the first time one of their number is mentioned in connection with illegal activities.

The Robbins family were living in Siston in 1674, and a Josias Robbins "came to be clerke of the parish (of Bitton) on the 22 day of March, 1690". Josias Robbins, a yeoman of Bitton who was married in 1714 to Martha Holbin of Stapleton, is possibly the Josias mentioned above, and perhaps a brother of my ancestor, Jonathon Robbins, who was born about 1700.]



Names mentioned by Mary Dafter in this year.

8 January 1725/6

Browning about Harding's leasing; William Humphries to put a third life in his cottage; "Susanna Lewton to put in two lives in a cottage that was Henry Beard's, which was her father's but now lately was Ann Weeks, her sister, and she is dead, which is one of the lives on it. There is but William Beard's life on it, the lease bearing date December 1707".

5 February 1725/6

Mrs Ann Dunn, re leasing; Isaac Dyer for the ground that came by the death of Edmond Jones, old lease granted to Samuel Jones; Joseph Nicholls' lease, "his house is much out of repair, and he will do nothing to it without trouble till he have renewed it"; Humphries' agreement and also Susanna Lewton's for her sister's children.

9 April

Mrs Ann Dunn's lease; Joseph Willcox, "a very old man and poor"; a meeting with Samuel Jones about ground near where Isaac Dyer "have the grant of".

14 May

Samuel Jones' lease - "he pretends he cannot find him".

27 June

Joseph Nicholl's says his lease is lost, but he agrees to give £35 for the two lives in his cottage; a box of leases to be sent by Benjamin Tarrant; Susanna Lewton's and William Humphries' old surrenders; Joseph Willcox and the old surrender "which was Brook's cannot be found"; Isaac Dyer's lease.

10 August

land bought by Dyer; Nicholl's lost lease - "I do expect to hear from Nicholls every day to put his lease in hand"; Squire Trye, "down with the gout, and very bad".

27 August

Robert Barrett, the carrier sent to London. Nicholls promised to come next month about his lease.

19 October

Fines received from Dyer, Willcox, Humphries and Lewton, and £5 paid to Squire Edward. Joseph Nicholls arrives and requests 6 acres be added which was not in his old lease. Nothing is resolved and he promises to come again in a week's time. "He is a very troublesome and unfair man." Mary threatens that the house would be "ingoted" - [ignited?] - if he does not keep it in repair. Mr Joseph Whittock offers £120 for Harding's lease.

30 October

Isaac Dyer's fine; Joseph Nicholls expected at Barr's Court, and another threat issued that his house should be ignited; a warning that Barr's Court House is falling into disrepair, endorsed by Mr Morris.

1727

10 January

A lease for seven years between James Butler of Westminster, Middlesex, esquire and Thomas Edwards of Bristol to Thomas Punter of Mangotsfield, yeoman, of coalmines and lands and the liberty of coaling on Shortwood Farm. [BRO AC/AS 62/2]

14 January

William Batman and Elizabeth Jones, were arrested and held in the Bridewell at Lawford's Gate. William was accused of being the confederate of Abraham Caynes, as well as breaking into the house of Ezekiel Cox of Mangotsfield. Elizabeth, described as Caynes' mother in law, was also charged with receiving stolen goods. [SamF]

[Abraham Caynes married Ann Jones at Bitton on 8 September 1718. The term mother in law has come to mean exclusively the mother of a wife or husband, but it could mean stepmother too. Elizabeth may indeed have been Abraham's stepmother as well as his mother in law, for a marriage took place between William Caynes and Elizabeth Jones of Bitton at Saltford on 17 April 1715. William Batman married Mary Smith at Bitton on 16 September 1718.]

As the alleged crimes took place in Gloucestershire, the felons had to be transferred to the county town to take their trial: they were "conveyed on horseback under sufficient guard" to Gloucester. Abraham Caynes, described "the Captain of their Gang" was already there.

21 January

Another member of the same gang [unnamed] was reported as being arrested whilst "in a house of ill-repute upon Lawrence Hill", whilst his companion escaped. "Divers sorts of suspected goods [were] found upon Caynes, Batman, Jones and Gane, a catalogue of which is intended to be made publick." [ibid]

26 January

"William Seymor's information. William Seymore of the parish of Bitton, gentleman, made oath this 26th day of January 1726\* that as his parents told him, he was born in the parish of Bitton where he lived with his said parents until he was near 7 years of age and then went to Brewton in Somerset and lived with her Ladyship Viscountess Harding as page for the space of 12 years and that about 38 years since, he left his said service and went into the excise where he served his Majesty in divers places in England, and that about fourteen years since, he came to Burford in the County of Oxford where he lived several years and paid tax on his own account and further saith that he hath not rented ten pounds a year or gained any legal settlement since he left the town of Burford aforesaid."

[Signed] William Seymour

witnessed: Thomas Trye, Henry Creswicke, Richard Hart. [BRO P/B/OP/6g/2]

[I believe that this William was the son of Thomas Seymour, and baptised at Bitton 30 December 1662. He is probably the William Seymour who was buried at Bitton on 26 August 1739.]

February

Petitions were presented at the House of Commons concerning the road between Studley Bridge, Wiltshire and Toghill complaining about highway conditions and proposing that tolls be introduced. [GJ, SamF]

18 March

Abraham Caynes and William Batman were sentenced to hang at Gloucester for various robberies. Elizabeth Jones was also found guilty and although spared the gallows, was to suffer another barbarous punishment: to be burnt in the hand. [SamF]

20 March

William Drew, his wife Elizabeth, and child, at Bitton with a settlement certificate from Newland, Worcestershire. [sic] [BRO/P/B/OP/6a/9]

29 March

At Doynton, "William Owen, a Blackmore, before called Chance, aged 27" was baptised. [PRD]

1 April

William Humphris died aged 72, and buried in the South Aisle at Oldland Chapel, beside his wife Ann, died 5 January 1720/11. [Bigland, Bitton]

12 April

Mary Dafter wrote: "Squire Player is stopping of the level which will be of great damage to your Honor and to your venturers, for they be out a great deal."

18 April

William Hudson, his wife Sarah, and child, at Bitton with a settlement certificate from Chippenham. [BRO/P/B/OP/6a/10]

20 April

John Smyth, schoolmaster, at Bitton with a settlement certificate from Mangotsfield. [BRO/P/B/OP/6a/11]

Removal Order, Susanna Bullock, widow, from Bitton to Woolley, Somerset. [BRO/P/B/OP/6b/2]

22 April

Tobias Lewton of Doynton, and his family were away, leaving Hannah Williams, a servant, in the house alone. She was discovered "stabbed behind one ear, and her neck twisted". A local man, Roger Bryant was held on suspicion of murdering her: in the fashion of the time, "they obliged him to handle and stroke the dead body which he readily did with great imprecations of innocency."

This seemed satisfactory, for "'tis conjectured by all the neighbourhood that he is not the person who did the Fact, nor was there any Thing found upon him, tho' the house was robbed of Money, Plate and Effects."



But Roger lost his nerve, and ran away. He was spotted at Wootton under Edge, where he tried to enlist in the Army. He was recognised, having previously been a deserter, and the hue and cry was raised. [GJ,SamF]

24 April

Those who had petitioned for turnpikes were rewarded, and two Turnpike Acts received Royal assent. The tolls had not yet been set, and the whole district waited anxiously.

26 April

Elizabeth Jones had returned home. The Bitton Poor Law paid her 2s 6d to look after two of her grandchildren, orphaned by judicial murder. William Batman's wife Mary received 1s 9d for nursing Caynes's youngest child. [Sadly, the baby died 4 August 1729.] [Bitton orders]

5 May

Thomas Vesey at Bitton, settlement certificate from North Bradley, Wiltshire. [BRO/P/B/OP/6a/12]

6 May

A day for public notices:

"Whereas Thomas Flower, and Jane his wife, of Coalpit Heath, in the parish of Westerleigh hath mutually agreed to part and live asunder, these are to caution all persons whatsoever not to trust her in her said husband's name, for that he will not pay any debts she shall contract."

[An inventory for Thomas Flower, collier of Westerleigh dated 1730 is filed at GRO, reference 1730/138.]

and

"Whereas William Axon, a journeyman weaver did engage with Thomas Box, stuffmaker in New Street, without Lawford's Gate, to serve him as such per day as an hired servant. These are to make notice that the said Axon hath clandestinely left his master, and feloniously carry'd away as much broadcloth as amounts to the value of £10 upwards. Any persons that shall secure him, or the said effects shall have half a guinea reward. Note he wears a ragged snuff coloured coat, has straight dark hair and is of a thin visage."

and the news everybody had been waiting for:

THE TURNPIKE TOLL fees:

A coach and six.....	one shilling
A coach and four.....	8d
Any conveyance drawn by less than 4 horses or other animals....	4d
By one horse or other beast.....	2d
Every horse, mule, ass or other beast of burden, laden or unladen and not drawing.....	1d
Except coal horses, per horse.....	½d

The colliers had desired and half expected total exemption; they were outraged and vowed to pay no tolls at all. Trouble was bound to ensue.

Finally:

Roger Bryant was arrested near Cirencester, when he tried to sell a woman a gold ring. He was committed to Gloucester Gaol. [GJ]

13 May

A long list of Turnpike Trustees was published, headed by the Knights of the Shire, Bristol's Members of Parliament, the Justices of the Peace of Gloucestershire and Somerset, and the Mayor, Alderman and Members of the Common Council of Bristol. The entire establishment. Amongst the names are William and John Berkeley, William Blathwayt of Dyrham, Thomas Chester, Henry Creswick of Hanham, Richard and Thomas Haynes of Wick, Richard Hart, Rogers Holland, [MP for Wiltshire], Sir Michael Newton of Barrs Court, Thomas Player, Onisipherous Tyndall, who would become lessee of the Kingswood Chase, Thomas Trotman of Siston, Mary Dafter's friend Thomas Trye, Francis Woodward, and so on, one hundred and forty three in all, with some strange bedfellows: even stranger, the descendants of some of the pirate lords who had illegally seized Kingswood after the Civil War, were now required to uphold the law their forefathers had flouted. All were summoned to the Bristol Guildhall at 10 o'clock on the 16 May to consult upon proper measures to put The Act into execution. [SamF]

27 May

Ordinary business carried on. Articles were agreed between Richard Haynes, esquire, and Stephen Summerill for digging pits on Churchley Hill, Bridgegate, in the parish of Wick and Abson, for seven years. Stephen was to pay Mr Haynes 2s 6d in the pound on any sales of coal. [BRO 14581 HA/E/13]

### The Mysterious Lost Village

Churchley Hill, the venue of Stephen's enterprise is a reminder of our "lost village". Churchley or Churchleigh is mentioned in 1512 when William Llewellyn granted a lease to William Dennys and Thomas Berkeley; Thomas and Edward Try, and George Sheppard of "a messuage in Abbotstone with the mannour of Wyke and other lands in the said parish". Edward Hall leased land there in 1674 and was allowed to enclose part of Churchley Hill Lane. A manuscript supposed written in the early 18th century states that Churchley takes its name from a church "whose ruins are to be seen in a ground thereto adjoining called Chapel-Hayes, dedicated to St Bartholomew upon whose festival there is a wake held in that part of the parish." It is not known why or when the village was vacated and the church allowed to fall into decay. The ruins are clearly marked on an eighteenth century map of the environs of Bristol, but even they have since disappeared. [BRO 14581 HA/MI/1]



## Trouble with the Turnpike

The system of coalmining the land was heirarchical. At the top, the landowners, some of whom had added to their domains by illegal encroachments. As we have noted, these men were often "the law" in the district. They leased parts of their landholding to adventurers, and exacted a premium from men like Stephen Summerill, the colliers, some of whom acted in consortia, and probably employed a small workforce of coalminers. The colliers not only sank for coal, but carried it on horseback into market at Bristol. It was hard enough already to eke out a living and they felt unable to swallow the additional burden of a toll on each pack animal, a penny there, and a penny back.

First, there was a demonstration. The colliers went to see the Mayor, shouted the odds, and waved clubs and staves about. His Worship treated all this as hot air, but nevertheless took the precaution of ordering coal from Wales. He said the colliers were "a set of ungovernable people, violent in their way, and regardless of consequences."

[quoted, Malcolmson]

12 June

Jonathon Harris and Martha his wife, in Bitton, Settlement Certificate from Titherington. [BRO/P/B/OP/6a/13]

26 June

"On Monday, the first day of paying the toll at the several turnpikes lately erected near the City, the colliers of Kingswood and Bussleton assembled in a body and pulled down four of them, some of which they set on fire and some they threw in the river. That at Totterdown in the Bath Road being erected again, they went the next day to view it and finding it not done to their minds demolished it again the second time and swear they'll bring no coal into the City nor suffer any turnpikes in their roads till they are exempt from paying the toll." [SamF, 1.7.271]

3 July

The colliers believed that the poor roads were the fault of the magistrates who had failed to enforce the existing laws for road repair, and did not see why they should have to pay to put the situation right. They voiced their opinion in strong terms in a "Letter to the Turnpike", dated from

Kingswood 3 July 1727

"Sir

"We are informed that you are drawing up your laws and action against us for riot and rebellion and deem us liable to be indicted for Common Rogues and that you are justified in so doing having an Act of Parliament on your side, but before you insist we desire you to take this comparison. If a house is wilfully set on fire, whether they may be rendered common rogues that runs with their weapons to put it out [It's a question Mr Turnpike]. This is our case: a fire may be wilfully handled by omission or commission: but if both do agree with long continuance it's the harder to put it out. Now to your Act of Parliament wherein you have got a full grant to cut furze and heath out of the common to repair the Highways [quoted in the 26th page of your Act] Oh we shall have brave highways now you have got full power to cut furze

and heath to mend them and stand and get the country's money for so doing.

Now Turnpikes are grown so much in Fashion  
The hardest Tax in all our Nation  
For where Wine & Women & Stock jobbing past  
The Turnpike must help us at Last.

"Now Mr Turnpike, who humbly beg your favour to have our comparison construed note at the beginning of your Act you complain of the badness of the highways, which obliges us to tell you how they became so bad: when you was a Lord of a Mannor you suffered your tenants to hall a thousand load be it more or less off the Highways into your land and not only so but in the streets for this many years past you have been throwing straw in the streets where we have as much a right to pass as you, Mr Turnpike that you commonly shovell up once or twice a year; we are able to prove this offence; when you was a magistrate you had an act of Parliament well grounded with experienced actions and good authority which you gave power to command unqualified of good report, rank and quality to be surveyors for to mend the roads and highways or elsewhere where you did receive complaint or see yourself amiss but by the omission of your duty and your carelessness and oversight you have lost yr. Honourable Magistracy and brought yourself under the reproach of a turnpike by mending the highways with furze and heath so that you have no more reason to indict us for a riot than if we had been going to stop the tide from overflowing. So Mr Turnpike we most humbly beg you when you purchase another Act of Parliament against the colliers, not to put any Lattin in it; one thing more we would desire you, that you would lay out all the money that you have got by Turnpike in Catechisms, which you may have for two pence apiece and give one to every one of those whose names are quoted between the 8th and 13th pages of your Act and by that they may learn to do their duty in that State of Life unto which it shall please God to call them and call in this Act as a thing clandestinely purchased as may appear in our next letter in particular: so we remain our Gracious King's subjects unto death.

[signed] We colliers in Kingswood."

[GRO]

8 July

"The colliers have been very busy since our last, tho' several have brought in Coals every day this week: But last Tuesday morning the Turnpike at Durdham Down beyond the Gallows was cut down and demolished, and whilst they effecting the same, they made several pay Contribution Money for the Turnpike, some half a Crown and others as they thought fit. The Alarm coming into Town, a Guard of Col. Groves's Regiment was sent in quest of 'em and four were taken asleep under a Hay Rick, one of whom is a young Lad who to save himself we are inform'd has impeach'd the other Three; they are now Prisoners at the Main Guard, in order to their being sent to Gloucester Goal to which Place they'll be attended with a sufficient Guard of Soldiers who are to have each 14 Charges of Powder and Ball and to fire at any that molest 'em. On the other Hand, the Colliers swear they'll release their brethren and threaten to pull down the Prison in a Body wherever they are confin'd; and to prevent the

19  
For

The Collected Letter to the Turnpike

King's Wood, 3 July 1797  
DIS 12

It is intimated that you are drawing up your Cause and Action against us, -  
for Riot and Rebellion, and deem us liable to be indicted for Common  
Rogues, and that you are justified in so doing having an Act of  
Parliament of your side; but before you proceed, we advise you to take  
this Comparison: If a house is wilfully set on fire, who says they may  
be rendered Common Rogues that run with their weapons to ~~quench~~ <sup>quench</sup> it and

(as a Question in Turnpike) This is our case; a fire may be wilfully  
kindled by omission or commission: but if both do agree w<sup>th</sup> long Continuance  
w<sup>th</sup> the Landlord to put it out. Now w<sup>th</sup> your Act of Parliament, whereas  
you have got a full Grant to cutt Fuzz or Heath, out of any Common,  
to repair the Highways (Quoted in the 26<sup>th</sup> Page of your Act) Oh we shall  
have brave highways now you have got a full Power to cutt Fuzz  
and Heath to waste them, and stand and get the Countys Money in ~~your~~ <sup>your</sup> ~~own~~ <sup>own</sup> ~~hand~~ <sup>hand</sup> ~~so doing~~ <sup>so doing</sup>

Now Turnpikes are grown much in Fashion,  
The heaviest Tax of all our Nation  
for whose Use, Monies & Stock jobbing part,  
The Turnpike must help us all last

Now all Turnpikes, who humbly beg your favour to hear our Comparison forstward,  
note at the beginning of your Act, you complain of the badness of the  
Highways, which obliges us to shew you how they came so bad, when  
you was Lord of a Manor, you suffered your Tenant to hall a Thousand  
Load, be it more or less, off the High ways into your land, and not only so but  
in the Streets for this many years past, you have been throwing Straw in  
the Streets, where we have a most right to pass us, you in Turnpike  
note Turnpike to the Division, when you was a City Magistrate you had an Act of Parliamen  
well grounded with Experienced Men and good Authority, which you gave  
you to Command men qualified of good report Rank and Ability, to be  
Surveyors, to mend the Roads and Highways, or Elsewhere, where you  
ad receive Complaint, or see your Duty call'd; but by the Omission of your  
Duty, and your Careless and Over sight, you have ~~made~~ <sup>made</sup> the Lord & Honourable  
Magistracy, and brought your self under the reproach of a Turnpike, by mending  
the Highways with Fuzz and Heath, so that you have no more reason to  
indict us for a Riot, than if we had been going to stop the tide from over

Following to Mr Turpin, we most humbly beg you, when you Purchase another Act of Parliament against the Colliers, not to put any Letter in it; one thing more we would desire of you, that you would lay out all the Money that you have got by the Turpin in Colliers, and which you may have for two pence a pence, and give one to every one of those whose names are justed between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13 pages of your Act, and by that they may learn to do their Duty in that State of Life unto the which it shall please God to call them.

And call in this Act as a thing clandestinely purchased, as may appear in our next Letter in particular: So we remain our Gracious Kings Subjects untill Death.

We Colliere in Kings Wood

Mr Turpin  
 Mr Colliers  
 Kingswood  
 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1727  
 D15/2

Mr Colliers  
 Kingswood

and receive Complaint, or send your self any, but by the Omission of your Duty, and your Carelesnes and Over sight you have brought your self and your Honourable Magistracy, and brought your self under the reproach of a Turpin, by sending the Highway with Buzz and Heath: so that you have no more reason to Indict us for a Riot, than if we had been going to stop the Tide from over

Town being surprized a Piquet Guard is erected at the Guildhall besides that of the Main Guard and Parties patrolled all Night about the Borders of Kingswood &c. Those that want to be rightly inform'd of the Nature and Validity of the Act of Parliament granted for erecting those Turnpikes may have the same at my Printing House for 3d.

"Note, One of the Four taken is one Robings, a Mason of Horvill [Horfield] who it seems acted in Conjunction with the Colliers."

[SamF, 15.7.27]

11 July

Strangely, Mary Dafter relays nothing of the troubles: "Squire Trye have been very bad, taking like an apoplexy, but is in hopes of recovery. He desires your Honor to send down Gabriel Jones' lease for his son William is now the possessor, and says he will sue him if he come on his ground to sink after coal. He have begun the pits in Cadberry's Mead and comes to some small matter of coal but it is very full of water.

Squire Edward came to Bath from London a Thursday and died there". [MD]

24 July

Attempts were made on the Toghill Turnpike by men disguised in women's clothes, and high crowned hats. The attack was fought off, and the barrier remained in place as a source of grievance. [SamF]

5 August

Mary Dafter: "The Stafford Liberty is sold to my Lady Gore". [A rumour denied in a later letter.]

12 August

No further attempts had been made to rebuild the turnpikes in the immediate vicinity of Bristol, and life went back to normal. For the time being the colliers were victorious. Sam Farley reported "things continue peaceable on the colliers side, who continue to bring coal into town unmolested."

19 August

Roger Bryant had been tried and condemned. He confessed himself guilty of murder and robbery, but his conscience was deeply troubled on another score. Some time before, he had hidden a stolen watch in the pocket of another man, entirely innocent of any crime. This man had gone to the gallows for the theft.

He resolutely refused to say where he had hidden the goods from Mr Lewton's but at Sodbury, on the night before his execution, some friends of Mr Lewton promised him £5 if he would tell. The following morning a ghastly procession took the road for Doynton. In a tumbril were Roger Bryant, securely bound, accompanied by two canting Divines; following on foot several law officers, and at the rear, the pathetic figure of Bryant's wife, carrying their child.

Five pounds in gold were passed to the prisoner, and the cavalcade diverted to a place under the roots of a willow tree where they found a tankard, cup, salter and spoons, all of silver. Bryant passed four

sovereigns to his wife, and the other one to the child. They then continued to the place of execution.

Roger Bryant was gibbeted at the Doynton cross roads, with his body placed in chains to rot until nothing was left save his bones to rattle and creak as a warning to all. The fate of his wife and child is unknown. [SamF]

30 September

With the Turnpike matter in abeyance, some of the trustees wrote to the Duke of Newcastle complaining of riots and disorders by licentious persons, particularly "our cole-workers" and asked how they should handle such situations in future, as rumours abounded that the Bristol toll-gates were soon to be rebuilt. A military guard was bivouacked at Toghill, under the sightless gaze of Roger Bryant's chattering corpse.

4 September

John Walker, a gentleman of Yate, became a Freeman of the City of Gloucester. [GRO Call]

4 November

A public notice in Sam: Farley's newspaper:

"Whereas Mary, wife of John Upton of Iron Acton hath eloped and left her said husband without the least provocation [assisted by some of her lewd wicked companions] and robbed him several times of Plate, rings, brass, pewter, linen and other effects to the value of £8 and may endeavour to run him into debt also having falsely sworn and obtained a warrant of the Peace against him, these are therefore to caution and forewarn all persons not to trust her on her said husband's account, &c,&c."

In this year, Beloved Wilkes left part of his house at Wick for the habitation of two clergymen's widows, with ten pounds a year and half a load of coal to each. With the remainder, a boy was to be chosen from the parishes of Pucklechurch, Doynton and Dyrham to be maintained at University until he obtained a BA degree. It would be interesting to know the name of this lucky lad. [Bigland]

Mentioned in Mary Dafter's letters this year:

12 April

Agreement with Francis Cook to put two lives on the cottage formerly Edward Gifford's; William Willis to change two lives on his cottage, late Cottles; lease granted to John Brook "near 30 years ago, but he have lost his lease"; Mr Fisher to put a third life on Mrs Rowsall's leasing. Joseph Nicholl's lease "in Mr Offield's hand ready to be signed. If he do not come very soon we shall write to him."

11 July

Message from Mr Good that John Reeve's sister lives in the house by the Windmill, but only his life is on it; Nicholls promises to come in a fortnight's time; Francis Cook's and Willis's leases.



29 July

Death of Mr Walter Fisher in 1724; Samuel Jones' lease comes to hand via his son's death and is sold to Isaac Dyer; Henry Willis to put two lives on his leasing, half sold off to Thomas Ross; "Nicholls have promised to sign his lease soon".

23 August

Mr Newton Woodward at Barr's Court; Willis's lease on his cottage found; Nicholls, predictably, fails to turn up, "I have heard nothing of Nicholls the Quaker. He is as false a man as any one have to do with, but Mr Good and I shall put Mr Offield to manage him"; Mary Fisher and John Fisher, her son.

1728

27 January

"The shoemaker that hang'd himself last week without Lawford's Gate was bury'd in the Cross Road called Dungen's Cross, but we hear some young Surgeons have since caused it to taken up again to anatomise." [SamF]

8 March

William Nutt died 8 March 1727/8 aged 90, buried at Bitton. [Bigland]

16 March

Isaac Sutton of The Tobacco Bowl in New Street, without Lawford's Gate advertised "Doctor Bostock's purging cordial, of Ebenezer Tizmee's preparing at 2s 6d the half pint, 1s 3d the quarter pint, with directions, stamped with 3 staggs and 2 cressences [sic] and the bottles sealed to prevent People's being imposed upon by false preparations." [SamF]

According to further adverts, Mr Tizmee, "lately dead" had bequeathed his recipe to Robert Topleaf, of The Golden Ball, in Redcliffe Street, and war broke out between the rival retailers, until Topleaf conceded that the same mixture was also sold by Sutton at Lawford's Gate. Whereupon, John Parker joined in the fray, insisting he was the 'onlie begetter' of the famous laxative, and Topleaf accused him of "ridiculing his liquor". As a matter of fact, Parker may have had the prior claim, as it transpired he was married to the daughter of Joshua Sendall, who was somehow connected with Tizmee, and had been selling the stuff at The Shuttle, also without Lawford's Gate, since at least September 1725. I don't know how it all ended. Probably in tears.

4 May

Public Notice.

"Whereas one Daniel Bowman of the parish of Dirham, about 5 feet nine inches high, with a pale face, dark straight hair, wears dark clothes and buckskin breeches, lame, was convicted at Lawford's Gate by Henry Creswicke, esquire for feloniously stealing a bag of gold, room of William Blathwayt, esquire, and after got away from the constable. Whosoever shall bring him to Dirham, or give notice to Mr Blathwayt or Sam Farley shall have five guineas reward." [SamF]

13 May

"Stolen or stray'd out of a ground of Francis Tucker's in the parish of Siston, a Black gelding with no shoes on, near 15 hands high, 6 years old, having lately had the Pashions, a Flick tail and the sign of a blow on the near buttock. Whosoever can return said gelding to Francis Tucker shall have a guinea reward, no questions asked." [ibid]

24 August

Daniel Bowman had been caught, and stood his trial at Gloucester Assizes. His theft was enormous for the time: the canvas bag which he had taken from Justice Blathwayt, but in fact belonged to the steward, contained 300 guineas. A death sentence must have seemed inevitable, but was Daniel very young, or was it a first offence? Whatever the reason, he was reprieved before the judge left Gloucester. He was probably transported to the plantations of Virginia. [SamF]

8 October

Although the colliers were relatively quiet, the weavers were in great turmoil. The clothing trade was very depressed, and the employers reduced wages. The Gloucester Journal on this date records that 500 workmen living in the area of Lawford's Gate destroyed and burnt about thirty looms there before proceeding to Chew Magna, Pensford and Keynsham where they attacked more looms and pulled down a house, presumably one which belonged to a master clothier. [GJ, L18c]

During the same week, a ghastly crime took place in a public house called the Boarden [Boarding] House, in Kingswood. Elizabeth Gough, the landlord's wife was accused of "stamping on the body of a woman; six months gone with child, who came to call her husband from the Ale-House, of which bruises she died in a few days, and the child within her." [GJ]

*(The victim was MARY WILLIS. GOUGH WAS FOUND GUILTY of MANSLAUGHTER  
BURNED IN THE HAND)*

2 November

A certain attorney died without Lawford's Gate, who was so notorious that Sam Farley felt it was unnecessary to state his name: the hearse was to be carried to the chapel in Woolland - ie Oldland, by his own request, "he having been such a plague and persecution of the poor colliers in his lifetime was thoughtful whether they would let him rest when dead, if buried in a churchyard where they could come to dig him up."

And it was not only the colliers who despised him for "not one person attended the hearse, but the colliers horses with empty sacks were the chief mourners, and the colliers themselves [when they understood whose corpse it was] saluted it with some volleys of curses for a good journey."

[SamF]

Who was this unnamed despised attorney? I thought at first he must have been Mary Dafter's old confidant, Thomas Trye, who according to Bigland's transcription

"In his Vault at Oldland's Chapel lies the Body of THOMAS TRYE of Hanham, Esq.....who departed this Life Nov.23 1728, aetat.59."

This date is confirmed by the burial register at Oldland, and as Sam Farley was not, presumably, gifted with clairvoyance, this mystery remains.

9 November

Henry Creswicke, junior of Hanham, was among the nominees for Sheriff of Gloucester. [ibid]

1729

New Years Day, and a great fair, traditionally held at "Points Pool" was moved to West Street. "A good ox was roasted whole." [SamF]

In this year Mrs Mary Webb gave the interest of £450 to endow a charity school at Fishponds Green for 20 Poor Boys and 10 Poor Girls, with one wing as the Master's residence, and another for alms rooms for three poor old women. In this "modest mansion" Hannah More, the author and philanthropist would be born in 1745. [Bigland, Stapleton]

21 May

Mary Dafter writes "The coal works at Pinkers comes to be a good work, but they be in vast charge in working of it as it is very full of water. Mr Good throws his money away within the walls but have no luck". [MD]

1 September

Serious disturbances broke out amongst the weavers who worked outside Lawford's Gate. Many looms were torn out of the employers' houses and destroyed. A house was demolished, and a body of soldiers sent in to restore order, were beaten off. On the 29th of the month, the weavers gathered in Kingswood and marched on Stephen Feacham's house. Feacham it was alleged, paid his workmen one shilling a piece less than was paid by other masters. There is nothing to suggest that this was anything other than a protest march, but Feacham, who was armed and ready, fired on the crowd, killing five and mortally wounding two others. A troop of soldiers also fired several volleys, but it was believed, used only blanks. In the melée, their sergeant was killed by one of Feacham's stray bullets. At the inquest, held at St Philip's, the coroner returned a verdict of wilful murder against Feacham, which, outrageously, was overturned by the Government who granted him a free pardon.

The weavers leaders, of course, were not so lucky. The following year, on 23 July, George Bidgood, and another man, were executed for their part in the riot. The un-named man bravely declared on the scaffold that the masters were to blame for reducing wages when the weavers were starving.

[L18c]

Mentioned in Mary Dafter's letters this year:

21 May

The estate at Kingsfield, late Warner's [Wornells], now Nicholas Read, "his kinswoman, Mrs Batt is Nicholas Warner's sister". [Mary Wornell and Elizabeth Batt - died 1733/4 aged 81, were sisters of Nicholas Wornell, died 1711. - see Bigland, Bitton, p209. Their relationship to Nicholas Read is not stated, but he and Elizabeth Batt were members of the mining consortium in 1726.]

4 October

Death of Sarah Greenaway, and a herriot of £3 due on the estate Joseph Greenaway purchased for Sarah and Susanna, his daughters, called Carters. The lease was granted 1669, and the son of Susanna, Nicholas Barker put in his own life.

1730

Certain persons, including Sir John Newton of Barr's Court, subscribed to a reward fund for the apprehension of a gang of burglars, who were said to be terrorising the area. Their names were George Balsome, William King and William Perry. [Ellacome Mss]

Thomas Morgan, who lived in the outparish of St Philip and St Jacob took out an insurance policy. This was an innovation, but nothing to do with the previous item, for insurance at this time was restricted to fire.

[BAFHS Journal No 2 p 20]

17 January

Mary Dafter's last surviving letter was written this day:

Barr's Court

"Hon. Sir

This comes to acquaint you that the ceiling of the long parlour is done according to your command, with some small addition, which looks very handsome, and the workmen have made a small beginning of mending the wainscote with a new panel at the bottom with deal, and the old that comes off is to mend the other. We have got the workmen to make a computation of the charge and they value the workmanship of doing this wainscote at least £15, and for the colouring and cleaning of it and running a light varnish over it all, £5, so Mr Good's opinion is that plastering will make the room lighter and that will be but little expense. The workmen is stopped till we have your Honor's answer to it.

Mr Good desires to know whether your Honor received his last letter bearing date November 20th with the two bills enclosed, of Sir Robert Sutton's in it. Likewise the same chapman that I mentioned in May last, have still a mind to buy Stonehill estate, and if your Honor thinks well of Mr Lamb's coming down this summer, I hope they will deal and some other leasings will renew, if not we shall take leave to treat the most to get and give your Honor an account.

Mr Good is still trying for coals within the walls but have no luck. Squire Trye's\* works is like to be a good work, but a great expense in keeping [out] the water.

Is all with my heart prayers for your Honor's health and my good Lady and all the good family,

From your ever dutiful servant to command

Mary Dafter

I hope that the wine and water came safe to hand that I sent in November last.

My opinion is, and several that I have advised with, is that it will be best to keep the wainscote up, it being such a fine chimney piece and a handsome room."

[\*This must be the late Squire Trye. Despite all these repairs, the Barrs Court Farm House fell into ruin and was demolished sometime during the next decade. The more recent Barr's Court Farm house was constructed around one of the outbuildings, utilising building materials from the former mansion. The Coat of Arms was saved and placed over the main doorway.]

25 January

Henry Weston married Ruth Phipps at Bitton, and of these much more in 1741, when Ruth's path will cross with Henry Creswicke, who also married this year....

29 January

Agreement between Thomas Haynes and James Harris and William Luton, of Bitton, coalminers, to work pits in Breachyate [Bridgeyate] Common for four years. [BRO 14581 HA/E/14. 29.1.1729/30]

21 February

Robert Farnell, yeoman, died "aged near 86 years". He was buried at Siston in the same grave as his wife Anne, who died 19 September 1695 aged 44. [Bigland]

11 July

Henry Creswicke, esquire, of Hanham Court married Helen Hort at St Augustine the less in Bristol, by licence. [PR]

23 July

George Bidgood and another man were hanged at Gloucester for their part in the weavers' riots of the previous year. [BAFHS Journal No 53, p 37]

30 July

Removal Order from Bitton, George Haynes, labourer, wife Mary and children to Wick and Abson. [BRO P/B/OP/6b/3]

same date

Ann, the daughter of Lamorack and Susanna Flower died, and was buried at Bitton, with her sisters, Elizabeth, who died 6 March 1744 aged 64 and Joanna, died 23 January 1752 aged 65. [Bigland]

12 December

"Here lyeth the Body of Francis Woodward of this Parish, Gent. who departed this life Dec. 12 1730 in the 60th year of his age." Monument in the North Chapel, Bitton Church. [Bigland]

1731

The "Matter of the Turnpike" had lain dormant since the commotions a few years before. No tolls were being collected and the roads continued to deteriorate. A new Turnpike Act came into force, and although coal carrying animals were now exempt from fees on the Bristol roads, no exception was made for Toghill, and trouble broke out again.

In view of the above, the churchwardens and overseers of Bitton looked out the Quarter Sessions order concerning "assemblies, meetings, fees for warrants, etc" which was "copied from the old book 1654-92". [BRO P/B/OP/2a]

26 May

Thomas Gore of Stapleton died aged 63. He was followed by his brother William of Siston, who died aged 65 on 7 June. Martha, William's wife died on 21 June. By the time of Martha's death, there was no-one left who knew her age. All were buried in the same grave at Stapleton. [Bigland]

3 June

John, son of Abraham Whittuck, died aged 36, buried at Bitton. [Bigland]

1 July

At Dyrham, Squire Blaithwaite and his retainers caught a number of men attacking the Toghill barrier, and took four prisoners. Soon his great mansion house was surrounded by "a great body" of colliers who demanded the release of their comrades. He refused, upon which the colliers threatened to tear the house down. Blaithwaite capitulated, freed the four men, and at the same time handed over a number of casks of strong drink. Jubilant, and in holiday mood, the colliers returned to Kingswood.

But it was only the end of round one. Disturbances spread over a wide area, with many turnpikes blown up with the pitmen's gunpowder. When the wooden turnpike bars were destroyed, chains were substituted. These too were cut, and the pieces carried off. It was rumoured that some of the local gentry encouraged the mayhem. The Kingswood colliers were universally blamed.

[GJ]

15 July

The London Post was stopped for several hours and "used in a rough manner" by the colliers. Threatening letters were said to have been received by a number of trustees.

3 August

"Last Thursday new Commissioners of the Peace passed seals for the counties of Dorset, Worcester and Gloucester. Several alterations were made in the latter on account of the rude behaviour of the colliers of Kingswood, relating to the Turnpikes near Bristol." [GJ]

12 August

Reinforcements were sent in: "Bristol. Last week arrived from Scotland the Lord Cadogan's Regiment of Foot. We hear the turnpikes will be erected again, and that the Commissioners are determined to prosecute those who were lately concerned in cutting them down." [GJ]

22 September

Lord Codrington and Mr Blaithwaite wrote to the Secretary of State. They realised that troops could not be engaged indefinitely, but gentleman and justices were thin on the ground in an area almost impossible to police without military assistance.

The turmoil finally led to the drafting of another new Act, which made the destruction of a turnpike a criminal offence. A conviction would carry the penalty of seven years transportation beyond the seas.

1732

17 February

"John Clarke, a poor child that was left in the parish in the year 1726 buried", at Pucklechurch. [PRPuck 17.2.1731/2]

28 March

Meanwhile, the weavers had not forgotten Stephen Feachem. "That unfortunate who killed eight or nine of their number with a blunderbuss loaded with slugs" said the Gloucester Journal with, I hope, irony, was away because of a financial crisis. His workmen seized the day, and made an effigy of their master with a butcher's block for a head, and dressed in a shroud which they paraded through Lawford's Gate before hanging it on a gibbet in Lamb's Fields. The City Watch attempted to cut down the "guy" but the weavers "beat to arms, with a frying pan" and collected money to mount a permanent guard. A good time was apparently had by all. [GJ]

30 May

The colliers let it be known that they had "enter'd into articles not to suffer any turnpikes to be erected." The local press warned them of the risk of transportation and begged them reconsider their inflammatory statement. [ibid]

20 June

From the Mangotsfield Poor Book: "Ordered that the Overseers do look out for some careful woman that will undertake to tend and take care of as many of the Parish children as the Parish shall think fit to put to her."

[OurPM, p202]

31 August

The trustees of the Studley Bridge - Toghill turnpike erected two gates between Marshfield and Chippenham, and the stage was set for further conflict. [GJ]

16 September

Samuel Fudge of Bitton, coalminer, and Stephen Britton, of same, coalminer, appeared at Quarter Sessions in Bristol charged with "riot and insult".

[BRO 04435/3]

which was very likely not unconnected with the following, reported on the same day:

A mob "arm'd with axes and hatchets came up from Kingswood and cut down the turnpike at Ford in Wiltshire without any opposition." Rogers Holland, MP for Chippenham was informed that "they were coming to destroy the Turnpike which stood two miles from that town". Holland with two other "gentlemen" and their servants mounted up and rushed to defend it. They found that the colliers had already cut down the gate, had started on the walls and were attempting to demolish the turnpike house. "The Gentlemen required 'em to surrender or they would fire on them. The Colliers swore they would die first, and attacked them with stones very smartly: the Return they met was a discharge of small shot among them, which made 'em take to their heels and run away across the fields: but they were soon pursued and three of them taken prisoners. The next morning they were taken under a strong guard to Salisbury Gaol." [GJ]

18 September

Meetings. The trustees to authorise the rebuilding of the turnpike. The colliers desperately trying to think of a way of rescuing the trio who languished in gaol. Someone issued a threat to burn down the whole town of Chippenham. Nothing came of this sabre rattling. [ibid]

It was widely believed that the colliers would do anything for money. Latimer records that one Richard Baggs - convicted of "a filthy offence" - was sentenced to the pillory. He not only covered his head with an iron skull cap, but wrapped his body thickly in brown paper - AND hired 100 colliers to protect him from the attentions of the mob. [Definitely not to be taken lightly - see 1737]. Violent rioting ensued and the magistrates suspended his sentence. [L18c]

1733

18 January

Francis Creswicke, the old man of Hanham Court died after a turbulent life, which will be recounted in another volume. He was eighty nine years old.

The Creswicke family memorial, "on flat stones" in the church at Bitton was in Latin, and recorded by Bigland:

In Spe Refurrectiones

Hic jacet Francisci Creswicke, Armig, qui obiit 18 January 1732[\*] aetatis suae 89

Ac etiam Corpus Mariae Uxoris ejus, aetat 58

Ac etiam Corpora Johannis, Galfridi, Francisci and Mariae Creswicke, fillii & nata Francisci & Mariae;

Nec non Corpus Henrici Creswicke, Armigeri qui obiit Vicesimo sexto die mensis Julii, Ann. Dom. 1744

Et enim infra jacet corpus Hellenae, uxoris Henrici Creswicke, Armigeri, obiit vicesimo secundo die Junii 1757 aetis suae 46.

[\* 18 January 1732 was 18 January 1733 by our present dating system.]

31 January

Marriage licence bond, Thomas Marsh of St Philip & St Jacob, coalminer and Mary Rouch of same. Marriage to be at the same church. [BMLB]

2 February

Marriage licence bond, Thomas Phipps of St Philip & St Jacob and Anne King of Frampton Cotterill; marriage to be at St John the Baptist. [ibid]

7 February

"An anonymous letter was sent to Mr John Stock, tenant of Rogers Holland, threatening firing by night or pulling down Mr Holland's house, and mischief to his person in case he prosecutes the three Kingswood colliers seized by him with the assistance of his neighbours and servants." The



State, with one of the Ministers or Secretaries of State who come to him from Fontainebleau for that Purpose.

### C O U N T R Y N E W S.

*Bristol, Oct. 11.* Our City and Suburbs have been strangely disturbed for these several Days past, by the turbulent Com-motions and Insurrections of the Colliers of Kingwood, (but chiefly by those that work entirely in the Coal-Mines) which proceeded from a Grievance among themselves. Several Per-sons having rented some old Works, and finding the Produc-tion capable of Improvement, have underfold the Proprietors of the other Works, in their Small Coal, which supply the Glas-houses, Smiths, &c. Those Proprietors that were chiefly injur'd by this, would fain oblige the Pitmen to work for a lower Price, by sinking their Wages from 16d. to 1s. per Day; which was so ill relished, that they absolutely refus'd a Compliance; and to remedy the Evil, gathered by Degrees to a considerable Body, and those that were unwilling to join them they forced, and some underwent a sound Drubbing, &c. And to prevent their bringing Coal to Town, have dispersed themselves into several Parties, and stopped up their Communication to the City on all Sides; and forced a Collection on the Road, by obliging People to give them Money, with heavy Strokes on Refusal; and such as had Cheese or Bread they took Care to lighten of their Burthen, swearing, *that it was Bread they wanted.*

About 3 o'Clock on Monday, a Body of about 60 enter'd Totterdown-House, drank up a considerable Quantity of Li-quer, but paid nothing for it; knock'd down the poor Par-rot that hung in the Kitchen; wrench'd the Staff from the Thumb of a Mop, wherein remain'd the Mop-Nail of about 6 Inches long, which one of the Gang threw at the Land-lady's Head, but the Nail luckily pointed over her Shoulder, and did not hurt her; then they knock'd her down, took up her Husband, threw up the Sash-Window, and were for to-ssing him into the Tide, but were prevented by some of the most human of them; and then retir'd to the rest of their mutinous Company (to the Number of about 200) in the Road. From thence they proceeded to Busleton, where they forced several of the civiliz'd Colliers into their Service, and violently beat those who refus'd; enter'd what Houses they pleas'd; eat and drank every thing they could come at, with-out paying any Money; and so return'd towards the City. In their Way they stopped at the Goat between Busleton and this City, took the Meat out of the Pot that was then boiling, and threatened to put the Head of the Landlady's Son therein; knocked down the Landlady three times at her Cellar-Door, and cut her on the Arm with one of her Case-Knives. From

thence they decamp'd to the White-Hart in the same Road, where some of them enter'd the House, demanded Liquor, eat up a Shoulder of Mutton, drank what they pleas'd, and departed towards Bristol, some going thro' the Body of the City halloving others taking Boat at the Temple-Backs, and pass'd without paying. They even threaten the Fire-Engines in Kingwood and Busleton, and to destroy all the Locks between Bristol and Bath; they cut what Colliers Sacks they meet with, and let the Coal about the Streets, beating the Pack-Saddles in Pieces. Several Waggons full of Coal have likewise fallen a Sacrifice to their Rage.

A very remarkable Instance of their Resolution to fulfil their Revenge, may be judg'd from their Insurrection against one Roger Purnell, who acts as a Bailiff. They by some means were acquainted of his being in a Lighter up the Ri-ver, and thereupon pursued him. At their Approach, Pur-nell took to the Water, and swam to the Shore on the other Side: The intrepid Colliers also took to the Water after him, and follow'd him to Squire Cobbs's, where they be-haved in a very insolent Manner, and would not be satisfy'd but what he was there, till the Squire himself declared he had not seen him, and that to his Knowledge he was not there, &c. From thence they pursued him to other Places, and going to a House of Mr. Sheriff Bailey's up the Road beyond Totterdown, insulted the poor Man who was there to take Care of the House, broke down the Vines, and did a deal of other Mischiefs. Purnell had conceal'd himself in the late Sheriff Langman's Garden; but fearing they would discover him there, rambled the Fields, and was so near being taken, that he was trod upon by some of them as he lay conceal'd under a broken Hedge, which they pass'd over. It seems they carried a Halter with them, and were resolv'd to hang him, could they have laid hold of him; and still give out, that they will destroy him wherever they meet with him.

Last Night they broke Mrs. Silverthorn's (the Pack-horse in London Road) Windows all to Pieces, and committed di-vers other Outrages in their Return Home.

This Morning they assembled again, and collect on the Road what Money they want. All the Neighbourhood are in the utmost Consternation, and call aloud for the Civil or Military Power to protect them from those Outrages.

These violent Com-motions have induced the Magistrates of the City to send an Expre's to Court with an Account thereof. And Yesterday the Constables were conven'd at the Council-House, and receiv'd strict Orders not to be absent from their Duty. The Watch is doubled, by the Addition of several supernumerary Constables, who patrolle the City from Nine at Night till Six in the Morning. The Military Guard is also doubled throughout the City; and a Party of Soldiers were last Night under Arms in the Square, lest the Tumult should spread so far as to require their immediate Interposition.

GLOS JOURNAL OCT 17 1738

No. 86.

*Bristol, Nov. 4.* The Reason the Colliers of Kingwood give for appearing in the hostile Manner they did on Thurs-day last, was to prevent the Justices, who were met at the Lamb-Inn without Lawford's Gate, from examining into the Damages they had committed in their last Rout, and to prevent the injur'd Persons from making their Appeal, who were appointed that Day to attend the General Meeting for that Purpose: But another Cause to second this was, the Powell, a Pitman, concern'd in the last Rupture, being ap-prehended by Stratagem, on Wednesday Night, and com-mitted to the County Bridewell, whom they were resolv'd to rescue, and would have attempted it, had they not made too much Noise before-hand, and threaten'd to pull the Pri-son down, as also the Lamb-Inn, where the Justices were assembled about Ten o'Clock in the Morning.

The Reports of this reaching the Magistrates Ears, the Drums of Brigadier Harrison's Regiment beat to Arms, and a Company appear'd presently before the Council-House, who at Twelve o'Clock, with Sir Abraham Blton, in his Chariot, (attended by some of the City Officers) march'd by Beat of Drum without Lawford's Gate, and Centries were immedi-ately plac'd at the Prison-Door, and the rest of the Company were in the New-Inn, under Arms. By one o'Clock almost all the Regiment, by Companies, follow'd by Beat of Drums, every Soldier's Piece being loaded, to give the Colliers a warm Reception, had they been so bold as to come in their Way; but by Five o'Clock they return'd to the City, ex-cept 50, who were left to watch their Motions.

Yesterday the Justices continued their Meeting both in City and County; and the better to oppose the Colliers from fulfilling their Threatnings, a large Detachment of Sol-diers march'd into Kingwood, in search of those against whom abundance of Informations are made, with Orders absolutely to fire on the Colliers, if they made any Opposi-tion; but instead of that they took to their Heels, and fled out of the Wood; and the Soldiers in searching their Houses, seiz'd what Fire-Arms they could find, and made one Sa-muel Wilimot, a noted Ringleader, Prisoner, whom they brought to accompany the other Collier in Bridewell.

All the Coal-Works in Sir Isaac Newton's, and several other Royalties, are stopp'd from Working. Four Pits are fill'd up at White-hall, near the Capola's, and the Car's, Reels, Ropes, and other Utensils cut and burnt, belonging to Mr. Larry Price. Five other Pits are also fill'd up at Si-son's Bottom, and the Utensils destroy'd, belonging to Jerom Ford, George Riddle, Charles Tippet, and Henry Monk. Some hav'd their Pits by giving them Money. This was done at their first Rising. Last Thursday they cast a great many Bullets at Grimsbury, and fir'd divers Times to bring their Arms in Tune, as they said, against they went to War.

GLOS J. NOV 14 1738



# A LETTER

FROM

The Rev. Mr. George Whitefield

TO THE

RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES,

Lately set on foot in several Parts of

ENGLAND and WALES.

Wrote on board the *Elizabeth*, Capt. *Stevenson*, bound from *London* to *Philadelphia*, and sent over by him to be published for the Benefit of the SCHOOL lately erected among the *Colliers*, in *Kingswood*, near *Bristol*.

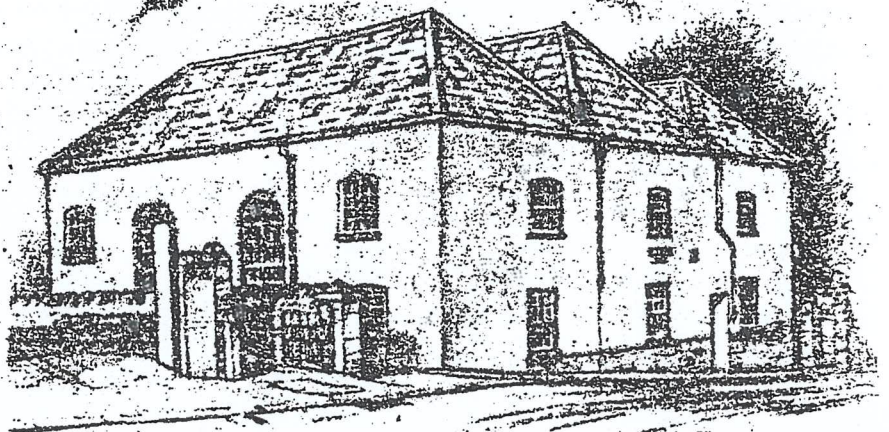
One Thing I forewarn you of; BEWARE OF ANTICHRIST — for it is Evil to be taken as you are with the Love of Stone-Walls; it is Evil to have a Veneration for the Church of God, as you have in Houses and Edifices; it is Evil to cry as you do, Peace, Peace, under THESE; For, it is here any Doubt to be made, whether Anti-Christ will fix his Seat in THESE; To me, Mountains and Forests, and Lens, and Prisons, and Pits, and the last Places; for in THESE it was that the Prophets, either waiting for, or being actually overwhelmed with the Spirit of God, prophesied — or Spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

See St. Hilary's Works, Paris Edition, pag. 116.

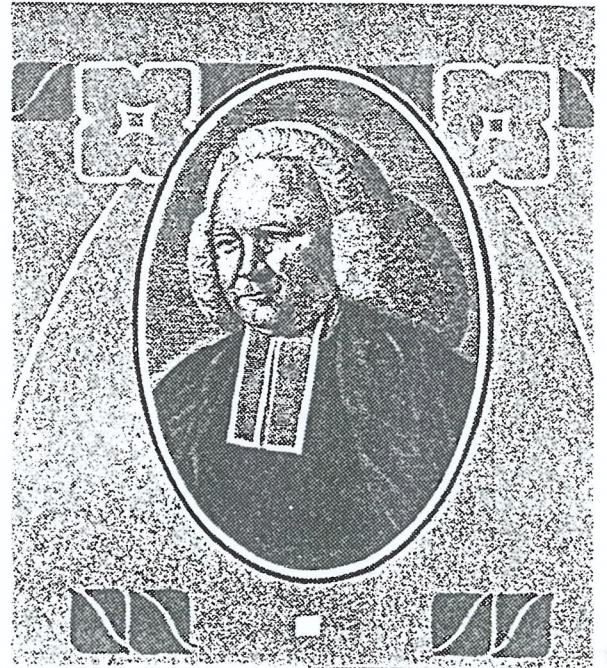
LONDON.

Printed by W. STRAHAN, and sold at Mr. JAMES HUTTON's, at the *Bible and Sun*, without *Temple-Bar*, for the Benefit of the SCHOOL lately erected among the *Colliers* in *Kingswood*, near *Bristol*. 1740.

[Price Fourpence.]



GEORGE WHITEFIELD'S ROOM, KINGSWOOD



GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

*John Wesley*



JOHN CENNICK, 1718-1755. Schoolmaster.  
lay preacher, hymn-writer.



(REV. CHARLES WESLEY.)

King's interest was also aroused and he offered "a most generous pardon and £200 reward to be paid on conviction of the offender. Two hundred pounds was a huge inducement, but it was not generally Kingswood's way to "nose". Few of the colliers could write, and ergo everybody must have known who was responsible for writing the letter. [GJ]

Family business went on, despite the troubles, and also on this day, William Smith, the son of Joseph Smith of Bitton, coalminer, who had been apprenticed to a blacksmith in Bristol was granted a discharge, being "sick, infirm and not capable of following the trade." William made his mark, as did his mother Joanna. [Perhaps he was the son of the Joseph Smith of the famous rescue? - see 1735.] [BRO 04435/3, 7.2.1732/3]

14 February

Pointz Fox died aged 67, [14 Feb. 1732/3] and was buried at Bitton. His widow Joane lived until 28 February 1762, aged 94. [Bigland]

27 February

Thomas Iles of Bitton, coalminer and Betty Smith of St Philip & St Jacob, [bondsman George Cogswell of St James] at St Philip & St Jacobs or Winterbourne, Marriage Licence bond. [BMLB]

22 March

Rogers Holland MP wrote to Thomas Haynes of Wick, a Bristol turnpike trustee: "The Bill was thrown out at the Third Reading in the House by a great majority. We must now resort to turnpikes again, if we will amend our ways and I cannot suppose they will stand now if you set them up in the middle of Kingswood, since the two ringleaders of the colliers are convicted at Sarum for transportation. I beg you'll let me know if your gentlemen intend to stir or not, if not we shall throw up our fates towards Bristol, and let the Roads go to Ruin that way again." [BRO 09710(25)]

[Mr Holland apologised for the delay in writing: "My fatigue at home have been owing to illness of my family. I have lost my only daughter and her mother's affliction has occasioned her to miscarry, which is not all, for she is now ill and a bed of a fever."] [ibid]

7 April

Arthur Palmer of Mangotsfield, yeoman and Sarah Jones of Bitton [Bondsman Samuel Harris of Winterbourne] at Filton. Marriage Licence bond. [BMLB]

14 April

Holland wrote again to Haynes, once more apologising for his tardy reply: "... I have been so ill of a fever upon my spirits that I was unable or indeed scarce able to support under it. I am not well yet, but much better.....Last night Stock sent me a petition from the Kingswood Colliers to the King imploring pardon for their convicted brethren, about 200 names to it. As soon as I am able, I will lay it before the Secretary of State, but don't know what effect it will have. However, they promise in their petition to oppose any attempt for destroying turnpikes in the future [if ever made]. I am sure the gentlemen about you will make good use of this if you think it proper and I should be glad to hear that they did."

[BRO 09701(26)]

[It is interesting to note that letters from Members of Parliament, as this was, were carried free as they still are today.]

May

Joseph Whittuck died aged 72, and was buried at Bitton.

[Bigland]

3 June

Item in the poor relief book of Bitton: "Sarah Batman, paid out in necessaries when her leg was cut off, £1 3s 6d". Expenses were paid out to various women to sit with her, and she was still alive, at least until May 1739 when she received £2 12s 0d representing one shilling a week poor relief.

5 July

Isaac Flook's son Samuel drowned in a well at Westerleigh.

[PRW]

22 August

George Batman aged 9, a poor child apprenticed to Benjamin Fawkes of Saltford to learn art and mistery of paper making. [BRO Bitton apprentices]

3 September

Edward Webster married Susan Bennett and Francis Smith married Elizabeth Webster at Almondsbury in a double ceremony. All the parties came from Mangotsfield. Weddings at St James, Mangotsfield were unusual, and those looking for marriages of their Mangotsfield ancestors are well advised to check Almondsbury.

[PR]

18 December

Marriage licence bond, Henry Bolsiah [Belshire ?] of Bitton, victualler and Elizabeth Dyer of Stoke Gifford [bondsman Lewis Long of St Philip and St Jacob, house carpenter]

[BMLB]

19 December

Marriage licence bond, Stephen Lawrence of Bitton, yeoman and Anne Woode [?] of Mangotsfield; at Mangotsfield or St Peter.

[ibid]



destruction of turnpikes became a capital offence, which stopped the Bristol turnpike disturbances for more than a decade. [GJ]

22 July

Will of Christopher Fowler, of Mangotsfield, tiler. [BRO 14581/HA/D/307]

19 August

Jonathon Willis stole a pair of buckskin breeches and a great coat from Thomas Minty, and his brother Nathaniel stole £25 from Benjamin Stone, but was so overcome by terror at such a large haul, that he returned twenty pounds of it the following day - I think he was very likely simple minded - but to no avail. Both brothers were executed at Gloucester. [GJ]

6 November

"We were wedging our coal in an old coal-mine near Two Mile Hill when a sudden and prodigious torrent of water burst out from the veins....." so begins the narrative of Thomas Hemmings printed as a broadsheet in 1762, when he was forty eight, "blinded by the damp of the earth" and the only one of the participants still alive.

The Mine was at Two Mile Hill, 234 feet deep, and worked by Joseph Jefferies, Thomas Nash and Edward Wilmot, and held on a lease from Thomas Chester.

The trapped men were Thomas Hemmings, 19, from Mangotsfield; Edward Peacock, of Bitton, aged 38, married to Hannah Wilmot, and the father of several children, including Abraham, aged about ten; Joseph Smith, an old man of nearly 70.

The rescuers were Sampson Phipps or Phillips, Thomas Summers, Moses Reynolds, and Thomas Smith, the son of old Joseph Smith.

In the first minute when the water burst through, John Batson was swept away and never seen again. Four boys working near the top heard the roar of the torrent and made for the rope, crying for the people on the surface to haul them up, with the last of the boys clinging to the heels on the one in front of him. Four miners remained below, in pitch darkness, "nigh to immediate death, not knowing where to escape for want of their lights which were extinguished by the water, that go which way they would, danger was near them of drowning or breaking their necks; in this distress they crawled on hands and knees from place to place."

The young boy, Abraham was the first to find rising ground, and with great presence of mind tied himself to a "hatching" - the slant from where coal had been dug, but he "made such a lamentable moan" that the others "hearing, came together by calling to one another."

More hopeful now, they were further cheered by a morsel of food, a bit of bread and beef, which had been dropped by the fleeing boys, and picked up by Edward Peacock. He divided the scrap equally between them.

Above ground, news of the disaster spread quickly, and great crowds gathered at the pithead. An immediate rescue attempt failed when the party found "black damp in the work, which is reckoned the most dangerous as

admitting no lighted candles." So passed the first day and night. Search parties continued to descend and return, hopelessly driven back by the gas. Days and nights continued to pass.

The little party on the ledge had neither water nor food. Peacock sent his nimble young son to climb down in the dark and fetch water in his hat, "which was but little by the time he returned." Soon the brave boy grew too weak to make further descents. Joseph Smith foraged along the hatching and found an old basket from which they chewed some chips. With the water now beyond them, and maddened with thirst, they were forced to drink their own urine. Old Joe Smith, gnawed his shoe, and became so distressed "he took a resolution to get at the water." Twice he left the ledge, and twice Edward Peacock went in after him to save him from drowning. The old man became delirious, and all of them began to decline through weakness. They began to hallucinate. At last even the tough Peacock lost hope of relief. Nine days passed since the breaking in of the water.

Still the men on the surface tried to get to them, but were drained by repeated failure. They could not succeed without light, and the gas drenched their candles. As a last hope they decided on a dangerous measure, to carry aloft before them a brazier of lighted coals which "would draw the damp into it". By this daring ploy Sampson Phipps, Thomas Summers, Moses Reynolds and Thomas Smith finally found their entombed mates, ten days, ten nights and six hours from the time the water had first flooded the mine.

Blind and very weak when brought to the surface, the four were sufficiently recovered to attend a service of thanksgiving at Siston church on 7 December. The Reverend Mr Wells preached a sermon from Psalm 103, verse 4, "who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies". Five hundred people attended. Two hundred more were spectators at a special dinner given for the men who were the wonder of the neighbourhood. Because it was all so unbelievable, they swore a statement to the truth of the miracle to Thomas Trotman, the Lord of the Manor of Siston, witnessed by William Saunders and Robert Cann, and in the presence of other gentry, Richard Hart, Henry Creswicke, Thomas Player and Thomas Haynes of Wick. A collection raised £25 - little enough, you might think and ironically, the same amount for which Nathaniel Willis hanged a few months before.

#### Some Genealogy:

##### THOMAS HEMMINGS.

Baptised 28 August 1714, Mangotsfield, the son of William Hemmings and his wife Jane.

##### EDWARD PEACOCK.

baptised Siston 27 February 1697 the son of John and Susan Peacock. In 1735 he was 38, married with at least two other children beside Abraham. Hannah daughter of Edward and Hannah Peacock, baptised Mangotsfield 25 December 1726, and John son of Edward Peacock baptised Oldland Chapel of Ease, 19 December 1731. Edward was buried at Bitton 8 November 1758. I have not yet found the baptism of ABRAHAM PEACOCK, but it is known he was the son of Edward and aged 10 in 1735. Young Abraham may not have survived long after his ordeal, for an Abraham Peacock was buried at Bitton 9 May 1738.



JOSEPH SMITH

born about 1666, and possibly the Joseph Smith, who with Arthur Smith is shown as a collier when Francis Creswick surveyed the Chase in 1684.

THOMAS SMITH

No baptism has been found for him, but he could be the Thomas Smith who married Grace Jones at Bitton 29 April 1731. If so, it could have been his second marriage, for two girls, Betty and Mary, the children of Thomas Smith, were baptised at Hanham in 1728 and 1729.

THOMAS SUMMERS

Once again, I have not found his baptism, but he was probably married to Mary, and the father of three children baptised at Mangotsfield: Katherine in 1726, Abel in 1728 [buried 1735] and John, 1729. He may be the same man for whom two warrants were issued in 1750, and whose son John was a leader of the colliers during the 1753 rising.

SAMPSON PHIPPS

married Grace Bush at Bitton in 1712. A Sampson Phipps, the son of William, baptised at Oldland in 1728, was probably his nephew. This Sampson was found guilty of High Treason in his absence after the rising of 1753.

MOSES REYNOLDS

several men of this name lived in Stapleton parish, and it is worth mentioning that Stapleton extended into Kingswood as far as the Lodge, and Moses probably lived close to the pit at Two Mile Hill. Like the Summers and Phipps families the Reynolds' were politically active, and later we shall meet "One Reynolds, alias Harborough" in the turnpike protests of 1749.

....and finally - of John Batson - nothing at all is known. I feel his name may have been incorrectly given and that it should be either Batman or Batt, both of which were common in Kingswood.

1736

2 January

James Peacock, coalminer, Anne his wife, and child, at Bitton, settlement certificate, Siston. [BRO/P/B/OP/6a/14]

27 March

Benjamin Lewis aged 77 died and was buried at Siston. [Bigland]

1 April

Berkeley Seymour was the largest ratepayer in the parish of Bitton, rated £1 13s 8½d for the Parsonage. The Rev Richard Barry paid 8s for the Vicarage. [BRO/P/B/OP/2a]

5 July

Settlement Examination, Bitton:

Benjamin Summerell, aged about 35 years saith that as his parents told him, was born in Bitton where he lived until he was three and twenty years of age and served his apprenticeship to his father Stephen Sommerell of Bitton, feltmaker, and about twelve years since he was lawfully married to his present wife Mary in the parish of Doynton, by whom he hath now living

four children, Mary aged about 11 years, Sarah about 8 years, Benjamin about 4 years and Hannah aged about two years. About seven years since he and his wife Mary went and lived in the parish of Bustleton, alias Brislington, in the County of Somerset where he occupied [for] £15 a year for 5 years and one half successively, moiety there which he had in [the] right of his wife and the other half he paid rent for. At the same time for one year he rented an estate of Sir William Cann, Baronet, in the same parish of £9 a year, and further saith he paid taxes for the £15 a year, and served [as] Surveyor of the Highways in Brislington and that about three years since he came and resided in Bitton, since which he sold his right to the estate at Brislington and brought the sum of £40 into the said parish, it being part of the money that he received for the estate. Sworn before Henry Creswicke and Richard Hart and signed

*Benjamin Som<sup>well</sup>*

[BRO P/B/OP/6g/9]

Benjamin would have rued the day he left Brislington, for there there was a sorry sequel to the above: in an undated note in the Ellacombe Manuscripts, we read:

"Harrington Davis conveyed Benjamin and Stephen Summerill to Gloucester Gaol, at a cost of £4 - expenses to be divided equally between Oldland and Bitton."

Worse would follow in 1737.

7 July

John Roger, victualler, bound in £40 for the appearance of Hannah, wife of Richard Peacock, coedriver, Ann wife of Abraham Caines, coalminer, all of of St Philip & St Jacob, Bristol, to give evidence against Richard Gowen, otherwise Livings, and John Vernon, otherwise Long Jack, for burglary and felony.

[BRO 04435/3]

1737

A young preacher called George Whitefield began his ministry. His first thought was to go to America, but his friends, said George, suggested that "If I had a mind to convert Indians, I might go amongst the Kingswood colliers and find Indians enough there." George went to America, anyway, but the seeds had been sown.

22 February

"Yesterday afternoon, one Elliott, a fidler, from without Lawford's Gate was committed to the stocks on the Kay for swearing falsely against a poor woman in Marsh Street for selling a dram of spirituous liquors. The Mob pelted him with kennel dirt, flung ashes in his eyes and otherwise so bedaubed him that no pillory chap could be worse served. To make him clean, they afterwards flung him into the common horse pond in the Wear. 'Tis supposed he must resign his employment.

[GJ]

[Unfortunately, unlike Baggs in 1732, no colliers were on hand to save him from this appalling ordeal.]

12 March

The Assizes at Gloucester, and Benjamin and Stephen Summerill were found guilty of the theft of 11 dozen hats. They were transported for life to the plantations of Virginia. [GJ]

[Benjamin Summerell was baptised at Bitton in 1702, the son of Stephen Summerill. He married Mary Little at Doynton in 1723. Although, he had a brother, also called Stephen, seven years his senior, it appears to be father and son who were transported, for it is known that Stephen junior who joined the army appeared again later. Their fate at hard labour in the colony is unknown.

Benjamin Summerell junior, son and grandson of Benjamin and Stephen, who was referred to in his father's settlement examination of 1736, returned to Brislington where he was put out as a pauper apprentice. In time, like his uncle, he joined the army, and deserted his family. The sad wanderings of his wife and children are chronicled in Brislington Bulletins Number 4.]

21 May

Mary Higgs, "a travelling woman, belonging to Charvill" buried at Pucklechurch. [PRPuck]

16 August

John Willis, "aged about 23, and of honest parents in this county", was convicted of breaking and entering the houses of Matthew Davis, staymaker, and William Ellery, innholder, at St Philips, and taking silver spoons and a tankard, to which he confessed and showed the officers where it was concealed. John Gibbs, aged about 60, and "well known amongst smiths and farriers in Wiltshire" was found in possession of "divers goods" belonging to John Belsire of St Philips, a collier, which he said he had found in a bag between Bristol and Bath. Both were executed at Gloucester. [GJ 16.8/23.8]

22 October

Elizabeth, wife of Jacob Cox died Oct. 22 1737 aged 65, buried at Bitton. Joseph Cox of the Out-Parish of St Philip and Jacob died Sep. 8 17--, buried at Bitton. [Bigland]

21 December

Isaac Stout died Dec. 21 1737 aged 58, buried Bitton. His wife Mary died June 12 1746, aged 65. [Bigland]

1738

24 January

Agreement between Thomas Haynes, Samuel Summerill, William and John Freeks of Siston and Stephen Cambray of Wick and Abson to dig coal on land between the Griffin Alehouse and Hormaple Hill for seven years. [BRO 14581 HA/E/15, 24.1.1737/38]

13 February

Removal Order: William Swanwick, aged 5, the son of John of Whitchurch in Salop, deceased: to Salop. [BRO/P/B/OP/6b/4]

7 October

Some coal owners reduced the wages of the Kingswood colliers from 1s 4d [about 7p] to 1s 0d [about 5p] per day.

The ensuing trouble was reported on 11 October by the Bristol correspondent of the Gloucester Journal, though his copy actually appeared on the 17th.

"Bristol. Our City and Suburbs have been strangely disturbed for these several Days past, by the turbulent Commotions and Insurrections of the Colliers of Kingswood, [but chiefly by those that work entirely in the Coal Mines] which proceeded from a Grievance among themselves. Several Persons having rented some old Works and finding the Production capable of Improvement have undersold the Proprietors of the other Works in their Small Coal which supply the Glass-houses, Smiths &c. Those Proprietors that were chiefly injur'd by this would fain oblige the Pitmen to work for a lower Price by sinking their wages from 16d to 1s per day; which was so ill-relished that they absolutely refus'd a Compliance and to remedy the Evil, gathered by Degrees to a considerable Body, and those that were unwilling to join them they forced, and some underwent a sound Drubbing &c. And to prevent their bringing Coal to Town, have dispersed themselves into several Parties, and stopped up their Communication to the City on all Sides; and forced a Collection on the Road, by obliging People to give them Money, with heavy Strokes on Refusal; and such as had Cheese or Bread they took Care to lighten of their Burthen, swearing, *that it was Bread they wanted.*

About 3 o'clock on Monday, a Body of about 60 enter'd Totterdown-House, drank up a considerable Quantity of Liquor, but paid nothing for it; knock'd down the poor Parrot that hung in the Kitchen; wrenched the Staff from the Thumb of a Mop, wherein remain'd the Mop-Nail of about 6 inches long, which one of the Gang threw at the Landlady's Head, but the Nail luckily pointed over her Shoulder, and did not hurt her; then they knocked her down, took up her Husband, threw up the Sash-Window, and were for tossing him into the Tide, but were prevented by some of the most human of them; and then retir'd to the rest of their mutinous Company [to the Number of about 200] in the Road. From thence they proceeded to Bustleton, where they forced several of the civiliz'd Colliers into their Service, and violently beat those who refus'd; enter'd what Houses they pleas'd; eat and drank every thing they could come at, with out paying any Money; and so return'd towards the City. In their Way they stopped at the Goat between Bustleton and this City, took the Meat out of the Pot that was then boiling, and threatned to put the Head of the Landlady's Son therein; knocked down the Landlady three times at her Cellar-Door and cut her on the Arm with one of her Case-Knives. From thence they decamped to the White Hart in the same Road where some of them enter'd the House, demanded Liquor, eat up a shoulder of Mutton, drank what they pleased and departed towards Bristol, some going thro' the Body of the City hallowing, others taking Boat at the Temple-Backs and passed without paying. They even threaten the Fire-Engines in Kingswood and Bustleton, and to destroy all the Locks between Bristol and Bath; they cut what Colliers Sacks they meet with, and let the Coal about the Streets, beating the Pack-Saddles in Pieces. Several Waggons full of Coal have likewise fallen a Sacrifice to their Rage.

"A very remarkable Instance of their Resolution to fulfil their Revenge may be judged from their Inveteracy against one Roger Purnell, who acts as a

Bailiff. They by some means were acquainted of his being in a Lighter up the River, and thereupon pursued him. At their Approach, Purnell took to the Water, and swam to the Shore on the other Side: The Intrepid Colliers also took to the Water after him and follow'd him to 'Squire Cobbs's where they behaved in a very insolent Manner, and would not be satisfy'd but what he was there, till the 'Squire himself declared he had not seen him, and that to his Knowledge, he was not there &c. From thence they pursued him to other Places and going to a House of Mr Sheriff Bailey's up the Road beyond Totterdown, insulted the poor Man who was there to take Care of the House, broke down the Vines and did a deal of other Mischief. Purnell had conceal'd himself in the late Sheriff Langman's Garden; but fearing they would discover him there, rambled the Fields, and was so near being taken, that he was trod upon by some of them as he lay concealed under a broken Hedge, which they passed over. It seems they carried a Halter with them, and were resolved to hang him, could they have laid hold of him; and still give out, that they will destroy him wherever they meet with him.

"Last night they broke Mrs Silverthorn's [the Pack-horse in London Road] Windows all to Pieces and committed divers other Outrages in their Return Home.

"This Morning they assembled again, and collect on the Road what Money they want. All the Neighbourhood are in the utmost Consternation, and call aloud for the Civil or Military Power to protect them from those Outrages.

"These violent Commotions have induced the Magistrates of the City to send an Express to Court with an Account thereof. And Yesterday the Constables were conven'd at the Council-House and receiv'd strict Orders not to be absent from their Duty. The Watch is doubled, by the Addition of several supernumerary Constables, who patrol the City from Nine at Night till Six in the Morning. The Military Guard is also doubled throughout the City; and a Party of Soldiers were last Night under Arms in the Square, lest the Tumult should spread so far as to require their immediate Interposition."

[GJ 17.10.1738]

4 November

"Bristol. The Reason the Colliers of Kingswood give for appearing in the hostile Manner they did on Thursday last was to prevent the Justices, who were met at the Lamb-Inn without Lawfords Gate from examining into the Damages they had committed in their last Rout, and so prevent the injur'd Persons from making their Appeal, who were appointed that Day to attend the General Meeting for that Purpose: But another Cause to second this was one Powell, a Pitman, concerned in the late Rupture being apprehended by a Stratagem on Wednesday Night and committed to the County Bridewell, whom they were resolved to rescue, and would have attempted it, had they not made too much Noise before-hand and threatned to pull the Prison down, as also the Lamb-Inn, where the Justices were assembled about Ten o'Clock in the Morning.

"The Reports of this reaching the Magistrates Ears, the Drums of Brigadier Harrison's Regiment beat to Arms, and a Company appear'd presently before the Council-House, who at Twelve o'Clock, with Sir Abraham Elton, in his Chariot [attended by some of the City Officers] marched by Beat of Drum without Lawfords-Gate and Centries were immediately plac'd at the Prison Door, and the rest of the Company were in the New-Inn, under Arms. By one

o'Clock almost all the Regiment, by Companies, follow'd by Beat of Drum, every Soldier's Piece being loaded, to give the Colliers a warm Reception, had they been so bold as to come in their Way, but by Five o'Clock they return'd to the City, except 50, who were left to watch their Motions.

"Yesterday, the Justices continued their Meeting, both in City and County; and the better to oppose the Colliers from fulfilling their Threatnings, a large Detachment of Soldiers march'd into Kingswood, in search of those against whom abundance of Informations are made, with Orders absolutely to fire on the Colliers, if they made any Opposition; but instead of that they took to their Heels, and fled out of the Wood; and the Soldiers in searching their Houses, seiz'd what Fire-Arms they could find, and made one Samuel Wilmot, a noted Ringleader, Prisoner, whom they brought to accompany the other Collier in Bridewell.

"All the Coal-Works in Sir Isaac Newton's and several other Royalties are stopp'd from Working. Four Pits are fill'd up at White-hall near the Cupolas and the Carts, Reels, Ropes, and other Utensils cut and burnt, belonging to Mr Larry Price. Five other Pits are also fill'd up at Siston's Bottom, and the Utensils destroy'd, belonging to Jerome Ford, George Riddle, Charles Tippet and Henry Monk. Some sav'd their Pits by giving them Money. This was done at their first Rising. Last Thursday they cast a great many Bullets at Grimsbury, and fir'd divers Times to bring their Arms in Tune, as they said, against they went to War. [GJ 14.11.1738]

The other side of the coin, how easy it is to be caught up in events beyond your control, is shown in part of an indictment for riot against one Edward Stone, which survives, undated, in the Ellacombe Manuscripts, labelled "Another Riot", though it quite clearly refers to 1738.

"The King against Edward Stone.

Indicted that in October last, the day before the mob rose he encouraged several persons to Riot in Kingswood & that he likewise on the [blank] day of October then and there encouraged them by bidding them to go on.

"The Edward Stone case. That on Sunday the 6th day of October last as he was a-going to Church, on his way he met one Harris who offered to give him a pint of ale which Stone refused but Harris insisted to drink with the said Stone. They both went to the house of Henry Iles, an ale house near adjoining and called for a mug of ale and before they had drank the ale, several persons came into the house, and particularly one Coole & William Simmons the Cheife [sic] evidence against Stone & some of the persons in the said company said that the colliers would rise and prevent Cole to be carried to Bristoll upon which the defendant Edward Stone replied that they had better left it alone for if they did the whole of the City of Bristoll would be against them and all the gents at Taverns, Chochallet [sic] howses and Ale Howses would highly blame them notwithstanding. William Simmons, a person afterwards very concerned in the said riot & helping cutting of the waggon to pieces, said he would soon work thereof, [and] he being a poor smith of very loose reputation went and made oath before Justices of the Peace that Edward Stone should say the words following:

"'God dame you if you don't goe and beat Larry Price's and George Riddle's pitts. I will give neither a man I have any more than one shilling, and to

you boys in proportion, and if you will goe and do it every man & boy shall be ready at a minute's warning to help doe it' and he added that Samuel Whittock, an adventurer in Coalworks intended to take some big cole to Bristoll and bid the company should [cut] it out by Simmon's shop, that he might have it, meaning the big coale, and Simmons further said that on the [blank] day of October last he saw severall of the mob doing damage at Riddles pitts and Mr Woodward's at Grimsbury & he said that Edward Stone rode down towards his house to the company, and being on his mare's back very near to him, said 'Well done boys, goe on,' or words to that effect and he believed that he, Edward Stone, gave the company some money.

"To prove the defendant Not Guilty of speaking such words in Iles Howse, call Isaac Coole, Grace Iles, Elizabeth Britton, William Palmer, who all said Edward Stone spoke no such words.

"To prove the defendant Not Guilty of the riot: James Stone, Edward Stone [no way related to the defendant] and Joseph Harris went together to Mr Shatford's House in Hanham in order to take a lease for some coleing there for Mr Kedgewin Webley, who lodged there, and after speaking with Mr Webley they went to the defendant's house and drank together some considerable time and some persons coming to the house told of a mob doing mischief to Riddle's pitt and were coming towards Grimsbury. James Stone and Edward Stone having a horse engine near the place went out of Edward Stone's house with Joseph Harris to see if the mob would do any mischief to their horse engine, but the mob taking another turn went forwards towards London Causeway and after the mob had gone one hundred yards, Edward Stone, the defendant, hearing that his son was at Mary Jones house in Kingswood and fearing the mob might meet with his son, took his horse and rode towards the mob, they having passed on before, and brought his son home to his house in about a quarter of an hour, where witnesses saw him from a hill. On returning, they drunk some more and Edward Stone, defendant spoke against the mob, and highly demanded their transportations. Witness Edward Stone, Joseph Harris, Ann Gough, Hester Harris. After which Edward Stone and James Stone went to Thomas Pontin's howse where they were some time. Simmons had been heard to threaten him, Stone, defendant."

[ARL, Ellacombe KW Vol2 Book7]

[This is where the narrative ends, so that sadly, was that. Whether Edward Stone was found guilty or not, we may never know. I must say, I am inclined to wonder why Simmons "had it in for him."]

14 November

"On Tuesday last, brought under a strong guard of soldiers from Bristol to our Castle [Gloucester] James Powell and Samuel Wilmot, two coalminers for being concerned in the late riots in Bristol. One Francis Peacock that was in the said gaol for debt, after his discharge was remanded back in the same account." Warrants were issued for thirty six others. [GJ]

According to Latimer, some 60 colliers all told were arrested for the riot. Bristol Council appears to have recouped £51 in fines according to a note in the Corporation accounts. [L18c]

25 November

The last of the militants once again threatened the river locks on the Avon "Hanham river", vowing that they had "as good be hang'd as they and their

families to starve" but it was the last flurry in the affair. The majority had gone back for reduced wages with the original legitimate grievance forgotten by a society whose main concern was the maintenance of the status quo. A sort of order returned to Kingswood, but extraordinary events were just around the corner. Mr Morgan, "a serious and awakened clergyman of the Church of England, pitying the rude and ignorant condition" of the colliers preached to them in the fields, and took the lid off the pot for "The Great Stir" of the next year. The Kingswood colliers were about to be saved.

1739

The reputation of the Kingswood colliers for lawlessness, depravity and brutality already widespread from the violent political activity of the past decade reached its nadir after the riots of 1738. Kingswood, isolated and a law unto itself, was looked on as a very sink of iniquity. This was due, according to contemporary thinking, to the inherent evil of the people: that the poverty and attendant squalor in which the population dwelt were the effects of sin, and not the cause. George Whitefield finally felt the call to save the colliers' souls.

He was twenty four, fair of hair and complexion, with a slight build which would become more rounded in later life; he was nicknamed "Squintam" for the cast in one of his small periwinkle blue eyes. He favoured a plain diet, with cow-heel pie a rare luxury. He rose each day at four, was rigidly punctual and fanatically neat; his quick temper was just as swift to subside. As soon as this fussy, emotional, mesmeric little man climbed a coal heap, and began to speak, he had come home. Kingswood had an apostle.

17 February

Whitefield wrote "About one, I went to Kingswood. My bowels have long since yearned towards the poor colliers who are very numerous and as sheep without a shepherd. After dinner, I went up upon a mount. There were upwards of two hundred. Blessed be to God that I have now broke the ice."

This was at Rose Green near the same spot where Mr Morgan had preached the previous year. Among the assembly was Thomas Maxfield, who would become one of John Wesley's preachers. [GW, JC]

21 February

George preached again, and by his reckoning, the audience had increased ten fold. He took as his text John III.3, one that has been adopted by 'born again Christians' in recent years. "Jesus answered and said unto him 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.'"

"I believe I was never more acceptable to my Master than when I was standing to teach those hearers in the open fields", George recorded.

23 February

He preached at 3 pm, and this time estimated the crowd at four to five thousand! [As this was greater than the entire population of Bitton, this figure, and especially later guesses, has to be taken with a pinch of salt.] "Blessed be God for such a plentiful harvest", he wrote.



25 February

And still more. "At Kingswood. At a moderate computation, there were 10,000 to hear me. The trees and hedges were full. All was hush when I began; the sun shone bright and God enabled me to speak with great power, so loud that all could hear me." He appropriately chose as his theme Matthew V.1, "And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain..." the opening line of the Sermon on the Mount.

1 March

Again, he preached, and wrote happily "I have reason to believe that my words have not altogether fallen to the ground."

3 March

"Preached on the steps of the Poor House, without Lawford's Gate."

4 March

was hectic, even for George. "To Hanham Mount. About 4,000 were ready to hear me. The people covered the green fields. In the afternoon, to the Mount at Rose Green, and preached to above 14,000 souls."

5 March

"Being invited by many colliers, I went to a place called the Fishponds, where 2,000 were gathered together. The wall was my pulpit, and I believe I never spoke with greater power."

6 March

Kingswood could not have George all to itself. The Gloucester Journal reported "Last Sunday morning the Rev Mr Whitefield preached at Busselton, [Brislington] two miles from Bristol, but the church would by no means contain the multitude, so he betook himself to a cross in the churchyard and preached from thence, after which there was a sacrament. In the afternoon, he repaired to Kingswood where many thousands attended to the word of God." [GJ]

[George would also preach in Bristol at Baptists Mills, the Bowling Green, the Weavers Hall, Temple Backs, and the Brickyard.]

11 March

George was at Hanham Mount and Rose Green again, but the pleasant early spring weather which had so far favoured his mission turned fickle and prevented his going to Siston on the 15th as he had promised, but there was a thaw, and on

18 March

He again preached at Hanham Mount and Rose Green, and wrote excitedly, "I really do believe that no less than 20,000 were present."

25 March

Again at Hanham, and he estimated numbers reached the astonishing figure of 23,000. Possibly the squint affected his eyesight, but there is no doubt he believed it. Of this occasion he wrote the famous lines "The colliers having no righteousness to renounce, they were glad to hear of a Jesus who was a friend to publicans and came not to call the righteous, but sinners

to repentance. The first discovery of their being affected was to see the white gutters made by their tears which fell plentifully down their black cheeks as they came out of their coalpits."

29 March

Though there were schools in some of Kingswood's peripheral villages, there was none in the heart of the forest. Whitefield was approached by several colliers who "were willing to subscribe, [and] I went to dinner with them at a place called Two Mile Hill and collected upwards of £20 in money and above £40 in subscriptions towards building them a school. Were I to continue here I would endeavour to settle schools all over the wood. It is a pity that so many little ones as there are in Kingswood should perish for lack of knowledge."

It was not all sweetness. The Gentleman's Magazine, which had spotted the fact that if the reports coming from Kingswood were true, then nobody could possibly have been doing any work, given that the entire population, and many from Bristol too were at one long revival meeting, attacked George and his colliers, in a snotty leader:

"The Industry of Inferior people in Society is the great Source of its prosperity. But if one man like the Reverend Mr Whitefield should have it in his power, by his preaching to detain five or six thousand of the Vulgar from their daily Labour, what a loss, in a little Time may this bring to the Publick! For my part I shall expect to hear of a prodigious Rise in the Price of Coals about the City of Bristol if this Gentleman proceeds as he has begun with his charitable Lectures to the Colliers of Kingswood."

Snide remarks would not stop Whitefield. He wrote to John Wesley, and acquainted him with the astonishing success of his mission to Kingswood. Wesley was swift to respond, and hastened to Kingswood himself.

John Wesley was then in his 38th year. From May 1738 when he first "saw the light", his whole being was devoted to "saving souls". His energy was awe inspiring, his dedication stupendous - he would one day confess he had wasted fifteen minutes of his life in the reading of a worthless book. He was short, strong, brave, resolute - and terrifying. He would shrivel fools with a glance of his piercing eyes, and it comes as a shock to learn that a contemporary said "It was impossible to be long in his company without partaking of his hilarity." [If this was true, then nobody else noticed.] He was an excellent organiser, and it was this skill which Whitefield sought to harness.

31 March

Wesley wrote: "I reached Bristol and met Mr Whitefield there. I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields of which he gave me an example."

2 April

Whitefield was due to leave Kingswood. The miners gave him a surprise entertainment and asked him to lay the first stone of the school. He was delighted. He wrote "I would rather preach the Gospel to the unprejudiced ignorant colliers than to the bigoted self-righteous formal Christians. The colliers will enter the Kingdom of God before them."

8 April

John Wesley: "At 7 in the morning I preached to about 1,000 at Bristol, and afterwards to about 15 hundred on the top of Hannum Mount in Kingswood. I called to them in the words of the evangelical prophets 'Ho! everyone that thirsteth come ye to the waters: come and buy wine and milk, without money & without price.'"

Wesley too was afflicted with exaggeration and continued "About 15 thousand were there in the afternoon at Rose Green [on the other side of Kingswood] among whom I stood and cried in the name of the Lord: 'If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow Rivers of living Water.'" [JW]

17 April

With Kingswood now ablaze with collective passion, there was a distressing development. "People began to be in agitations &c", John Cennick wrote in his diary. [Cennick would not arrive in Kingswood for another two months, but he would later be extremely uneasy about these hysterics which he would expound on fully.] [JC]

23 April

Wesley went to see the school foundation stone which Whitefield had laid and pronounced "It cannot be better placed. 'Tis just in the middle of the wood, two miles every way from either church or school." According to a later letter, it was on the site of a cock pit.

12 May

Wesley laid the first stone of the chapel in Broadmead, Bristol, the first Methodist chapel in the world.

14 May

Wesley, the organiser, had second thoughts about the site of the school in Kingswood, and despite all that had gone before, found "a proper place...pitched between the London and Bath roads."

Meanwhile, John Cennick, twenty years old and boiling with enthusiasm, went to London along with his sister Sally, and Kezia Wilmot, and was accepted into the Society at Fetters Lane. "When I heard of the awakening at Bristol and Kingswood, I felt an inexpressible desire to see it. I asked the brethren if I might have leave to visit Bristol..." but even better "Mr Whitefield told me both his design of building a school for the colliers' children and also wished that I would go and be one of the masters. I consented with all my heart." [JC]

10 June

Whitefield dined with Wesley at Two Mile Hill, and discussed progress; presumably the imminent arrival of Cennick as schoolmaster was raised.



11 June

Cennick could not afford transport, and set out to walk to Bristol and Kingswood. He left Reading on this wet June morning with a companion, Dr Perne and "walked the same day to Sandley Lane, and because it was late we were obliged to sleep upon straw at an outhouse at night." [JC]

12 June

"We came through Bath to Bristol in the afternoon, but Mr Wesley had gone to London.....Mr Purdy, a tailor from London....received us very kindly."

[ibid]

[This must surely have been the father of Victory Purdy, famous as "the Walking Bible" - see Kingswood Annals 1776-95].

14 June

"I [Cennick], Mr Purdy, Perne, Tommy Catfield and Mr Norman of Bristol walked three miles to Kingswood to see the colliers. In the afternoon, Sammy Wathen, an apprentice to a surgeon in Corn Street had begun to visit the colliers and to read to them, and was to have come about three or four o'clock but as he stayed later than ordinary and the people were a little impatient, my company entreated me to expound a chapter, and also to speak to the souls."

The numbers were rather more modest:

"I stood under a sycamore tree and spoke to several hundreds." James Stone, later Cennick's brother in law, calculated there were about four or five hundred gathered: "I was one of the colliers under the sycamore tree and I thank God I heard the first discourse of the Rev John Cennick in 1739."

Cennick: "We went aside into a little cottage near where the foundation of the school was laid and there we kneeled down simply and asked our Saviour to manifest his mind." [The new foundation stone was laid on a small piece of land bought by Wesley with his own money "being able to procure none any other way". The school had "a fine hall for preaching, and four rooms at each end, and two handsome houses."]

"My preaching was noised all over Kingswood so that I could not avoid preaching again, at Whiteshill on the morrow. From this time in many places and was universally received, but I did not appear like a preacher &c, still wearing either a dark coloured coat or else a very light one." [ibid]

July

Wesley was preaching fortnightly above Conham and at Hanham Mount, and now that the school site had been settled, progress was rapid. Whitefield dined with Wesley at Two Mile Hill and was delighted: "The schoolhouse has been carried on so successfully that the roof is ready to be put up.....old as well as young are instructed. A great and visible alteration is made in the behaviour of the colliers. Instead of cursing and swearing, they are heard to sing hymns about the woods." This metamorphosis was confirmed by the Gloucester Journal of 17 July which reported an incident whereby a Sheriff's Warrant was served on one William Haines of Kingswood, and congratulated: "This may be deemed a great favour, no officer within the memory of the oldest man living has been able to affect an undertaking in so peaceable a manner" - but Cennick worried.....

17 July

"People began to fall into fits under the discourses, especially as Mr Wesley began to preach perfection. At first no-one knew what to say, but it was called the pangs of the new birth, the work of the Holy Ghost, the Bruising of the Serpent's head, casting out the Old Man, &c and some were offended and entirely left the societies when they saw Mr Wesley encouraging it. I often doubted it was not of the Enemy when I saw it, and disputed with Mr Wesley for calling it the work of God.....I have seen people so foam and violently agitated that six men could not hold one but he would spring out of their arms or off the ground and tear himself in hellish agonies. Others I have seen sweat uncommonly and their necks and tongues swell and twisted out of all shape. Some prophesied and some again uttered the worst blasphemies against our Saviour." [JC]

Wesley himself wrote: "I was pressed to visit a young woman at Kingswood and found her on the bed, two or three persons holding her. Anguish, horror and despair appeared in her pale face. A thousand distortions of her whole body showing that the dogs of Hell were gnawing at her heart. The shrieks intermixed were scarce to be endured; she screamed out 'I am damned, damned, lost for ever. Six days ago you might have helped me but it is past, I am the Devil's now, I have given myself to him, His I am, him I must serve, and if I must go to Hell, I will be his, I will serve him, I will go with him to Hell, I cannot be saved, I must, I will, I will be damned.' She then began praying to the Devil. We began 'Arm of the Lord, Awake, Awake! She immediately sank down as if asleep, but as soon as we left off, broke out again with inexpressible vehemence 'Stony heart, break, I am a warning to you, break, break poor stony heart. I am damned but you may be saved, you need not be damned though I must.' She then fixed her eyes on the corner of the ceiling and said 'There he is, come good Devil, come. You said you would dash my brains out - come do it quickly, I am yours, I will be yours.' We interrupted her by calling again upon God, upon which she sank down as before, and another young woman began to roar as loud as she had done. My brother now came in, it being about nine o'clock. We continued in prayer until past eleven, when God in a moment brought peace to the souls, first to the first tormented, then to the other, and they both joined in praise to Him who had killed the enemy and the avenger." [quoted "Wrestling Jacob"]

In this frenzied atmosphere, James Rogers "a leader of the colliers in wildness and sin" was converted, and became "more eminent in a religious way than previously in folly and wickedness". Before his conversion he had played the fiddle, scraping away on the few occasions when the colliers and their families enjoyed themselves. Now with this harmless entertainment considered sinful, he "broke and burnt his fiddle, as it had previously been associated with his drunken carousals". It is difficult to forgive those who piously applauded this pathetic sacrifice.

Another convert met a miserable end, seen as an example of God's mercy, at the instant of his conversion. According to Wesley, "a serious young Kingswood miner pleaded with an older companion. They laid aside their tools and the black walls resounded with entreaty and prayer. And not in vain, for in penitence, the wanderer returned to the Shepherd of Souls". Upon which "the sides of the pit caved in and crushed him to death in a moment."

Cennick continued to record ill-effects, noting that he saw people "sweat uncommonly, and their necks and tongues swell and twisted out of all shape. Some prophesied and some uttered the worst of blasphemies".

"I have seen Ann Roberts, a servant of Mr Deschamps, without Lawford's Gate fall down after and become lifeless and continue so for 24 hours, and then come to herself singing a hymn. Besides her was Lucretia Smith, a Quaker Gentlewoman, Thomas Maxfield, a toymaker. [now a field preacher with Mr Wesley] who has been, as he said, possessed of the devil, that he once conversed with a Saint in Heaven in his fits, Tommy Hamilton, a taylor's boy, Mr Whitehead, a gentleman who favoured the French prophets &c. Mr Wesley prayed with them and they recovered and sang hymns, and declared before all that they had received the Holy Ghost, but afterwards the same persons were afflicted again and grew intolerable, and tho' they prayed with them whole nights, they were rather worse and worse." [JC]

27 July

The rioters of 1738 were still being mopped up: John Newman of Bitton, coalminer, was bound over in the large sum of £200 and Thomas Pontin and Thomas Hankins, also coalminers, both of St Philip & St Jacob, "severally in 100 shillings, that the above bound John Newman shall personally appear at the next gaol delivery to answer for a riot and that he shall not leave court without leave. Signed Wm Jefferies, mayor." Samuel Edwards of Bitton, coalminer, was also bound over to appear in court in the sum of forty shillings to give evidence against John Newman for the riot. [BRO 04435/4]

11 August

Daniel Britton of Bitton, coalminer, and Daniel Britton, junior, bound over in the sum of 100 shillings to be of good behaviour. [BRO 04435/4]

The methodical hauntings persisted and on

23 October

Cennick went to an extraordinary meeting held by Wesley at Two Mile Hill where "they began to cry out. At first I took no notice of it, but its easing forward caused me all I could do to prevent it. I believe that more than twenty roared and shrieked together in the New School and all at the same time. Tho' it was winter it thundered, lightninged, rained and blew such a tempest that I was frightened and had no doubt but the whole was a delusion. The chief persons that were affected were Sarah Robins, Betty Sommers, Sarah Jones and a brother of Betty Jones. The three former confessed that they were demoniacs. Sarah Robins could not read, yet could answer at any time if persons talked to her in Latin or Greek, &c. They could tell who was coming in to the house tho' they were held down upon the floor: they said who would be seized next and what was doing in other places.

"One said her name was Satan, the other Beelzebub, the third Legion. All the times cursed and blasphemed our Saviour, gnashing their teeth and at times sang the Gloria Patris and Lord's Prayer in the same tones. If any prayed with them they tried by the most comical inventions to make them laugh and hinder them. If any named Jesus, they trembled and cursed him. Mr Wesley asked Betty Sommers how the devil entered her? She said 'By thy Gospel, thou Toad.' But experience proved the more questions they asked,

Religious fervour continued unabated in Kingswood. Some people were now going about openly saying they were without sin themselves and prayed only for others, were pregnant of the Holy Ghost, and among them was

"Betty Bush, a collier's wife, Mrs Turner, a captain's wife, and Maxfield the preacher, who grew more and more high. Well on a time, Mr Wesley had made a sort of proselyte of a condemned man in London, and sent word to his people that he should be executed the Thursday following at 3 o'clock, at which time they were to fast and pray for him.

"Accordingly, they met and prayed and at three, Mr Maxfield and Mrs Turner burst out in a transport of joy, saying 'There! There! I see his soul ascend into paradise!' The next news they heard was that the poor man was relieved for transportation and this mortified the perfect people exceedingly and lessened their repute among the souls."

[Cennick obviously enjoyed this. So did I.]

18 September

There was talk of a colliers' rising in protest against the high cost of grain, which had risen to eight shillings and sixpence per bushel. Bristol treated the rumours seriously, and the regiment quartered in the City were mustered in Queen Square, and publicly issued with "powder and ball".

22 September

The colliers "gathered together in a great body obliging one another to desist from working, severely threatening those that did not join them, complaining loudly at the high price of Corn: that there was good living enough in the land and whilst it was to be had, they would have a part." About one thousand marched to Lawrence Hill where they were met by Charles Wesley who persuaded the majority to turn back. ["Wherever I turned," he said, "Satan lost ground."]. He believed that "our colliers" - that is the Methodists, had been forced to join in the rising, particularly twenty or so of Mr Willis's men, who joined because the militants "threatened to fill in their pits and bury them alive if they did not come up and bear them company." A small deputation, with wives and other women, and some sympathetic weavers, continued to the Mayor's parlour, bent on peaceful negotiation and without their "usual armour of clubs and staffs". Their case was put quietly by an elderly collier who said that they "came with no intent to hurt any man, but for the good of their country; that for his part he had good bread, good cheese and good fat beef enough, but that there were hundreds of poor families starving round him." Their request was modest: that they should be able to buy grain for six shillings a bushel. The Mayor answered "Gentlemen, I'll take care that you shall have justice done you." The colliers mistook this ambiguous statement for victory, and shouted loud "huzzas".

23 September

Back in the school house at Kingswood, Charles Wesley led hymn singing and preached to the colliers "on the things they would have done, had not Grace restrained them." Meanwhile, the Mayor was writing to the Duke of Newcastle

admitting the price of grain was excessive, but maintained that nothing could be done about it.

30 September

The colliers realised they had been had. The Gloucester Journal reported from Bristol: " We hear that a great number of colliers rose yesterday on account of the high price of corn. On Thursday they threatened to destroy Mr Read's mill at Hannum. Several millers at Bath have been threatened by an incendiary letter and this morning a body of colliers were at Lawrence Hill. But if they attempt to enter this City, they will be met with a warm reception from the soldiers."

But it was not 1738. The colliers had no political clout; they were disunited, perhaps because of the religious buffeting and they had lost confidence. For many months the City of Bristol maintained a round the clock guard "to keep the colliers in awe" but nothing happened. Three months later, the price of grain was reduced by two shillings per bushel. Those who had not already starved would benefit for their patience.

5 October

Hannah, wife of John Lewton, senior, of Hanham, died aged 43, and was buried in Oldland Chapel Yard. [John died aged 80 in 1772].

[Bigland - Bitton]

25 October

John Harris of Mangotsfield, waggoner was charged at the quarter sessions with "bringing Elizabeth Jarrett, a poor impotent person into the parish of St Peter, where she is chargeable, and likely to remain so." [BRO 04435/4]

[Presumably the ratepayers of Mangotsfield had commandeered Harris's waggon to get Elizabeth off their rates and on to someone else's, a common enough occurrence.]

13 December

A indenture signed between John Talbot and Kedgewin Webley, gentlemen, and Edward Stone, coalminer as servant, agent and workman. [Ellacombe Mss]

The garrulous Cennick is strangely silent on the autumn colliers "troubles" and resumes just before Christmas

"Mr Wesley saw that the souls were in parties, both in Bristol and more especially in Kingswood where I had by far the greatest number and therefore he himself, his brother Charles, Mr Saye, a cooper, Mr Maxfield &c tried to persuade me to renounce my principles." The bickering between the religious groups continued, with "the perfectionists striving daily against me" and at last, "Mr Wesley forbid me to preach in the school any more, and without noise, I yielded, and never did...."

Then, "Mr Wesley, and many more from Bristol came and instead of doing as he had before, proposed to publicly put me out by name, and tho' I sat with him at the desk and was a little surprised, yet I showed little of it to the souls, only they saw me weep as I went out, for I said nothing.

This cruelty was followed by an amazing scene, when two dozen of the assembly rose, and followed the young preacher out into the cold.



"Twelve men and twelve women followed me" wrote Cennick,

Samuel Tippett, married, now a dear brother  
Abram Stout, single, now gone into the world, and married  
Thomas Beswick, single, now a Baptist preacher  
Ambrose Luton, single, in the World, since married  
William Bolt, single &  
Peter Bush, single, hearers of the Methodists, but in no Society  
Samuel Beswick, since married  
Ed. Stone, single, afterwards married, died among the brethren  
William Bush, married, died before I came to the brethren  
Aaron Bush, single, in the World  
John Tippett, married, in the World  
Isaac Haskins, single, since married among the brethren

Mary Tippett, married with the brethren  
Hannah Jefferies, single, now Brother Stone's wife  
Ann Allen, since married in the world  
Ann Davis, single, since married. With Mr Wesley.  
Jane Tippett, married, in the world  
Hannah Stone, otherwise Peacock, single, since married to Arthur Palmer  
Johanna Rider, single, since married to Thomas Beswick  
Ann Tippett, single, died happily  
Hannah Richards, married, with the brethren, now a widow  
Eleanor Morgan, widow, with the brethren  
Sally Morgan, single, died happily 2 May 1742  
Mary Jones, widow, dead.

"With these twenty four I came to Stephen Tippett's house a little way from London Road, and we sat down and wept together, but resolved to continue as hearty friends to each other and meet often.

"By this means we loved one another and increased our number till we were 130. But our love feasts we kept upon the hay in the fields and sat down upon the grass which was also our table." [JC]

[The "brethren" were the Moravians, who Cennick later joined. Those "in the world" had left the various dissenting societies.]

1741

18 January

Ann, the wife of Charles Brooks died aged 68 and was buried at Bitton. On her tombstone were the words "They lived 44 Years a Married Life" - considered a remarkable achievement in those days of high mortality. Charles survived her twenty years, and was buried in the same grave aged 86. [Bigland 18 Jan 1740/41]

Cennick's group continued their alfresco meetings, and the following year, during a mission to Wiltshire, they were attacked in a field belonging to a Farmer Lee at Foxham. One of Lee's workmen who enthusiastically joined the fray, Cennick tells us, was later condemned for horse stealing. Cennick went to see him in prison, where "He damned himself to Hell for disturbing us. I said 'My dear Man. You should not curse so. You don't know what it is to go to Hell.' He said 'I want to go there that I may call Old Burges to

account, who cheated me before he died.' But I heard before he was executed he became very sorry and altered his mind."

[One of Cennick's chief concerns was "the widespread indifference to the terrors of sin", and he was mainly interested in saving this man's soul. It never occurred to him to question whether death was a suitable punishment for the theft of a horse.]

Like the unnamed horse thief, many others who spoke out or acted against the group were, according to Cennick, struck down in various ways, though it might be pointed out this was scarcely a Christian attitude.

Farmer Lee of Foxham was, Cennick writes "a wealthy man, but several of his best horses died, his swine were bitten by a mad dog, and all things made against him until he was ruined and obliged to abscond." And in a final irony: "His house fell into the brethren's hands."

In more Divine retribution four men were said to have expired from nosebleeds. One of them, Sylvester Keene, bled until "his bowels corrupted, and so he ended his life cursing those who had encouraged him to meddle with us." Another man died a lingering death after falling from his horse which stumbled when a gun accidentally discharged. As his relatives could not agree who was responsible for the funeral arrangements, he was left unburied, "until the stench grew too much." Charles Gay, a tailor and Thomas Perry, a breeches maker, "narrowly escaped the gallows", and Thomas Locker, a soapboiler and Thomas Holliday, a labourer, were publicly whipped for stealing fowls.

In July, a Mr Hollis, arriving for work with his haymakers at Segry, was not best pleased to find the field occupied and a prayer meeting in full swing. An altercation ensued and Mr Hollis "cursed me and my doctrines exceedingly, and while he continued to blaspheme, he sank down, and was carried to his house deprived of the use of his limbs, and there he recovered no more until he died", in November.

[Some of these "plagues of Egypt" must surely have been exaggerated and passed on to Cennick by those eager to win his approval.

-o-o-o-

As a magistrate, Henry Creswicke dealt with all manner of petty crime, both on the bench at Lawford's Gate and nearer to home at Bitton. During this year, a woman variously known as Ruth Phipps, Beard, or Weston came to see him, and told an extraordinary story.

She said that about eleven years before, she was married to Henry Beard, otherwise Weston, at Bitton church, and he was her first and only husband. Shortly afterwards, her husband SOLD her to a collier called Nicholas Reed, of Hanham. They went off together to Bath, where they went through a bigamous marriage ceremony conducted by "a lawless minister", a Parson Grey. She had lived with Nicholas until he died, three years ago last May, but was now very poor and unable to maintain herself, "and the inevitable must happen unless she is relieved."

[Ellacombe Mss]

Henry's judgement has unfortunately not survived.

VOLUME 9

(Ref. hnd.)

Blair's Room

25 March

"My very dear brother" wrote Whitefield to Cennick from London. "Hasten thither with all speed and then we shall see what God intends for us and by us. It is a trying time for the Church. The Lord give us a due mixture of the lamb and the lion. My love to the colliers and all friends."

[This letter fell into the hands of Mr Jones, a butcher, who passed it to Mr Richards, a preacher, who attempted to use it as a lever to bring about Cennick's reconciliation with Wesley. Cennick remained obstinate, and they left off. Cennick complained "I did not get it for a week until after it came to Bristol. In a few days, I went to London to Whitefield." [JC]

28 March

"Gloucester. On Thursday last, Thomas Cook and Francis Cook were executed here for robbing R. Rogers on the highway of 8s 6d [42½p] in silver, [and] a pair of scissors &c. Their behaviour while under sentence of death was very stubborn. No exhortation [either in prison, or at the Tree] being prevalent enough to induce them to acknowledge the crime for which they suffered; neither did they deny it. They were born in this County & worked at the coalpits at Kingswood but as is customary among people of that occupation were both very illiterate. The former was about 38 years of age and left a wife and four children and the latter about 28 and left a wife and three children." [GJ, 31.3.1741]

27 April

Wesley, still rankling, writes to Whitefield that Cennick never was schoolmaster at Kingswood.

16 May

"Tuesday last Thomas Chester and Norborne Berkeley, esquires were unanimously elected Knights of the Shire for this County to the great Joy of all true lovers of their Country." [GJ]

27 May

Edward, the son of Edward and Elizabeth Parker died this day aged 29, and was buried at Bitton. [Bigland]

[This is the "most beloved son" of the Mr Parker who "meddled" with Cennick and his band in 1740.]

29 May

John, the son of John and Elizabeth Woodward and grandson of Francis and Dorothy Woodward died aged 11, and his name was added to the Woodward memorial stone in the North Chapel at Bitton church. [Bigland]

8 June

After conference with his friend Whitefield, Cennick returned to Kingswood: he wrote with the good news that he had found a suitable plot of land to build a schoolroom. Whitefield replied "How sweetly does Providence order all things for us! Just before yours came I was resolved to send you £20 to begin the Society Room at Kingswood." Cennick put the money to good use, and recorded:

18 June

Cennick writes: "I laid the corner stone of the school on land in Kingswood which I had bought from a collier for the purpose. I kneeled down and prayed on it and sung some verses with a pretty little company who stood all around." [JC]

[So was begun the second colliers' school.]

"About this time, Betty Bush, the chief perfectionist in Kingswood sent me a blasphemous letter which I read before my mother, and several, and laid it on a table to expose it, but before us all....."

[At this point, the narrative is lost. A leaf is torn from the preacher's book. Did the offensive letter catch fire....? Explode....?]

13 September

"Sunday I met the Society as usual and chose some for stewards as follows: Samuel Tippet, John Harris, William Clear, John Tippet; to those afterwards were added Thomas Burchill [married] Thomas Beswicks, Francis Stone, Ed. Cambridge, Isaac Haskins, all single.

"Some of these met and spoke to the Society when there was no minister, and so we kept together." [JC]

14 November

Samuel Jacob, collier of St Philip and St Jacob, bound over for the appearance of Elizabeth his wife, charged with assaulting and threatening the life of Sarah, wife of Francis Williams, collier. [BRO 04435/4]

1742

28 January

Whitefield returned to Kingswood, and administered the sacrament to the Kingswood converts. Cennick delightedly reported progress: "In the beginning of this year, the school or chapel was finished and ministers began to teach regularly once or twice a week, only when I was there, I preached once a day, and often twice." [JC]

31 January

Berkeley Seymour who was murdered by his brother William was buried at Bitton on this day.

The circumstances were related many years later to the Reverend Ellacombe at Bitton: "Robert Newman of Oldland Common told me this day, November 24 1828 that he perfectly remembers the murder at the Parsonage when William Seymour murdered his brother - he saw the corpse lying in a room [there], one shot hole on one side and two on the other side of his body produced by two bullets. Berkeley had sold some oxen in Bristol and returned home with the money. William shot him in his bed and afterwards he and his brother scuffled with each other in the bedroom and the adjoining large room where he fell and died. He saw blood and brains about the large room. William then robbed his pockets and rode off to Bristol, and to pay for something he needed, he rendered a guinea with a hole in it, that afterwards the person who bought the oxen swore to having paid with that holey guinea

among others which proved him guilty. That Berkeley Seymour was a steady man, about 25 to 30 years old. That William was a drunken, idle fellow about 40 or 50, that William had one illegitimate child by Sarah Bright, the clerk's daughter, and that this child, a boy, was always called Seymour and worked at the Swinford Copper Mills. A Miss Seymour lived with her two brothers. Before the murder she married a Mr Padmore or Padmer. There was another brother John who kept the Swan Inn at Swinford and before that an Inn at Stouts Hill where he was a sort of horse jockey. Another brother, Edward, was a freestone mason who lived and died in Bath. He believes the daughter was the youngest and that her name was Martha. He knows nothing of Colonel Seymour or the father of the murderer."

According to another account, William's escape was impeded by a hard frost, and his horse's hooves slipped around so much that he was obliged to knock up a blacksmith to rough the horseshoes. He paid the man with a guinea which had a hole in it.

The Seymours had once been one of the "Great" families of Bitton, and were believed descended from Edward Seymour, brother of Jane Seymour, the third wife of Henry VIII, and Lord Protector of England [during the reign of the boy king Edward VI] until he was executed in 1552.

It has proved an impossible task - both for Reverend Ellacombe and for me to fit the Parsonage family on to the grand Family Tree of the Seymours, hence the allusion to Colonel Seymour, a noted soldier. As neither of the brothers appear to have been baptised at Bitton, Mr Newman's account is helpful in establishing their approximate dates of birth: Berkeley born ca1712-1717? William born ca1692-1702? Although the Parsonage where they lived was rated highest in Bitton, the impression is that they had declined financially. Braine makes much of the Seymours in The History of Kingswood Forest, but fails to mention the murder.

On 1 April, William Seymour was executed and "persisted his innocence till the last". He was buried at Bitton - "under the Communion Table in an old vault there" and apparently beside his brother, according to "Old John Holbin" another of Ellacombe's informants.

[ARL, Ellacombe Mss B7382 Newton Seymour fams;  
Bristol Weekly Miscellany, 10.4.1742; PRB]

[Col John Seymour = Mrs Hester Newman Bitton 25.4.1698  
John Seymour = Mary Harding, Pucklechurch, by licence, 4.12.1729  
Dame Elizabeth Seymour, wife of Sir John, Knight, Probate PCC 1635-9  
John, Margaret & Elizabeth Seymour, inhabitants of Siston 1674]

8 March

George Bateman, Bitton, coaldriver, with others, bound over to give evidence against Peter Strafford for violently wounding George Bateman, with intent to rob.  
[BRO 04435/4 8.3.1741/2]

8 May

A Boarding School for young ladies was advertised by Elizabeth Cope at French-Hay.  
[Bristol Oracle]

11 May

Stephen Britain, coalminer of Oldland charged with an assault on Henry Creswicke, esquire. He was committed to the House of Correction at Old Market, for ten days and then conveyed to appear at the Quarter Sessions at Gloucester. [GRO QS]

15 July

George Whitefield wrote to John Cennick: "Of all my fellow labourers, I think yours come sweetest to my soul."

11 August

Thomas Maggs was in the House of Correction, St Philip and St Jacob charged with stealing coals from Aaron Brain & partners coalworks at Hanham & Oldland: "to be kept 10 days, then sent to the Castle in Gloucester".

[GRO QS]

[Perhaps the same Thomas Maggs who would be arrested during the colliers' hunger march on Bristol in 1753?]

25 October

John Cennick's Diary: "Bro. Thomas Beswick & his wife came to live in Wiltshire. This man was once in a very pretty way and tho' he was brought up a collier, had useful gifts and preached with blessing 'till falling into the most rigid doctrine of reprobation became dry in his heart and at last few or none would hear him so that after a few weeks he returned to his own country where he joined the Baptists and soon after separated from them and would have set up for himself but was unsuccessful and at last contented himself to be a collier as before, and live private." [JC]

["Reprobation" is an allusion to Calvin's rum doctrine that before the beginning of time God predestined "the elect" for salvation, and the rest of us "the reprobate" for damnation. Thomas Beswick and his wife Johanna Rider were two of the faithful who had followed Cennick when he was "put out" by Wesley in 1740.]

In the same year, Samuel Tippett, another of the original twenty four, wrote to John Cennick, paraphrasing The Song of Solomon, innocently unaware of what it was all about. No doubt as a collier, he was certainly black:

"Jesus is a dear Saviour; he keeps me as the apple of his eye. He is mine and I am His. I find a closer union to Him than ever. O may I lie low at His feet continually having nothing in myself for in Him I have all things. Tho' I am poor yet in Him am I rich. Tho' I am despised yet in Him I am precious; tho' I am black yet I am comely. O He is the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely." [JC]

1743

15 January

Agreement between Thomas Haynes and George Ruddle, Joseph Eyles, Abel Eyles of Bitton and Thomas King of Siston, coalminers, to dig coal on Breachyate Common and Churchleigh Hill between Churchleigh Hill and the Griffin Inn, Siston. [BRO 14581 HA/E/16, 15.1.1742/3]

February

John Cennick's Diary: "I spoke with all the Society, who were now divided into five classes and found all in a pretty flourishing way. I spoke with about 120 in number." [JC]

11 March

Removal Order, Katherine Hart, daughter of Henry and Ann Hart, to Dyrham from Bitton. [BRO P/B/OP/6b/5, 11.3.1743/4]

8 April

James Stone, a Kingswood collier, married Anna Cennick, the sister of John Cennick, at Yate. James was very proud of his connection with the Cennick family, and probably through his wife, he inherited a little hymn book, whose pages are reproduced in this volume.

Written on the flyleaf is:

"Ann Cennick, mother to Mr John Cennick, her book, 1742.  
"Note. This hymn was sung when I was taken in a Member into the Society of the Methodists at Mr Whitfield's Room-- Commonly called the Little School Near the Causey Side, Kingswood, A.D. 1743. [signed] James Stone. The Author, Mr John Cennick."  
[The hymn was No XVII 'Sing, Sheep of Jesus']

Elsewhere in the book is written:

"Mary Stone was born on the 27th day of October in the Year of our Lord 1764 in St Phillip's Parish Bristol, at Baptist Mills."

"Mary Kennedy, Her Book. The Author, Mr John Cennick was your mother's brother. He died about ten years before you were born. Don't part with this book while you live. Ja. Stone. 1786

"In 1787, the 24th and 25th June i dreamed that my father was dead which make me very uneasy. Mary Kennedy.

"My daughter Mary Kennedy was Cast away in the Ship Sirius Near Norfolk Island South Seas with her Husband Mr J. Kennedy, Sarjant of Marines (and many others) but through God's Gracious Providence not Drowned. this book was in her box with most of their effects but Recovered. I had it New bound. Ja. Stone. Bristol, 1794."

[ARL B7040]

Mary Kennedy, née Stone, evidently had a most adventurous life. Sirius was one of the vessels of the First Fleet which sailed with a large consignment of convicts to Botany Bay in 1787. On the 24 and 25 June, Mary was bound for Rio from the Cape Verde Islands, and possibly aboard the Prince of Wales, one of the female transports. No wonder she was uneasy, for arrival in the Tropics caused an escape of lice, rats, bedbugs, fleas and cockroaches from the woodwork of the vessels. Crew and convicts alike suffered from the unwelcome attention of these vermin.

A Serjeant Kennedy appears several times in the records, a disreputable and not very pleasant character:

Port Jackson, July 1787: "Then some days later Sgt Kennedy of the Prince of Wales got thoroughly drunk and after abusing several people and making a general nuisance of himself jumped down a hatchway, falling heavily on Sergeant Scott's wife, who was seven month's pregnant. She got a severe fright and it hurted her greatly."

Kennedy was arrested to await court martial, and languished in irons until the end of the month when he was found guilty and reduced to private. By April, he had turned over a new leaf, and was promoted again to Sergeant. In January 1789 he was once more demoted for bad behaviour.

In 1790, with the colony at Sydney Cove on the point of starvation, the Sirius with 281 people aboard, including John and Mary Kennedy, and escorted by the Supply, was despatched to Norfolk Island where Governor Phillip believed they would have a greater chance of survival. Sirius was then to sail on to Canton for provisions. Supply returned with the dire news that Sirius had been wrecked on Norfolk. All aboard were saved, but the two settlements were cut off from each other. They were eventually relieved by the arrival of the Second Fleet, but rations were still very short.

In July 1791, John Kennedy made a deal with a convict baker, and exchanged a pair of his trousers for four pounds of rice. The baker was fined, but John was exonerated this time. John & Mary Kennedy cannot be found among the marine families who elected to stay in Australia, and, as is apparently confirmed by the hymn book being preserved in Bristol, they returned safely home. It is almost certain that whilst on Norfolk they encountered other Bristol people, convicts this time: a certain Shuke Milledge of St George, who later married John Wisehammer, and who was an old friend of my kinsman, James Pillinger. Their story will be told in the long promised story of the Pillinger family! [see BAFHGS Journal 51]

Meanwhile, back in 1743: ,

18 April

William Parsons, coalminer, of St Philip & Jacob and John Blackway of Bristol, gave evidence against John Day and Ann Smith for felony.

[BRO 04435/4]

27 April

Mary, wife of Thomas Barnes and daughter of Abraham Whittuck, who died aged 38, was buried at Bitton. [Thomas's second wife died aged 61 in 1777.]

[Bigland]

29 May

At Kingswood, John Cennick wrote: "I began a free school for the colliers' children and settled Mr Little as master, paid for out of weekly collections. For sometime it went well but Mr Little took to drinking and obliged us to break up the school." [JC]

Also in this year, The Moravian, or Church of the United Brethren, erected a chapel at East Tytherington, near Chippenham in Wiltshire, after previously using the farm building near Foxham [which had belonged to Mr



Lee, the farmer, bankrupted after the 1741 affray] for their meetings. Cennick became pastor of this church, and a number of Kingswood area people brought their children there to be christened, including James Stone and his wife Anna [Hannah] Cennick.

15 Apr 1750 Rosina Stone daughter of James & Hannah of Bristol  
20 Sep 1751 James Thistlewait son of James & Joanna of Ss Philip & Jacob  
31 Mar 1752 Stephen Tippett son of Samuel & Mary of Bitton  
31 Mar 1752 Theophilus Cambridge son of Edward & Hannah of Stapleton  
20 Sep 1752 Thomas Stone son of James & Hannah of Ss Philip & Jacob  
19 Sep 1752 John Okely son of Francis & Elizabeth of Bitton  
8 Oct 1752 Stephen Stone son of Francis & Hannah, Bitton  
29 Jul 1753 Thomas Stone son of James & Hannah, Ss Philip & Jacob  
28 Dec 1753 Anna Maria Cambridge daughter of Edward & Hannah, Stapleton  
21 Aug 1757 Nathanael Palmer son of Arthur & Hannah, Bitton.

Mary Stone's birth which took place after Cennick's death is not apparently recorded. The infant "Thomas Stone of Baptist Mills, Bristol, aged 2 months" was buried 13 October 1753.

28 June

Anne, the wife of Newton Woodward of Bitton, Gent died aged 50. Her name was added to the Woodward monument at Bitton church. [Bigland]

-o-o-o-

During 1743, a coalminer called Joseph Butler drowned in a pit at Mangotsfield. Sixteen years later his bones were found, and buried at Mangotsfield on 21 November 1759. [PR]

1744

Thomas Birch fell to his death into a coalpit and was buried at Mangotsfield. [PR]

10 January

Removal Order, George Jones, feltmaker and children, from Bitton to Mangotsfield. [BRO P/B/OP/6b/6]

22 February

Sarah Shill, widow of Henry with her child, in Bitton, settlement certificate, Siston. [BRO P/B/OP/6a/16]

8 April

George Whitefield returned to Kingswood and gave Cennick's society a "Love-Feast" and baptised a child. [JC]

25 June

Charles Bragge of Mangotsfield, the heir of the Player lands took out a licence to marry Elizabeth Wayne, spinster of St Philip and St Jacob. The marriage was to be at the bride's parish or at St James or Stapleton. Walter Pritchard, clerk was bondsman. [BRO, Mar Lic bonds]

29 July

Henry Creswicke of Hanham Court was buried at Bitton.

[PRB]

1745

In this year, Hannah More was born at the modest school house at Fishponds Green [see 1729], her father being Schoolmaster. "She followed the same profession conducting with her sisters a Ladies School at Bristol in which the mother of Lord Macauley was a pupil. Her fame was increased by her writings in the interest of virtue and religion and her philanthropic labours."  
[Bigland, Stapleton]

On the other side of the Avon, a map of Brislington dated 1745/6 shows "Crew's Hold" [sic], which led Mr G.W. Braikenridge to state fancifully that the name derived from the crews of Bristol merchant ships who holed up there to escape from the Press Gang! There were certainly sailors hiding in Kingswood Forest, but I believe that the name derives from the Crew family which was numerous in Kingswood.  
[BrizB3]

Also in this year, "Brother Samuel Tippet of Kingswood, in whose house John Cennick had first preached the Gospel went with Bro: Cennick to London and became acquainted with the Brethren" - that is the Moravians, who Cennick joined.

[Bristol Univ. Lib. "The Beginning of the Brethren's Congregation in Kingswood."]

1 February

Lease between 1. Francis Colston and 2. Hugh Chancellor of Bristol, hooper to 3. Thomas Punter of coalmining rights to Rodway Hill, Mangotsfield and Bitton.  
[BRO AC/JS 52(6) A-B]

[Mr Chancellor, living at Rodway Hill House, is recalled in 1788 - see Annals of Kingswood 1776-95.]

5 March

Bargain and Sale between the following parties about "property called New Room, Horsefair:

1. John Wesley, fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford
  2. John Hodges, clerk, of Wenwo, Co Glamorgan
- John Dyer, gent  
Henry Durbin, chemist  
David Jenkins, corkcutter  
Thomas Willis, of Barton Hundred, gent  
James Wheatley, of Painswick, gent  
Thomas Whittington, collier.

[BRO 34545 (15)]

[It is said that if the Kingswood colliers had been a little more speedy in collecting donations, then the centre of Methodism would have been in Kingswood and not at the New Room in Bristol!]

Thomas Whittington, later a haderdasher of small wares of St Nicholas Bristol left £5 "to Rev. Mr Josiah Tucker MA, rector of All Saints in the City of Bristol to be laid out for books with Mr John Wilson, bookseller in Bristol if he be living at the time of my decease to be discreetly distributed by Mr Tucker among the SOBER colliers of Kingswood near Bristol,

the whole of the five Pounds to be laid out in the Book entitled The Pious Country Parishioner." [PROB 11/720, f288 pg395]

29 March

Abraham Whittuck, Gent., died March 9, 1744/5 aged 79, buried at Bitton. His wife Sarah died October 17, 1747, aged 83. [Bigland]

9 April

Robert Davis, aged 67 drowned in a gravel pit, and was buried at Westerleigh. [PRW]

25 April

Thomas son of John & Ann King, died of small pox, buried Pucklechurch. [PRPuck]

6 July

An Estate called Kingston in the hamlet of Woland [Oldland] in the County of Gloucester offered for sale. [FFBJ]

24 August

"Monday last, one Keene, a sprightly boy, son to a farrier near Lawrence Hill, was crush't to Death by a cart going over his Body as it was driving thro' the crowd that were assembled to hear the Ignorance and Stupidity of the Mountebank without Lawford's Gate, to fill whose Pockets the unwary Populace assemble in great numbers." [FFBJ]

5 September

Sarah, wife of Joseph Parker, died aged 25, and was buried at Bitton. [Bigland]

21 September

"Stolen or Strayed on Wednesday the 10th instant from Edward Bawn of Frampton Cotterell in Gloucestershire, a cole-black mare, near 16 hands high. Anyone who gives information to the said Edward Bawn shall be handsomely rewarded." [FFBJ]

19 October

A farm at Downend was advertised: apply to Anthony Brown, yeoman of Serridge. [FFBJ]

4 November

John Wilcox, died of small pox, buried Pucklechurch. [PRPuck]

1746

The trials of Local Government:

"In this year, William Cann, the Town Clerk of Bristol, his assistant clerk and an under-clerk, all went mad in the same week. One cut his throat, and the other two were taken to Fishponds Lunatic Asylum." [Brainel]

3 May

"A reward of 2 guineas is hereby offered to any person who shall arrest anyone for stealing timber from Mr Wesley's School Room at Kingswood in the parish of Bitton, to be paid by John Heatley at the said school." [FFBJ, Advert]

5 May

Warrants for the apprehension of reputed fathers, Bitton: Joseph Bain, coalminer & Eleanor Prigg. [BRO P/B/OP/8/2]

17 May

Merchant Colewell's house at Fishponds offered for sale. Advertisement.

[FFBJ]

14 August

At Oldland Chapel: "Here lyeth the body of James Shatford of Hanham, who departed this life Aug. 14, 1746 aged 59 years; also here lyeth Susanna, wife of the above, who departed this life Jan. 24, 1762, aged 70 years; also the body of Ann Christopher, sister in law to the above James Shatford, who departed this Life July 20, 1745 aged 42 years." [Bigland]

[Mr Shatford was Mr Thomas Trye's clerk.]

30 August

"Eloped, Mary wife of Edward Stone, 20 August, of St Philip & St Jacob, horsedriver, he being apprehensive she may run him into debt hereby cautions all persons not to trust her for that he will not pay any debts she shall contract from the date hereof." [FFBJ]

23 October

John Cennick's Diary:

"William Clear broke open the door of the school accompanied by several others, but it was done by the instructions of Thomas Burchill, bailiff of the coalworks under Mr Bragge. Mr Jenkins, the dissenting minister at Maidstone [once a Methodist] and Mr Humphreys, ditto at Bradford, prompted them on. John Pool repented of it afterwards, and joined the brethren. Clear also was sorry, but went back again to Burchill." [JC]

[Evidently certain parties did not want Cennick's school to continue, perhaps because it would keep boys away from their work at the pits and give them ideas "above their station", but it is impossible to say why two dissenting ministers were in cahoots with a pillar of local society, Charles Bragge, coal owner, gentleman and magistrate. Even more mysterious is the involvement of Thomas Burchill and William Clear, who had been amongst those Cennick appointed as Stewards of his Society in 1741. Had they been forced to choose between God and Mammon to keep their jobs?]

22 December

"Mr Richard Farrar was found in the pond belonging to Brice's Mill, Stapleton with no marks of violence and his gold watch, pocket book, some papers and ha'pence in his pocket, and his silver buckles and shirt buttons in their proper places." The coroner's verdict was accidental death.[BathJ]

1747

In this year, Victory Purdy was born. He was variously described "The Kingswood Collier" or the "Walking Bible". He was christened at the parish church of St Philip and St Jacobs and married Mary Milsom on 13 January 1774. He commenced his evangelical work for John Wesley in 1781, and it is said that between then and his death he preached 2,882 sermons and walked 22,896 miles, mainly on foot, [though it is difficult to know how these



This Book is Now Missing  
Baptist Pub Library

\* Note, This Hymn was  
sung when I was taken in  
Member into the Society  
of the Methodists, at  
Mr. Whitfield's Room  
commonly called the Little  
School, Near the Crusey  
side Kingswood, A.D. 1743

The Author  
Mr. John Lennick.

H Y M N XVII.

- At the taking in MEMBERS.
- 1 SING, Sheep of Jesus, for our Lord  
He loves t' accomplish all his Word,  
And seal it with his Blood.
  - 2 He said (and now we prove him true)  
Ye shall not be alone:  
The Spirit shall descend on you,  
And lo! the Thing is done.
  - 3 The Spirit brooding, spreads his Wings  
On dry and lifeless Bones:  
'Tis He the glorious Record brings,  
And seals us Abrah'm's Sons.
  - 4 More of our SAVIOUR's dear Elect  
To-day he joins to us:  
And calls to every Land and Sect,  
Who, who will bear my Cross?
  - 5 Lo these are they---come in dear Seed  
Of our Redeemer, GOD:  
Come in, for whom the LAMB did bleed,  
To wash you in his Blood.
  - 6 Hail! Happy Children! Welcome ye  
To travel with the Flock!  
Hail! Father of our Family!  
Hail! Israel's antient Rock!

~~to 24 & 25~~  
1787  
The 24 and 25 of June  
I dreamed that Mr.  
Mary Kennedy  
The Author Mr. Lennick  
was your Mother's Brother  
He died about 10 years  
before you was born  
don't part with the book  
while you live in Stone

Mary Kennedy 2 or  
Mary Stone was born on  
the 27th day of October, in the  
year of our Lord-1764.  
St. Phillips Parish,  
Bristol.  
at Baptist Mills

John Lennick, Mother  
to Mr. John Lennick.  
the book 5142

prodigious hikes could be measured so precisely!] He began life as a collier and afterwards a labourer, but became steward to the Duke of Beaufort. [For more of the Life of VP, see "Annals 1776-1795"]

The male inhabitants of Oldland Bitton side.  
Humphrey and William Lear to serve the Court Leet as tythingmen.

John Stump	William Britain	John Tippet
Henry Iles	Samuel Tippet	James Peacock
Dennys Rogers	Henry Rogers	Arthur Williams
William Lear	Jonathon Pierce	John Williams
Abraham Brain	Isaac Cool	James Fisher
Thomas Harris	James Stibbs	William Meacham
Humphrey Lear	Richard Britton	Isaac Brittan
Ralph Peacock	John Batman	Joseph Morgan
Edward Stone	William Lines	Thomas Britain
Samuel Edwards	Henry Britain	Samuel Harris
Thomas Harding	John Pearce	Able Scull
Isaac Brain	Nathaniel Crew	Thomas Beasley
Joseph Jefferis	Joseph Brain	Isaac Bailey
Samuel Potter	Charles Tippet	Francis Stone
Isaac Tippet.		

[ARL Ellacombe Mss.]

16 February

Samuel Cox died Feb. 16 1746, [1746/7] aged 31, buried at Bitton. [Bigland]

28 February

Samuel Batman, labourer of Langridge, Somerset, his wife Mary and children, removal from Bitton to Langridge. [BRO P/B/OP/6b/7]

30 March

Henry Watts, for stealing goods from the house of John Pinker of Bitton, was sentenced to transportation for seven years. [BathJ]

20 July

A hailstone, reported 5½ inches in diameter was caught in a basin during a violent storm at Hanham. [Bath J]

2 August

From John Cennick's Diary: "Bro. Ed. Stone went to our Saviour in Kingswood. He was born about 1718 and was awakened when that great stir came in 1739. In 1741 he came to live with me and took all cares off my hands and for three years was a faithful and trusty friend and companion. In the year 1744 he promised himself unknown to me to Sister May Hayward of Brinkworth and so entangled me in many troubles....[untill] I thought it best to let him go from me, and accordingly after shedding many tears over each other we parted lovingly at Ford and shortly after he married, namely 10th October 1745, and settled in Kingswood in his former employment of being a collier. He soon felt he had not acted uprightly and wrote some tender letters to me begging pardon for his behaviour, &c. When I came to Kingswood I spoke heartily with him, and all was made up. The same evening he went home, rejoiced in his mind and in the night he sickened and wasted away till he went home. In all his illness he was so cheerful and in love

with our Saviour that all the brethren in Kingswood who visited him or attended on him could not but feel something extraordinary in his company. He often repeated that pretty verse:

Thou know'st O God that I  
Were I just now to die  
No other Saviour have  
No other wish or crave  
But Jesus, sinner's friend  
A Saviour without end.

Some brethren from Kingswood accompany'd his corpse [which was brought on a hearse] to Tytherington where it was repositied near that same spot where he had often sat down with pleasure to rest after his day's work. He was about 28 years old." [JC]

[The burial register of the chapel at Tytherington where Cennick had his other ministry shows that Edward died of consumption.]

12 September

Lease for the three lives of Francis Punter, Hannah, his wife and Samuel Punter, between

1. Norborne Berkeley of Stoke Gifford, esquire
2. Charles Arthur, the younger of Stapleton, coalminer, re message, garden, etc, in occupation of Zachariah Porter, tenant to William Pierce. coalminer, profits to Hannah Punter, nee Arthur, for her use for life, then to Samuel Punter, her son. [BRO 29996/Fishponds Lunatic Asylum papers]

[Norborne Berkeley, Member of Parliament, was one of the Lords of Kingswood, 1717-70, and lived at Stoke Park Lodge.]

5 December

James Weston, his wife Sarah, and child, at Bitton with settlement certificate Kelweston, [Kelston] Somerset. [BRO P/B/OP/6a/17]

29 December

Robert Wathen, his wife Elizabeth, and child, at Bitton, settlement certificate Harescombe, Gloucestershire. [BRO P/B/OP/6a/18]

1748

In this year, John Wesley opened a school in Kingswood for the children of his itinerant preachers. Wesley, who believed that "he that plays as a child will play when he is a man", had no time for slackers. He drew up a regime designed to keep the scholars from "idleness and effeminacy:

4 am. [winter and summer] Boys rise. Private meditation, self examination, singing, reading and prayer.

5 am. Boys meet together, supervised by masters. They were never to be alone.

6 am. Work until breakfast: on fair days in the garden, according to



strength, on wet days in the house. Breakfast: Milk porridge or water gruel.

7 am. School begins. Languages.

9 am. Writing, etc.

11 am. Walking or Physical Labour

noon. Dinner: Sunday: Cold Roast Beef. Monday - Wednesday: hash and apple dumplings. Thursday: Boiled Beef or Mutton. Friday: vegetables and dumplings. Saturday: Bacon and greens with apple dumplings.

Water to drink. On Fridays fasting was encouraged until three in the afternoon, "far from impairing health...it greatly conduces to it." During Lent, meat was forbidden, with vegetables and dumplings every day. Eating between meals was strictly forbidden.

1 pm. Languages

4 pm. Writing

5 pm. Hour of private prayer

6 pm. Walking or Physical Labour. Supper: Bread and Butter or Cheese and Milk.

7 pm. Public Worship

8 pm. Bed, youngest first.

Thus every day moved in its petty pace, except Sunday, which was taken up with worship. There were no holidays.

It has to be noted that this was Wesley's ideal: the implementation of the rules lay with individual masters and the great man would later write "Surely Satan has a peculiar spite at this school" when he discovered the deadly sin of sloth, both boys and masters lolling in bed after 5 am in the morning, and sin - individuals playing and fighting with the colliers' sons in the woods. It should also be noted that the above account is taken from "Bristol Past and Present" the writers of which I have taken to task in Appendix 1 for over active imaginations.

[BPP; more about the school will be found in "Annals 1776-95"]

-o-0-o-

A reference to the year 1748 is contained  
in a memoir of Stephen Britain, a coalminer, aged about 70, in 1788:

He remembered Captain Woodward living at Rodway Hill House, and keeping cattle and a great number of rabbits. Harry Lacey, a collier stole the rabbits. About 40 years back [ie c1748] Captain Woodward shot Lacey's dog, called Pretty One, and ripped it open on the hill. Out of revenge, a man known as Old Rich, "a desperate fellow among the colliers, unhung" threw down the gates to the hill, and in so doing tore off his finger and thumb.

Afterwards more colliers came and destroyed the rabbits, and then opened the gates, turning out their horses and cattle on the hill. [BRO 13999/6]

[This incident is more fully described in "Annals 1776-95"]

18 April

An accident in Wade Street, outside Lawdford's Gate. "One of the dragoons who came off duty from guard at Knowle where the French and Spanish prisoners are confined neglected to draw his piece which was charged with powder and ball. His piece went off and shot one Nelmes, a rug weaver thro' the upper part of his thigh as he was making water in the street. Nelmes cried "You have shot me", on which the dragoon reply'd "God Forbid!". The unfortunate man was carried to the Infirmary where he languished till next day, and died of his wound." The dragoon was taken in charge but was exonerated by the coroner's verdict of accidental death, though he admitted he was not entirely sober. [BathJ]

30 July

Removal order, Mary Bright, spinster from Bitton to Siston.

[BRO/P/B/OP/6b/8]

2 August

Autumn

Removal Order, Sarah Hook, spinster, from Bitton to St John's, Bristol.

[BRO/P/B/OP/6b/9]

Autumn

John Latimer reports "the first mention of a steam engine in the local press appears in the Autumn of 1748 in an account of an assault committed by a negro on a person described 'the master of the fire-engine and one of the overseers of the cole-works in Kingswood.' The engines of that period were serviceable only for pumping water: horses being employed to draw the coal from the workings." [LA18c]

[I have not been able to locate this newspaper reference. It would be interesting to know the circumstances involved and the names of the protagonists. However, we know it was far from the first "fire-engine" in the area: see note 20.3.1740]

7 September

Benjamin Hall, the younger, blacksmith, settlement certificate, Wick & Abson.

[BRO P/B/OP/6a/19]

15 September

Elizabeth, second wife of Charles Arthur died aged 65, and was buried at Stapleton. [Charles was steward to Norborne Berkeley at his coalworks.]

[Bigland]

3 October

John Mays, wife Betty, and child, settlement certificate, Wick & Abson.

[BRO P/B/OP/6a/20]

14 November

"Examinations" under the poor law at Bitton, of Thomas Patrick of Bromsberrow and his family, and William Jefferis, his wife Jane, and child of Siston.

[BRO/P/B/OP/6b/10,11]

26 December

"A house was broken open at Grimsbury, near Hannum and a blue narrow cloth coat, a blue damask waistcoat trimmed with silver and a purple pair of plush breeches were carried off. The rogues took pains for these trifles to enter the house by making a breach of the wall with pick-axes, and it seems a little surprising that they carried off no other things." [BathJ]

In this year, Thomas Lovell, the son of Martha, was killed in a coalpit, and buried at Mangotsfield. [PRM]

1749

9 January

Committed to Lawford's Gate Bridewell, Thomas Bayley and Thomas Smith, two colliers, on the evidence of another collier, John Pearce, for "divers burglaries and felonies by them separately and co-jointly in Hanham and Kingswood, particularly in breaking open the houses of Mrs Brayne, Mrs Shatford and Mrs Harris, situated at Hanham" [which appears to have been the Christmas robbery, two weeks before] "and also in robbing divers pits in Kingswood belonging to Norborne Berkeley, esquire, of 150 fathoms of pit rope. Pearce has since impeached another of the gang, and is himself committed as evidence for the King. We hear there are upwards of thirty other colliers concerned in other burglaries and felonies about the same quarter, some of whom may have absconded from their dwellings." [BathJ]

[Bayley and Smith were found guilty at the following Gloucester Assizes, and both were sentenced to seven years transportation beyond the seas, as reported 13 March 1749, in the Bath Journal. Was this Thomas Smith of the 1735 rescue?]

13 February

"We hear from without Lawford's Gate that there was lately buried in St Philip's Churchyard from the Poor House, one Margaret Plin, aged 105, who retained her senses until within two days of her death, and could remember the beheading of Charles I. [ibid]

6 March

William Wilmot, and his wife Sarah, settlement certificate, Oldland.

[BRO P/B/OP/6a/21]

14 March

John Wesley refers to FOUR schools in Kingswood: the boys' boarding school at New House, and the girls' at the Old House; two day schools, where the boys were taught by James Harding and the girls by Sarah Dimmock. Wesley does not mention his colliers' school after this date, and similarly I have found nothing regarding Cennick's. Perhaps both enterprises, which were so enthusiastically commenced, dwindled away, and were abandoned. They were certainly no more by 1811 when the colliers with the help of Henry and Samuel Budgett joined together in the making of the new Cock Road School.

[see The Budgetts of Kingswood Hill]

19 March

Settlement Examination of "Sarah Morris, now residing in Bitton, widow or wife of James Morris, late of St Philip and St Jacob's in Bristol. This informant saith that about fourteen days before Christmas last, near ten years since, [she] was married to her late husband, James Morris, of Wick

and Abson, horsedriver at a Publick House going down the Hill into Bath [but cannot remember the sign] by a person unknown to her, but who she believes was the person that kept the Publick House, that said person reading over that part of the ceremony used in the Church of England which relates to the man's taking the woman to wife and the woman's taking the man to her husband, and this informant and her said husband made the usual answers thereto and also the ceremony with the ring was performed betwixt her and her said husband immediately after she returned to her place of residence and her husband went elsewhere, but about fourteen days after, they co-habited as man and wife, and lay together as such several nights, and after the marriage, her husband was examined as to his legal settlement and adjudged to be of St Philip and St Jacob, since which he has not by any means gained any other to this informant's knowledge and belief, she not knowing whether her husband be living or dead, having neither seen nor heard from him for 12 months since." [BRO P/B/OP/6g/33]

10 April

Samuel Harver, his wife Parnell, and child, settlement certificate, Oldland. [BRO P/B/OP/6a/22]

15 April

Old John Charde, the postman, who "for forty years had ridden with the post from Bristol to Gloucester" was tragically drowned in a swollen brook which had engulfed the road at Cromhall. [BathJ]

20 May

Sports on Durdham Down: "A race for 3 guineas was run for by two men, naked, and a Holland Smock and 1 guinea by five women, which was won by a Kingswood girl." [LA18c,p279]

31 May

Samuel Brooks, his wife Mary, and child, at Bitton with a settlement certificate from Tytherington. [BRO P/B/OP/6a/23]

26 June

The settlement laws could be very harsh indeed, for now there was a Removal Order issued against John Collins, bastard son of Mary Collins, married to Samuel Brooks of Bitton, [above] to Preston, Somerset. [BRO P/B/OP/6b/12]

19 July

The Turnpike Act which had caused so much trouble two decades before was on the verge of expiry. Norborne Berkeley and Thomas Chester, the Tory Members of Parliament for Gloucester, and also great coal owners were appointed to a committee to bring in a new Parliamentary Bill. The finished product, perhaps quite deliberately in their own interest, only marginally affected Kingswood, with the brunt of the tolls to be borne by the country farmers of Somerset who would pay dear to bring their produce into Bristol. Two weeks later, a rag-taggle army of some 500 people, armed with rusty swords, pitchforks, cudgels and axes, and calling themselves the Jack-a-Lents tore down the Ashton turnpike. John Brickdale, an armed citizen, repulsed the attack at the head of an overly keen gang of seamen who ran amok with cutlasses. A great many prisoners were taken. [BathJ]

## Appendix 1

Meanwhile, to coin a phrase, in another part of the forest, and into the realm of fancy, the authors of Bristol Past & Present writing in 1881 supposedly recall the sensational events of a previous age, and therefore state:

"circa AD 1734. Before John Wesley and George Whitefield, [the evangelists] there was scarcely an assize at Gloucester but a Kingswood man was left for execution for horse and sheep stealing or still graver felonies. The relatives were generally allowed to carry away the body of the convict which in taking home they usually exposed nearly naked by the roadside with a plate on the breast for the contribution of the passers by, ostensibly in order to bury their dead. Such was the brutalised state of the people that they often levied this hideous blackmail [for such it was] few daring to refuse to contribute long after the necessary sum had been raised when they spent the overplus in a drunken orgie."

I would be interested in a sight of Nicholls & Taylor's original research! I know of only one instance where the body of a hanged felon was according to a contemporary report, put on display for cash, and that was Benjamin Caines in 1817 - in his father's front room, prior to a spectacular funeral. It must be said that this was supposed to be "according to custom" but was many years AFTER Kingswood had supposedly been "saved" by Wesley and Whitefield! An invitation to view the corpse was a "treat" I myself recall, well into the present era, after washing and other ministrations had been carried out by certain women who were always called upon to perform these offices.

## Appendix 2

## Mary Dafter

Mary worked as steward - or estate manager - for the Newton Family of Barr's Court between the years 1713 and 1730, seemingly after the death of her husband who had apparently been employed in a similar position. During these years she wrote a great many letters about estate business to her employers who lived mostly in London. The majority of the letters were written between 1720 and 1727: only one has survived for 1713 and none at all for 1714-18 and 1728. I have included some of the information given where appropriate in this volume.

As a family historian, I am fascinated that sometimes Mary writes about her own family affairs, particularly concerning her son, who marries against her wishes and then dies suddenly leaving behind a litigious widow and tremendous complications. This sorry saga, though ending in the period covered by this book, has its roots in a previous era, and I have chosen not to include it in the present volume: the whole story should be of a piece and I hope interested readers will manage to curb their impatience until the Annals of Kingswood 1700-1724. I was delighted to find this unusual career woman in the early years of the 18th century.



Appendix 3

Alphabetical list of electors from the Kingswood area who voted as "Country Voices" in Bristol in the Parliamentary elections of 1734 & 1739.

1734

Allen, Thomas, yeoman, Mangotsfield  
 Carter, Andrew, upholder, Stapleton  
 Clare, Richard, clothworker, Bitton  
 Cox, John, baker, Downing [sic]  
 Dimery, William, cordwainer, Hannam  
 Frankcombe, George, mason, Stapleton  
 Gregory, Thomas, merchant, Pucklechurch  
 Hardwick, Philip, carpenter, Westerleigh  
 Morgan, Joseph, mealman, Bitton  
 Pontin, Henry, vintner, Mangotsfield  
 Seed, John, baker, Bitton  
 Shipley\*, Francis, cordwainer, Mangotsfield  
 Skrine, George, baker, Mangotsfield  
 Street, Thomas, mason, Hannam [sic]  
 Truebody, Thomas, butcher, Hannam  
 Williams, Nathaniel, hooper, Bitton

[\* incorrectly printed as "Stripley"]

1739

Allen, Thomas, yeoman, Mangotsfield  
 Baily, Thomas, merchant, Mangotsfield  
 Bolsom, John, silk weaver, Hannam  
 Carter, Andrew, upholsterer, Stapleton  
 Cox, John, baker, Mangotsfield  
 Davies, Henry, haberdasher, Frampton Cotterell  
 Dimery, William, cordwainer, Bitton  
 Guest, Edgar, grocer, Mangotsfield  
 Lewis, Benjamin, house carpenter, Scison,  
 Morgan, Joseph, mealman, Bitton  
 Marshal, John, barber-surgeon, Mangotsfield  
 Parker, Thomas, currier, Frampton Cotterell  
 Ponting, Henry, vintner, Mangotsfield  
 Reed, Chifferton, butcher, Scison  
 Seed, John, baker, Scison  
 Shewring, Joseph, upholsterer, Westerleigh  
 Shipley, Francis, cordwainer, Mangotsfield  
 Skrine, George, baker, Mangotsfield,  
 Stone, Edward, butcher, Bitton  
 Truebody, Thomas, butcher, Hannam  
 Williams, Daniel, hooper, Bitton.



It is interesting to note that a barber-surgeon was in the area in 1739. Like his 19th century successor, Dr Henry Grace, father of the famous W.G. he would have been much in demand amputating limbs lost in coalmining accidents. None of the Kingswood coalminers had the vote.

# INDEX

- Allen, Ann, 57  
 Alsup, Ann, 34  
     Stephen, 34  
 Archer, Mrs, 34  
 Arthur, Charles, 52, 70, 72, 76  
     Eliz, 72  
     Hannah, 70  
     Sarah, 52  
 Atkins, Ann, 9  
     Wm, 9, 33  
 Axon, Wm, 17  
 Baggs, Richd, 30  
 Bailey, Isaac, 69  
     Sheriff, 41  
 Bain, Joseph, 68  
 Balsome, George, 26  
 Barker, Mrs, 9, 10  
     Nich, 26  
 Barnes, Mary, 64  
     Thos, 64  
 Barrett, Robt, 10, 11, 14  
 Barry, Rev Richd, 33, 37  
 Bartlett, Mary, 7  
 Batman/Bateman  
     Abraham, 33  
     George, 32, 61  
     John, 69  
     Mary, 17, 69  
     Sarah, 32  
     Wm, 15, 17, 34  
 Batson, Jn, 35, 37  
 Batt, Eliz, 13, 25, 33  
 Bawn, Edward, 67  
 Bayley, Thos, 73  
 Beard, Henry, 14, 58  
     Ruth, 58  
 Beasley, Thos, 69  
 Belsire/Bolsiah  
     Henry, 32  
 Bennett, Susan, 32  
 Berkeley, Jn, 18  
     Norborne, 52, 59, 70  
                     74  
     Thos, 18  
     Wm, 18, 52  
 Berrow, Henry, 7  
 Beswick, Sam, 57  
     Thos, 57, 60, 62  
 Bidgood, Geo, 25, 27  
 Birch, Thos, 65  
 Blackway, Jn, 64  
 Blaithwaite, Wm, 18, 23, 24, 28  
 Bolt, Wm, 57  
 Bond, Edmond, 51  
     Richd, 75  
 Boscock, Dr, 23  
 Bowman, Dan, 23, 24  
 Box, Thos, 17  
 Bragge, Chas, 52, 65, 68  
 Brain, Abraham, 69  
     Isaac, 69  
     Henry, 33  
     Joseph, 69  
     Mrs, 73  
 Brewer, Wm, 54  
 Brickdale, Jn, 74  
 Bright, Mary, 72  
     Sarah, 61  
 Britton/Britain  
     Dan, 50  
     Eliz, 43  
     Henry, 69  
     Isaac, 69  
     Richd, 69  
     Stephen, 29, 62, 71  
     Thos, 69  
     Wm, 69  
 Brooks, Ann, 57  
     Chas, 57  
     Jn, 10, 14, 22  
     Mary, 74  
     Sam, 33, 74  
 Brown, Anth, 67  
 Browning, --, 14  
     Robt, 10  
 Bryant, Rog, 16, 17, 18  
                     21, 22  
 Bullock, Susan, 16  
 Burchill, Thos, 60, 68  
 Bush, --, 11, 12  
     Aaron, 57  
     Betty, 55, 60  
     Grace, 37  
     Peter, 57  
     Wm, 57  
 Butler, Jas, 15  
     Jos, 65  
 Caines/Caynes/Keynes  
     Abraham, 13, 15, 16,  
                     17, 38  
     Ann, 38  
     Edw, 9  
     Sarah, 9  
     Wm, 15, 16  
 Cambray, Steph, 39  
 Cambridge, Ann M, 6,  
     Edw, 60, 65  
     Hannah, 65  
     Theo, 65  
 Cann, Robt, 36  
     [Sir] Wm, 38, 67  
 Carters, --, 26  
 Catfield, Thos, 48  
 Cennick, Ann, 63  
     Hannah/Anna, 63, 65  
     John, 47-70 *passim*  
 Chancellor, Hugh, 66  
 Champion, Wm, 75  
 Chapman, Mary, 51  
     Steph, 51  
 Chappell, --, 33  
 Charde, Jn, 74  
 Chester, Thos, 18, 34  
     35, 52, 59, 74  
 Clarke, Jn, 29  
 Clear, Wm, 60, 68  
 Cobb, Sir Geo, 41  
 Codrington, Ld, 28  
     Wm, 34  
 Cogswell, Geo, 31  
 Collins, Jn, 74  
     Mary, 74  
 Cook, Fran, 22, 59  
     Thos, 59  
 Coole, Isaac, 42, 43  
                     69  
 Cooling, Hy, 52, 53  
 Coster, Thos, 33  
 Cottles, --, 22  
 Cox, Ezekiel, 15  
     Eliz, 39  
     Jacob, 39  
     Joseph, 39  
     Sam, 69  
     Wm, 51  
 Creswicke, fam, 7  
     Henry, 15, 23, 25  
     27, 30, 33, 36, 38  
     52, 58, 62, 66  
     Fran, 30, 34  
     Helen, 30  
     Mary, 30, 51  
     Squire, 8  
 Crew, fam, 66  
     Nath, 69  
 Cribb, Isaac, 52  
 Christopher, Ann, 68  
 Clear, Wm, 60, 68

INDEX

- Colewell, ---, 68  
 Colston, Fran, 66  
 Cope, Eliz, 61  
 Dafter, Mary, 7-27, passim  
     53  
     Thos, 7  
 Davis, Ann, 57  
     Eleanor, 8  
     Harrington, 38  
     Matth, 39  
     Rich, 7, 8  
     Robt, 67  
     Sarah, 8  
 Day, Jn, 64  
 Dennys, Wm, 18  
 Deschamps, Mr, 50  
 Dimmock, Sarah, 73  
 Drake, Jona, 11  
     Mary, 11  
 Drew, Eliz, 16  
     Wm, 16  
 Dunn, Ann, 8, 10, 14  
     fam, 7, 9, 11  
 Durbin, Hy, 66  
 Dyer, Eliz, 32  
     Isaac, 14, 23  
     Jn, 66  
 Edwards, Sam, 69  
     Squire, 7, 9, 14, 21  
     Thos, 15  
     Wm, 33  
 Ellacombe, Rev Hy, 60, 61  
 Ellery, Wm, 39  
 Elton, Sir Ab, 7, 9, 10, 41  
 Evans, --, 10  
 Eyles see Iles  
 Farnell, Ann, 27  
     Robt, 27  
 Farrar, Rich, 68  
 Fawkes, Ben, 32  
 Feacham, Steph, 25, 29  
 Fisher, Jas, 69  
     Jn, 23  
     Mary, 23  
     Mr, 10  
     Walt, 23  
 Flook, Isaac, 32  
     Sam, 32  
 Flower, Ann, 27  
     Eliz, 10, 27  
     Jane, 17, Joanna, 27  
 Lam, 27, 33, Susan, 27  
     Thos, 17, Val, 53  
 Ford, Jerome, 42  
 Fowler, Chris, 35  
 Fox, Joane, 31  
     Pointz, 31  
 Francis, Mary, 75  
 Freeks, Jn, 39  
     Wm, 39  
 Fudge, Sam, 29  
 Gane, Aaron, 13, 15  
     Owen, 13  
 Gay, Chas, 58  
 Gibbs, Jn, 39  
 Gifford, Edw, 12, 22  
 Good, Mr, 8, 9, 10, 11  
     12, 22, 23, 25, 26  
 Gore, Lady, 21  
     Martha, 28  
     Thos, 28  
     Wm, 28  
 Gough, Ann, 43  
     Eliz, 24  
 Gowen, Rich, 38  
 Greenaway, Jos, 26  
     Sarah, 26  
     Susan, 26  
 Grey, Parson, 58  
 Gunning, Thos, 33  
 Hale, Jn, 52, 53  
 Hall, Ben, 72  
     Edw, 18  
 Hamilton, Thos, 50  
 Hankins, Thos, 50  
 Harboro', --, 37, 75  
 Harding, Jas, 73  
     Mary, 61  
     Thos, 69  
     Lady, 15  
     --, 10, 14  
 Harris, Hester, 43  
     Jas, 27  
     Jn, 56, 60  
     Jona, 18  
     Jos, 43  
     Martha, 18  
     Mrs, 73  
     Sam, 31, 69  
     Thos, 69  
     ---, 42  
 Hart, Ann, 63  
     Capt, 8, 9  
     Hy, 63  
     Kath, 63  
 Rich, 15, 18, 33, 36, 38  
     Sir Rich, 9  
 Harver, Parnell, 73  
     Sam, 73  
 Haskins, Isaac, 57, 59  
 Haynes/Haines  
     Ann, 12  
     Chris, 12  
     Geo, 27  
     Mary, 27  
     Rich, 12, 18  
     Thos, 12, 18, 27  
     31, 36, 39, 62  
     Wm, 48  
 Hayward, May, 69  
 Head, Deb, 75  
     Jn, 75  
 Heatley, Jn, 67  
 Hemmings, Jane, 36  
     Thos, 35, 36  
     Wm, 36  
 Higgs, Mary, 39  
 Hodges, Jn, 66  
 Holbin, Jn, 61  
     Martha, 13  
 Holland, Rogers,  
     18, 29, 30, 31  
 Holliday, Thos, 58  
 Hollis, Mr, 58  
 Hook, Sarah, 72  
 Hopkins, Mrs, 10  
 Hornblower, Jos, 75  
 Hort, Helen, 27  
 Hudson, Sarah, 16  
     Wm, 16  
 Humphriels Ann, 16  
     Mr, 68  
     Wm, 14, 16  
 Iles, Abel, 62  
     Grace, 43  
     Hy, 42, 69  
     Jos, 62  
     Thos, 31  
 Jacob, Eliz, 60  
     Sam, 60  
 Jarrett, Eliz, 56  
 Jefferies, Hannah, 57  
     Jos, 35, 69  
     Wm, 50, 72  
 Jenkins, David, 66  
     Mr, 68





INDEX

- Jones, Cath, 37  
 Betty, 50  
 Edmd, 14  
 Edw, 10  
 Eliz, 15, 16, 17  
 Gab, 21, 34  
 Geo, 65  
 Grace, 37  
 Mary, 43, 57  
 Mr, 59  
 Sam, 14, 23  
 Sarah, 31, 50  
 Wm, 21
- Keene, Sylv, 58, 67  
 Kennedy, Jn, 63, 64  
 Mary, 63, 64
- King, Ann, 30, 67  
 Jn, 67  
 Thos, 62, 67  
 Wm, 26
- Lacey, Hy, 71  
 Lamb, Mr, 10, 26  
 Lane, Dr, 8  
 Langman, Sheriff, 41  
 Lawrence, Steph, 32  
 Lee, Farmer, 57, 58, 65  
 Lear, Humph, 69  
 Wm, 69
- Legg, Hy, 52  
 Leonard, ---, 33  
 Lewis, Ben, 37  
 Lewton/Luton, Amb, 57  
 Hannah, 56  
 Jn, 56  
 Susan, 14  
 Tobias, 16, 21  
 Wm, 27
- Lines, Wm, 69  
 Little, Mary, 39  
 Mr, 64
- Livings, ---, 38  
 Llewellyn, Wm, 18  
 Long, Jos, 7, 8  
 Lewis, 32  
 Mary, 7, 8  
 Thos, 7, 8
- Lovell, Martha, 73  
 Thos, 73  
 ---, 33
- Luffingham, Jona, 7  
 Lydiard, Wm, 33  
 Maggs, Thos, 62  
 Manson, Sir Wm, 12  
 Marsh, Thos, 30
- Martin, Geo, 75  
 Mrs, 75
- Maxfield, Thos,  
 44, 50, 55, 56
- Mays, Betty, 72  
 Jn, 72
- Meacham, Wm, 69  
 Milledge, Shuke, 64  
 Miller, Mr, 12  
 Milsom, Mary, 68  
 Minty, Thos, 35  
 Monk, Hy, 42  
 Moor, Mr, 53  
 More, Hannah, 25, 66  
 Morgan, Eleanor, 57  
 Mr, 44  
 Sally, 57  
 Thos, 26
- Morris, Jas, 53  
 Mr, 14
- Naish, Wm, 34  
 Nash, Thos, 35  
 Nelmes, ---, 72
- Newman, Hester, 61  
 Jn, 50, 53  
 Robt, 60
- Newton, Sir Jn, 7, 8, 9  
 11, 12, 13, 42  
 Sir Mich, 9, 18  
 26, 34
- Nicholls, Jos, 10, 14  
 22, 23  
 Moll, 76
- Norman, Mr, 48  
 Nutt, Jn, 9  
 Wm, 9, 23
- Offield, Mr, 7, 8, 11  
 22, 23
- Okeley, Eliz, 65  
 Fran, 65  
 Jn, 65
- Owen, Wm, 16  
 Padmore, Mr, 61  
 Palmer, Arth, 31, 65  
 Hannah, 65  
 Nath, 65  
 Wm, 43
- Parker, Edw, 33, 59  
 Eliz, 59  
 John, 23  
 Mr, 54
- Parsons, Wm, 64  
 Patrick, Thos, 72
- Peacock, Ab, 35, 36  
 Ann, 37  
 Edw, 35, 36  
 Fra, 43  
 Hannah, 36, 57  
 Jas, 37, 69  
 Jn, 36  
 Ralph, 69  
 ---, 33
- Perne, Dr, 48  
 Perriman, Grace, 51  
 Jas, 51
- Perrott, Benj, 33  
 Perry, Thos, 58  
 Wm, 26
- Phipps, Ruth, 27, 58  
 Samps, 35, 36, 37  
 Thos, 30
- Pierce/Pearce  
 Jn, 69, 73  
 Jona, 69  
 Wm, 70
- Pillinger, Jas, 64  
 Pinker, Jn, 69  
 Mr, 13, 25
- Pidding, Jas, 9  
 Player, Arth, 52  
 Squire, 12, 13, 16  
 Tho, 13, 18, 34, 36, 52
- Plin, Margt, 73  
 Polham, Madam, 11  
 Pontin, Tho, 43, 50  
 Pool, Jn, 68  
 Porter, Zach, 70  
 Potter, Sam, 13, 69  
 Tho, 13
- Powell, Jas, 41, 43  
 Price, Larry, 42  
 Prigg, Elean, 68  
 Pritchard, Walt, 65  
 Punter, Fra, 70  
 Han, 70  
 Jac, 13  
 Sam, 70  
 Tho, 13, 15, 66
- Purdy, Mr, 48  
 Vict, 48, 68
- Purnell, Rog, 40, 41  
 Raymond, Mr, 10
- Read/Reed  
 Mr, 56  
 Nich, 13, 25, 58  
 Wid, 10
- Reeves, Jn, 22

## INDEX

- Reynolds, --, 75  
     Moses, 35, 36, 37  
 Rich, Old, 71  
 Richards, Han, 57  
     Mr, 59  
 Riddlef Ruddlel  
     Geo, 33, 42, 43, 62  
 Rider, Johan, 57  
 Roach, Benj, 52  
 Roberts, Ann, 50  
 Robbins, Josias, 13  
     Jona, 13, 33  
     Sar, 50  
     ---, 21  
 Rogers, ---, 10  
     Ann, 38  
     Dennys, 69  
     Hy, 69  
     Jas, 49  
     Jn, 38  
     R, 59  
 Ross, Tho, 23, 33  
 Rouch, Mary, 30  
 Rowsall/Rosewell  
     Mrs, 10, 22  
     Joan, 10, 34  
     Jos, 34  
     Susa, 10  
 Saunders, Tho, 10  
     Wm, 36  
 Saye, Mr, 56  
 Scott, Sgt, 64  
 Scull, Abel, 69  
 Sendall, Jn, 23  
 Seymour, Ber, 33, 37, 60, 61  
     Edw, 61  
     Eliz, 61  
     Jane, 61  
     Jn, 61  
     Margt, 61  
     Marth, 61  
     Thos, 16  
     Wm, 15, 16, 60, 61  
 Shatford, Jas, 68  
     Mr, 13, 43  
     Mrs, 73  
     Susa, 68  
 Sheppard, Geo, 18  
 Sherman, Jn, 54  
     Robt, 53  
     Sar, 54  
 Shill, Hy, 65  
     Sar, 65  
 Silverthorne, Mrs, 41  
 Simmons, Wm, 42, 43  
 Smith, Ann, 64, Arth, 37  
     Betty, 31, 37  
     Doro, 13  
     Fra, 32  
     Joanna, 31, Jn, 9, 33  
     Jos, 31, 35  
     Lucret, 50  
     Mary, 15, 37  
     Tho, 35, 36, 37, 73  
     Wm, 31  
 Smyth, Jn, 16  
 Spencer, Wm, 54  
 Stibbs, Eliz, 13  
     Jas, 69  
     Jn, 13  
 Stock, Jn, 13, 30, 31  
 Stone, Benj, 35  
     Edw, 42, 43, 56, 57  
     68  
     Fra, 60, 65, 69  
     Han, 57, 65  
     Jas, 43, 48, 63, 65  
     Mary, 63, 68  
     Rosina, 65  
     Steph, 65  
     Tho, 65  
 Stout, Abram, 57  
     Isaac, 39  
     Mary, 39  
 Strafford, Peter, 61  
 Strange, Moses, 33  
 Stump, Jn, 69  
 Summerell, Benj, 37, 38, 39  
     Hannah, 38  
     Mary, 37, 38  
     Sar, 38  
     Sam, 39  
     Steph, 18, 37, 38, 39  
 Summers, Abel, 37  
     Betty, 50  
     Hy, 37  
     Jn, 37  
     Kath, 37  
     Mary, 37  
     Tho, 35, 36, 37  
 Sutton, Isaac, 23  
     Sir Robt, 26  
 Swanwick, Jn, 39  
     Wm, 39  
 Talbot, Jn, 56  
 Tarrant, Benj, 8, 14  
 Taylor, Jn, 33  
 Thistlewaite  
     Jas, 65  
     Joanna, 65  
 Tippet, Ann, 57  
     Chas, 42, 69  
     Fra, 13, 33  
     Jane, 57  
     Jn, 57, 69  
     Isaac, 69  
     Mary, 57, 65  
     Steph, 57, 60, 62, 65  
     --, 10  
 Tiszme, Eb, 23  
 Tonkins, Sam, 53  
 Topleaf, Robt, 23  
 Trotman, Tho, 18, 36  
 Trye, Edw, 18  
     Tho, 8, 9, 11, 12  
     13, 14, 15, 18  
     21, 24, 26, 27  
     68  
     Justice, 13  
 Tucker, Fra, 24  
     Jos, 66  
 Turner, Mrs, 55  
 Tyler, --10  
     Edw, 52, 53  
 Tyndall, Ones, 18  
     33, 34  
 Upton, Jn, 22  
     My, 22  
 Vernon, Jn, 38  
 Vesey, Tho, 17  
 Vickery, Isa, 75  
     Jn, 75  
 Warn, --, 10, Edw, 54  
 Walker, Jn, 22  
 Wathen, Sar, 70  
     Sam, 48  
     Rob, 70  
 Watts, Hy, 69  
 Wayne, Eliz, 65  
 Wear, My, 33  
 Webb, My, 25  
 Webley, Kedg, 43, 52  
     53, 56  
 Webster, Edw, 32  
     Eliz, 32  
 Weeks, Ann, 14  
 Wells, Rev, 7, 36  
 Wesley, Chas, 54  
     55, 56  
     John, 44-73,  
     passim

INDEX

- |                           |                        |                      |
|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Weston, Hy, 27, 58        | Willcox, Jn, 67        | Wilmot, Edw, 35      |
| Jas, 70                   | Jos, 10, 14            | Han, 35              |
| Ruth, 27, 58              | Williams, Arth, 69     | Kez, 47              |
| Sarah, 70                 | Han, 16                | Sam, 42, 43, Sar, 73 |
| Wheatley, Jas, 66         | Fra, 60                | Wm, 73               |
| Whitefield, Geo, 38,      | Jn, 69                 | Wilson, Jn, 66       |
| 44-62 <i>passim</i>       | Nath, 33               | Winstone, Tho, 33    |
| Whitehead, Mr, 50         | Sar, 60                | Woode, Ann, 32       |
| Whittington, Thos, 33, 66 | Willis, Hy, 10, 23, 52 | Woodward, Ann, 65    |
| Whittock, Ab, 28, 64, 67  | Jona, 35               | Fra, 18, 27, 59      |
| Jn, 28                    | Jn, 39                 | Jn, Eliz, Doro, 59   |
| Jos, 14, 32, 33           | Mr, 55                 | Mr, 11, 43, Mrs, 33  |
| Sam, 33, 43               | Nath, 35, 36           | Newton, 23, 65       |
| Sarah, 67                 | Thos, 66               | Wornell/Warner       |
| Wilkes, Beloved, 22       | Wm, 22                 | Nich, 25, Mary, 33   |
|                           | Yorberry, Wm, 10       |                      |



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY/SOURCES/ABBREVIATIONS

ARL	County of Avon [now Bristol] Reference Library
BathJ	Bath Journal
Bowen, M	Wrestling Jacob [1937]
Bigland, R	Historical Monumental & Genealogical Collections, relating to Gloucestershire. Ed. B.Frith
BAFHS	Bristol & Avon Family History Society
BMLB	Bristol Marriage Licence Bonds
Braine	A. Braine, History of Kingswood Forest
BrizB3	Brislington Bulletins III, Lindegaard
BRO	Bristol Record Office
BPP	Bristol Past & Present, Nicholls & Taylor
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
Ellacombe	Manuscripts at ARL
FFBJ	Felix Farley's Bristol Journal
GJ	Gloucester Journal
GRO	Gloucester Record Office
GRO Cal	Calendar of the Freemen of the City of Gloucester
GW	George Whitefield
JC	John Cennick
JW	John Wesley
LA18c	John Latimer, Annals of Bristol in the 18th Century
Malcolmson, R.	A Set of Ungovernable People
MD	Mary Dafter
OurPM	Our Parish, Mangotsfield
PR	Parish Register
PRB	Parish Register Bitton
PRD	Parish Register Doynton
PROB	Probate
PRP	Parish Register Pucklechurch
PRS	Parish Register Siston
PRW	Parish Register Westerleigh
QS	Quarter Sessions
SamF	Samuel Farley's Journal

Bristol Oracle  
 Bristol University Library  
 Bristol Weekly Miscellany

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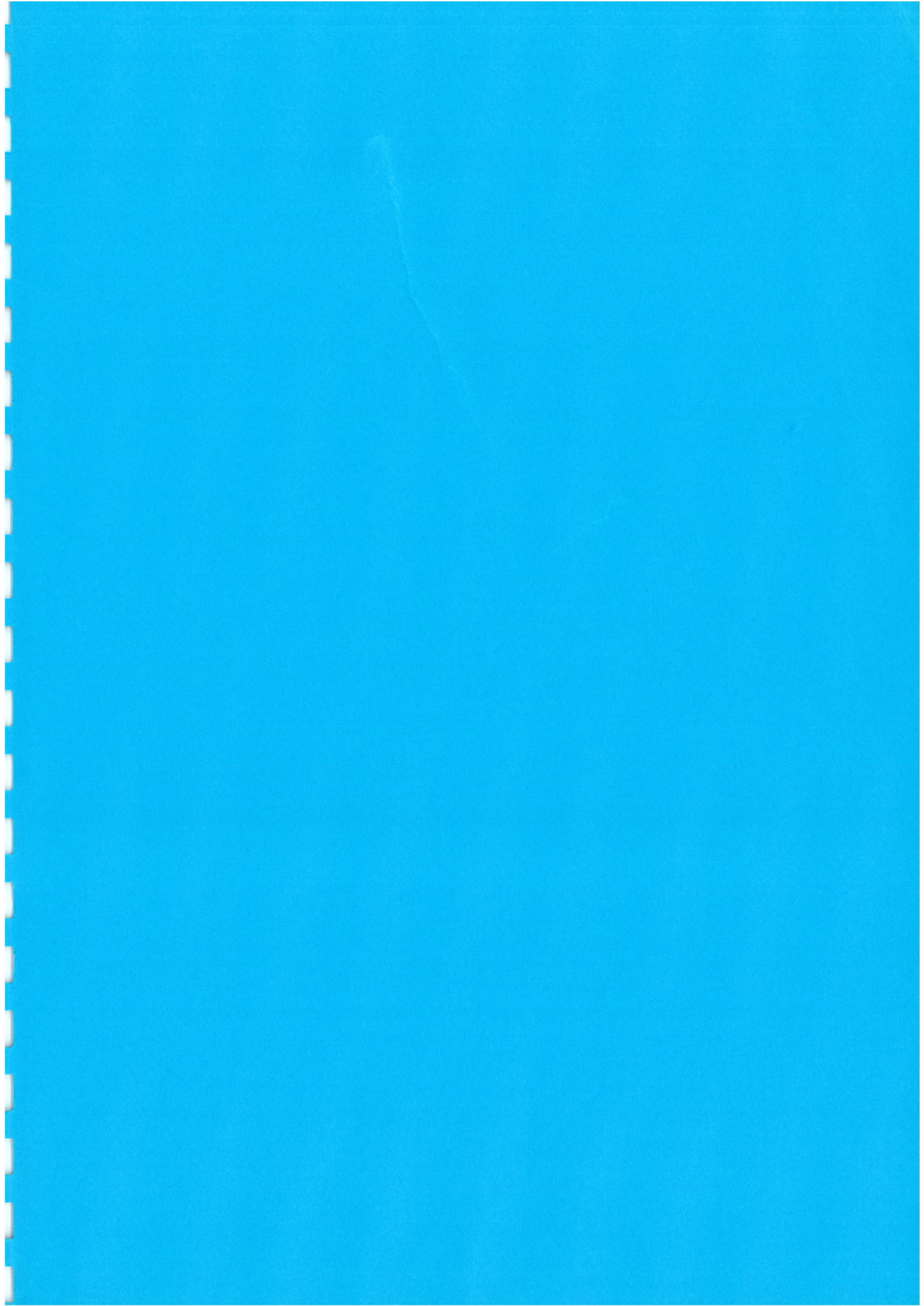
# The Lindegaard List

Killed in a Coalpit I	Fatalities in the Kingswood mines
Supplement to Killed in a Coalpit I	Fatalities in the Kingswood mines
Killed in a Coalpit II	Fatalities in the Mendip mines
Killed in a Coalpit III	Fatalities in the Bedminster mines
Annals of Kingswood 1725-1749	A catalogue of events
Annals of Kingswood 1750-1775	A catalogue of events
Annals of Kingswood 1776-1795	A catalogue of events
Black Bristolians	Black residents of Bristol 17/18c
The Budgetts of Kingswood Hill	Story of the famous grocery family
The Simple Annals of the Poor	Family life in 3 parishes, 1550/1650
Brislington Bulletins 1066-1600	A catalogue of events
Brislington Bulletins 1601-1699	A catalogue of events
Brislington Bulletins 1700-1749	A catalogue of events
Brislington Bulletins 1750-1774	A catalogue of events
The Pillingers of Kingswood	History of a local family

All are available from the author, D.P.Lindegaard, B.A.,  
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