

lying in the PARISHES of
BLITTON & MANGOTSFIELD
truly transcribed from Mr Player's
original PLAN Dated 1750.
By Daniel Cook, 1779.

*Reduced from the Original in the possession
of M^r Whitlock, Hanham Hall.*

At Players the
St. John Newton's
each 3 Parts and
can be truly & pro-
perly also, as in li-
tion. The 1st Liberty
contains 198 Acres,
Elm The Adventure
are Samuel Ste-
The second lib
contains 268
led in it The
at present are
Thomas Jefferys,
Willmot, John
Charles Jones,
Britton, and
Partners.
The third Lib.
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are Richard &
These Liberties
John Newton's
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St. John Newto
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John Millie
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is about 70
The Adventure
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Lord Staff
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THE
ANNALS
OF
KINGSWOOD
Volume IV

D. P. Lindegaard

S^r JOHN NEWTON'S First LIBERTY
Step. ☐ Britten.

Mr PLAYERS First LIBERTY

ST. JOHN
NEWTON'S
cond LIBERTY

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THE ANNALS OF KINGSWOOD 1796-1820

D.P.LINDEGAARD B.A.

"(history).....is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind."
Gibbon

"A large part of this district lay in the parish of Bitton, a fact that explains the following anecdote: Justice Heath, while sitting at the Crown Court at Gloucester asked a prisoner from what part of the county he came, and being answered "From Bitton, My Lord," he exclaimed "You do seem to be of the Bitton breed, but I thought I had hanged the whole of that parish long ago."

(Attributed to the later years of the 18th century, quoted by John Latimer, "Annals of Bristol, 19th Century", in a footnote on page 48)

“Receipts” from the Ledger of John Couch, quarryman of Hanham:

“To Make Ginger Beer. To one gallon of Water putt one ounce and a quarter of ginger, two ounces cream of tarter, two lemons, one pound and quarter loaf sugar. Boil the ginger and lemon peel half an hour and strain it on the sugar and cream of Tarter and when milk is warm add the lemon juice and a spoonful of yeast and lett it work twenty four hours and skim it. Add to every gallon half a noggin of rum, then bottle it.”

“To Make Goosberry Vinegar: Get the ripest goosberrys. Put a gallon to a gallon of water, well bruised and lay three weeks. Stir it three or four times a day then strain it through a hair sieve and add one pound brown sugar and one pound of trakle (treacle) to every gallon and spoonful of fresh yeast. Let it work three or four days in a tubb well wash’d and cleaned, then put it in an Iron Hoop’d Barrell and let it stand twelve months and put it in Bottle for use.”

“A Drench for a Cow: Take one hand full of White Wort, one hand full of rue, one hand full of Worm Wood, one hand full of boys love, one hand full of Sallytine, one hand full of groundsill. Take thus six hand fulls, chop them very small and boil them in two quarts of good Ale for ten minutes and let it cool until blood warm and give it to the beast and the beast may be bled if a need.”

(“Boy’s love” is also known as Southernwood and “Sallytine” is presumably Celandine.)

Kingswood remedies

Highly recommended by Victory Purdy, (1747-1822), Kingswood’s “Walking Bible”:

“For Rheumatism:

Mix honey and flower of brimstone together in equal quantities. Take 3 teaspoonfuls at night, 2 the next morning and one teaspoonful night and morning afterwards.”

“For Cough and Consumption:

One spoonful of honey, one ditto of oatmeal, a piece of butter the size of a walnut, the yolk of an egg. Pour on one pint of boiling water, stir the whole together and take on going to bed.”
(BRO 39801/X/1)

FOREWORD

A recent visitor to Kingswood remarked to me, "It's so different from the rest of Bristol! Like a place apart. Was it a village?" I told her that she had almost hit the nail on the head. Not so much a village, but definitely a place apart.

In the years covered by the current annals, Kingswood appears more adrift than ever. Bristol newspapers which had always been exercised by the doings of "the lawless colliers," now worked up a lather over "the Cock Road Gang." There is naught for the faint hearted here, whether it is the bloodshed in the pits, the vicious obscene judicial slaughter of the gallows or the pitiable state of the French Prisoners of War at Stapleton.

If there is any degree of hope for the coming years, it is to be found in the diametrically opposed aims of two local bodies, the Kingswood Association and the Kingswood Benevolent Society.

Members of the macho Kingswood Association raced about the countryside on horseback, having a hugely enjoyable time, congratulating themselves for bringing in very minor thieves. To be fair, the situation was indeed greatly out of hand, and at the very least, the Association drew attention to the need for an organised professional police force to replace the hapless parish constables, who were called upon to deal with outbreaks of mob violence, as well as a new and serious development, the carrying and use of guns by certain members of the criminal fraternity.

The Kingswood Benevolent Society recognised that the awful working conditions, abject poverty, dearth of education, and indeed lack of hope itself might have some bearing on the actions of the people. As Henry Hill Budgett, a local grocer, Methodist and philanthropist graphically put it in 1817, just after the gaudy funeral of the executed Benjamin Caines, "hunger, nakedness and disease are preying on the vitals of our fellow creatures." The opening of the Cock Road School was the Society's greatest success and in a small way was part of that general sensibility of the times which brought about the emancipation of the slaves, the banning of bear baiting and cock fighting and later on, governmental examination of the situation of children working in mines and factories and education for all. As they might have said, things could only get better.

D.P. Lindegaard, July, 2008

SOURCES AND ABBREVIATIONS:

NB: INQUESTS and ACCIDENT REPORTS: Unless otherwise stated the inquest reports are held at Gloucester Record Office under reference D260. William Joyner Ellis was coroner for South Gloucestershire during the period of these annals. He kept a meticulous record of his official duties and, principally because of the loss of life in the pits, as well as the deaths amongst the wretched POWs at Stapleton Prison, came to the Kingswood area almost weekly. He died aged 75 on the 24th February 1823. His wife Sarah died on 5th April 1840 having attained the great age of 95 years. There is a plaque to their memory in Berkeley Parish Church.

BGa: Bristol Gazette

BMe: Bristol Mercury

BMi: Bristol Mirror

BaChr: Bath Chronicle

BRL: Bristol Reference Library

BRO: Bristol Record Office

DV: Dorothy Vinter. Mrs. Vinter was the wife of a local GP in Kingswood in the 1950s, and wrote a number of pamphlets and learned articles on local history.

FFBJ: Felix Farley's Bristol Journal

GRO: Gloucestershire Record Office

HO: Home Office

JC: The Ledger of John Couch, Quarryman. This typescript was handed to me anonymously many years ago after a talk I gave at the Kingswood Local History Society. I would love to know the whereabouts of the original!

NA: National Archives

PR: Parish Register

SFBJ: Sarah Farley's Bristol Journal

SRO: Somerset Record Office

TS: Thomas Shillitoe, Journal of the Life, Labours & Travels of; London, 1839

(I am grateful to Mr. Alan Bryant for drawing my attention to this tract.)

Wilmot family: I am grateful to Mr. Terry Wilmot for allowing me to plunder his original Family History research concerning his family and their associates, the Caines.

As always, my thanks to the staff at Bristol, Bath, Gloucester & Somerset Record Offices and Bristol City Reference Library for their continued help, and for permission to reproduce documents in their care.

GLOUCESTER

Shewing that part
(Colored Red.)

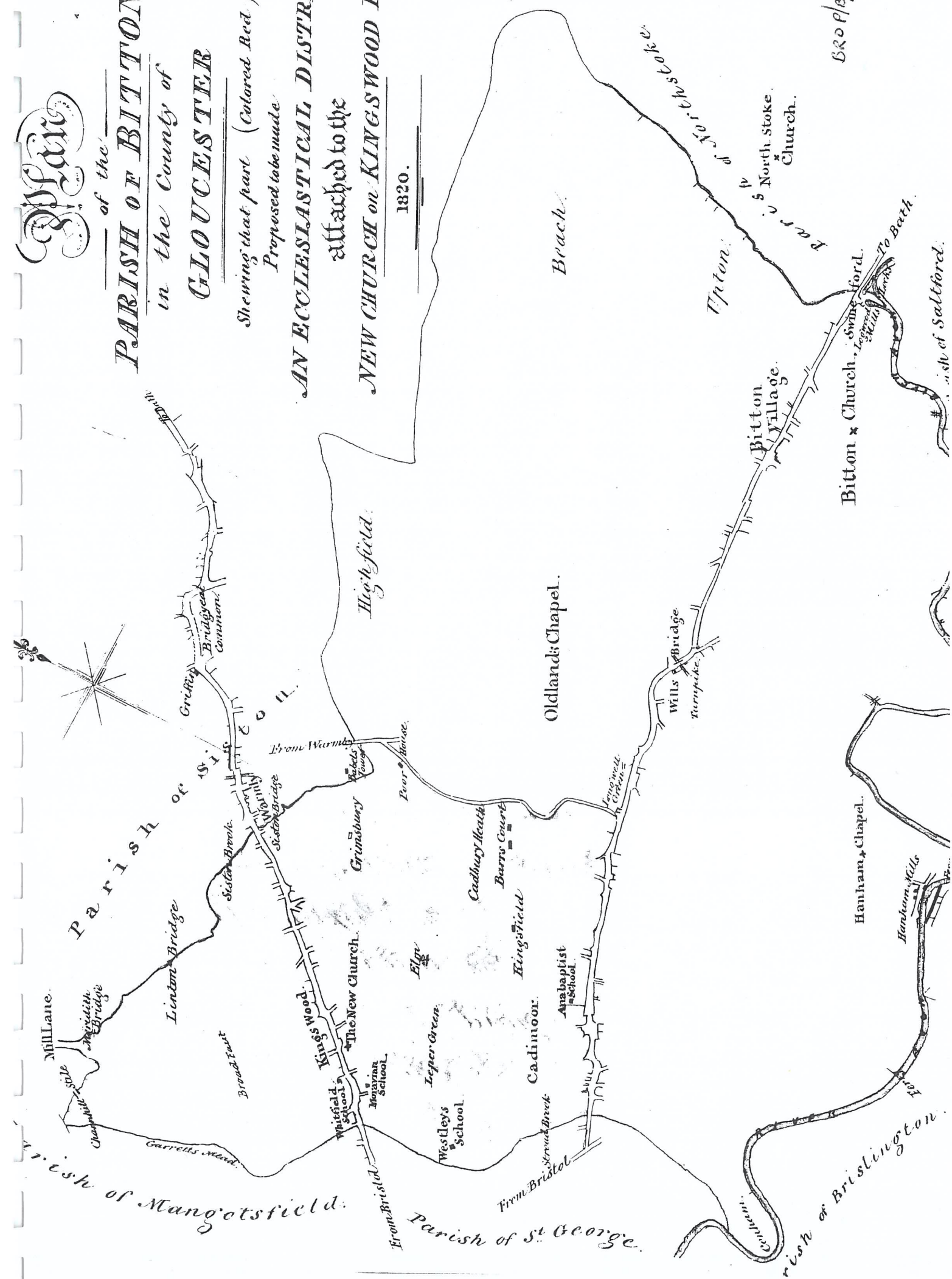
Proposed to be made

AN ECCLESIASTICAL DISTRICT

attached to the

NEW CHURCH on KINGSWOOD HILL

1820.



1796

8 February

An inquest was held at the White Hart, Hanham on George Jenkins, a coalminer, aged 26, who died of a fracture of the skull at Mr. Leonard's coalpit.

13 February

"Last Saturday, two men were working at the Linch Pit, Hanham when the waters burst in on them. One was taken out alive, but died soon after. The body of the second man has not been recovered." (FFBJ)

18 February

Isaac Stanley was killed by five hundredweight of coal falling on him whilst he was at work at Hurd's Pit.

April

Sixteen Frenchmen, Prisoners of War, who had escaped from the Gaol at Stapleton were recaptured on the river Avon by Excise Men. (DV)

2 April

The Rev Charles Elwes was buried at Bitton. (PR)

13 April

George Crew aged 16, coalminer, fell 54 feet from the trip to the bottom of Soundwell coalworks, and died instantly.

24 May

Joseph Flook, a coalminer, aged 11, fell 66 feet down one of the Duke of Beaufort's pits in St George, and was killed.

11 June

Thomas Hemmings, aged 19, was killed at a coalpit at Pucklechurch by a fall of timber, and buried at Mangotsfield, the following day. (PR)

25 June

"Thomas Harris of Wick, in his 24th year, died from a fractured skull after falling from his horse. His father had been killed in a similar fashion two years previously and another son aged 7 was drowned a few months before. Mr. Harris' partner was also killed (when in his company) by falling from his horse between Bristol and Wick." (FFBJ)

5 August

Samuel Fry aged 47 was killed at Oldland Pit by a roof fall.

October

There were now 2,700 prisoners at Stapleton Gaol, including a number of Creoles from the French West Indies, for whom extra warmth had to be provided. Many complaints were made about overcrowding. (DV)

12 December

Martha Lovell, aged 81, of Mangotsfield, the wife of William Lovell, a coalminer, died from a fractured skull when she tripped and fell on some stones.

1797

27 January

William Haskins, aged 20, died from injuries received when falling down a coalpit belonging to Peter Bush at Oldland, having lingered for several days.

2 March

Samuel Powell of Oldland Common died from injuries sustained falling down the Duke of Beaufort's Lodge Pit.

April

It was rumoured that the French planned to land a small force at Sea Mills, who would set fire to the docks and shipping there. The threat was averted when enemy ships were taken in the Bristol Channel, though it had been suggested that the wretched French prisoners at Stapleton should be lowered into the Duke of Beaufort's and Lord Middleton's Pits at Staple Hill, and kept there until the threat of invasion was over. Fortunately, nothing seems to have come of this idea. (The Times newspaper, quoted DV)

14 November

The regular troops guarding the French prisoners were transferred to active service, and their place was taken by volunteers from Bristol who had more enthusiasm than experience. An attempt at a mass escape was rumoured, and in the disarray, Francis Cordrey, aged 27, was "shot by his brother sentinel, who misunderstood the word 'Fire!' given by the Sergeant of the Guard." (DV)

9 December

Francis Stone, aged 12, was found dead hanging by the tugger on the coal cart which he could not see in the darkness of the pit. An inquest was held at Oldland.

24 December

Stephen Burchill, aged 27, was killed at Lodge Pit by a roof fall. He was buried at Mangotsfield.

1798

At Boyd Mill, Golden Valley, Bitton, George and Mary Flower agreed with eight other parties a lease for 21 years "Free Liberty" to open pits and raise coal in six pieces of ground on the Upton side of the brook, near the mills and to erect a fire engine for draining and carrying away water obstructing the working of mines. The signatories were Aaron Brain, Bitton, coalminer, Edward Stone, the younger, Stapleton, gardener, James Quarman, Oldland Common, victualler, Samuel Brain, Bitton, carpenter, Edward Stone, the elder, yeoman, Henry Stone, coalminer, John Brain, St George, yeoman and William Lacey, Hanham, coalminer. (GRO)

4 January

George Harding aged 15, was killed by a fall of coal at Land Pit in Stapleton.

8 January

Property for sale, the several estates of William Hayward Winstone, esquire at Stapleton, Mangotsfield, Bitton, and a Manor House at Oldbury Court. (BaChr)

12 March

A meeting was held at Bitton to collect voluntary contributions "To the Defence of the King and Constitution against their violent and inveterate enemy, the French."

J.A. Curtis	Minister	£50. 0s.0d
William Raine	Curate	5. 5s.0d
William Atkins	Churchwarden	2. 2s.0d
Thomas Strange	Churchwarden	2. 2s.0d
Thomas Smallcombe		10. 0s.0d
Miss Smallcombe & Miss K. Smallcombe		5. 5s.0d
Mrs. Ann Palmer		1. 1s.0d
Coster Thompson		1. 1s.0d
James Quarman		1. 1s.0d
Thomas Bright		5s.0d
John Holbin		10s.6d
Mrs. Mary Hook, Charles Pritchard, Alex. Hendry	Servants of the Rev. J.A. Curtis	3. 3s.0d
Thomas Pearsall		5. 5s.0d
Samuel Pearsall		1. 1s.0d
Mrs. Strobe		5. 5s.0d
Edmond Armstrong		5. 5s.0d
George Burges		1. 1s.0d
John Godfried		2s.6d
John Lewton		1. 1s. 0d
John Ferris		10s.6d
Miss Greaves		10s.6d
Robert Whittington		10. 0s.0d
John Whittuck		21.0s.0d
Miss E. Whittington		5. 5s. 0d
Samuel, Martha & Ann Whittuck		5. 5s.0d
John Stibbs		10. 0s.0d
S. Stibbs		5. 5s.0d
Mrs. Martha Leonard		5. 5s.0d
James Emerson, jun		5. 5s.0d
Thomas Harding		10s.6d
George Gregory		2s.6d

At which point, the total was £169.15s, after which the following pledges were received:

Francis Williams		3d
Robert Nurse		10s.6d
Daniel Harris		6d
William Fry		10s.6d
William Rallings		1. 1s.0d
Mrs. Flower		1. 1s.0d
William Ship		1s.0d
Sarah Adams		5s.0d

(GRO D123/Z1)

By 19th April, the fund stood at £239.7s. 9d.

28 April

Inquest by Mr Joyner-Ellis on the body of a new born female child tied in a handkerchief, apparently strangled by a cord and found floating in the River Frome near Stapleton.

Verdict: Murder by person or persons unknown.

(BaChr)

12 May

Auction of a farmhouse and buildings, with 33 acres at Siston, occupied by Thomas Spicer.

(BaChr)

24 May

George Pool was killed at Soundwell Pit by falling 60 feet to the bottom.

21 June

Fire at the house of Mr Webb, Surgeon at Wick, caused by a spark from the chimney catching the thatched roof.

(BaChr)

22 June

Henry Garland died at Soundwell pit in an identical accident to George Pool, above.

20 July

At the Full Moon, Stapleton, an inquest was held on Lieut. Jacques Delahaye, aged 22, a Frenchman, who had made an escape attempt from Stapleton Prison. He was found hiding in a tree and shot dead by William Meredith, a private soldier of the Royal Pembroke Militia. The verdict was "Justifiable Homicide."

29 July

James Fry aged 20 of Oldland was killed by a fall of the roof at Hudd's Pit.

30 July

William Sheppard, "a horse jockey", John Roberts, (31), of London, John Hawkins, (22), of Hanham and Benjamin Gullick, (19), of Bitton, were accused of breaking into the house of George Jones, a horse dealer of Hanham and stealing £150. The robbery was suggested by Sheppard to a man called Palmer who turned King's Evidence. Informed

that Mr. Jones, a man of property, would return from the fair on the evening of 17th March, the gang decided to rob him as he got to his stable, but they arrived late, and he was in bed. They disturbed the poultry deliberately and when he duly came outside in his nightshirt to see what was the matter, he was knocked down and left for dead. They went inside and took the money which was under his pillow and in his wife's pocket. Mrs. Jones raised a hue and cry and the four men were arrested next day at Temple Back, Bristol. They were taken to Gloucester Castle, where they were found guilty at the Assizes and sentenced to death. (FFBJ)

(It is possible that Benjamin Gullick was the son, or at least a relative, of the man of the same name who applied for settlement in Bath on 20th December 1770. "Benjamin Gullick of St Peter & St Paul, Bath, gardener, about 27 years of age, made his living as a gardener at Shepton Mallet, and about that time his brother John hired himself as a servant at Shepton Mallet at £3 per annum. John lodged with him 2 years and gave him his wages."

"John Gullick, of St Peter and St Paul, 26 years ago, hired to Mr. Trinder at the Christopher Inn, Bath, at 40 shillings a year and has lived at his master's behest ever since. Married Mary Barham, and has two children, Betty, about 16, and Jane, about 11."
(Bath R.O. Examinations before Justices, Book 3, pages 57 & 60/61.)

11 August

John Roberts, John Hawkins and Benjamin Gullick were hanged at Gloucester. No mention is made of Sheppard, who suggested the robbery, and the informer, Palmer, appears to have been exonerated. (List of executed felons, GRO)

12 September

William Reeves, aged 10, died through a kindly act. He was leading a blind pit horse to the engine pond at Lodge Pit to give it water when the horse stumbled and dragged the boy into the pond where he was drowned. The Duke of Beaufort was ordered to fence the pond forthwith.

16 September

Two little boys, Francis Batman, aged 10 and Sampson Brain, aged 8, coalminers, let go of the timbrel rope by which they were being let down Siston Hill coalpit, and fell to the bottom. Francis died on the spot, Sampson lingered 14 hours, and then he too died.

17 September

"A large quantity of foul air broke out in a coalpit belonging to Mr. Whittuck of Hanham, occasioned by the proprietor having stopped up a communication between that Pit and the Duke of Beaufort's coalworks adjoining by which accident the whole pit's company, (29 men and boys) were in imminent danger of being suffocated but receiving timely assistance from His Grace's colliers who were at work nearby, they all escaped though some were saved with great difficulty, the foul air continuing so very powerful as to render fruitless all the endeavour made for several days to purify the coalpit and fit for work again."
(SFBJ, 29.8.1798)

18 October

A lease was granted to James and John Williams, coalminers, of two tenements and garden ground in Westerleigh and all or any of the coalmines or veins on the land. (GRO)

24 October

Thomas Weeks, a ten year old coalminer was killed at Trim's Pit when a hundredweight of coal fell on him.

21 December

William Garland, aged twelve fell to his death at Soundwell Pit.

23 December

William Pierce, "killed in the pit", was buried at Mangotsfield. (PR)

28 December

William Bush was crushed to death by a stone, two tons in weight which fell on him, whilst he was at work in Mr. Leonard's Pit at Oldland.

1799

19 February

An Inquest took place at the Full Moon, Stapleton on an 18 year old coalminer, George Blackborough who was killed falling down the Duke of Beaufort's New Pit.

14 March

John Battens, cornfactor of Bitton was declared bankrupt. (BaChr)

15 March

James White, esquire was buried at Wick. The parish register states "He ended his existence by famine. Supposed to be insane. His name not learnt for some time." According to the Bath Chronicle, his name was James Wright, and he died at the Carpenter's Arms, Wick. "He was the author of letters which appeared in the Courier last summer."
(PR, Abson; BaChr, 4.4.1799)

19 March

An inquest was held at the Ring of Bells, Stapleton on Thomas Britton, 27, who had been killed by a pit roof fall, three days earlier.

6 April

At Ilchester, at the Somerset Assizes, Thomas Bright, Mark Parfitt and Samuel Britton were convicted of returning from transportation before the expiration of their sentences. Bright was left for execution, and the others were reprieved to transportation. Family and friends made an attempt to "spring" Parfitt from gaol, and this resulted in further tragedy.
(SFBJ)

10 April

Thomas Bright, of Bitton, aged 36, John Hewlet of Sutton, near Chew Magna, aged 21, for horse theft and William Pearce, of Wiveliscombe, aged 50, for stealing a piece of cloth, were hanged at Ilchester. (SRO, Chaplain's Book, and SFBJ 20.10.1799)

26 April

An inquest was held at the Don John's Cross, St George on the bodies of John Fudge, 19, George Biss, 26, William Powell, 26 and John Milsom, 35, who had drowned at Pile Marsh Pit when water broke through from one of Samuel Riddle's old pits. Because of foul air and the depth of the flooding the bodies took almost a month to recover. The men left "wives and twelve helpless children not of an age to help their mothers the least pecuniary assistance." A "generous publick" contributed liberally. (SFBJ)

10 May

Abraham Isles, also known as "Scrammy-handed Jemmy" and Abraham Scull, both of Bitton, with Robert Webb from Chippenham stole three horses at Pensford. They rode to the Chelwood turnpike, where Jemmy, arriving separately, pertly asked the gate keeper for change for a shilling, whereby she went inside, obligingly leaving the door open. Scull and Webb followed her, and robbed her of £5. Outside, Jemmy waited for his change, and when the poor woman told him what had occurred, he brazenly promised he would catch the rogues, and rode off in hot pursuit. The same day, the trio broke into the Paulton Inn and stole £15 worth of goods, and then went on to other premises, where they stole another horse and a saddle. Tired after their day's work, they returned to Bitton where Isles was arrested in bed. Some of the stolen goods were under his pillow and there was a horse stabled in his pantry. Webb escaped, though was later seen at Monmouth Fair. Scull made a temporary getaway, but was taken later. (SFBJ)

On the same day, an inquest was taken on Samuel Lear, who broke his neck falling down Baugh & Co.'s Pit at Warmley. (SFBJ)

30 May

A marriage settlement was drawn up between the Rev John Adey Curtis, the Vicar of Bitton and Albinia Winstone, spinster of Bath. Albinia was the eldest daughter of William H. Winstone, esquire of Great Bedford Street, Bath and the marriage took place at Walcot Church. (GRO, Curtis-Hayward family of Quedgeley, D123; BaChr)

7 August

"On Wednesday sennight were executed at Ilchester, W. Parfitt, Abraham Scull and Abraham Isles for various robberies at Paulton, Chelwood and other places. Parfitt was 52, and came from Farmborough; Scull and Isles were both from Bitton in Gloucestershire, the first aged 24, the other 28. Parfitt declared he had never committed any acts of a criminal nature, but that with others he had attended the breaking open of Ilchester prison. Scull and Isles had committed robberies in every part of the neighbourhood in company with Bright who was executed in April last. They described Bright's widow as a most expert shoplifter and the projector of their nightly depredations.

One Webb, their accomplice has escaped the vigilance of justice. The three malefactors behaved with becoming decency and seemed resigned to their wretched fate.”

(SFBJ 17.8.1799,& SRO, Ilchester Chaplain’s book.)

(I think we can deduce from this that William Parfitt’s misguided and fatal action in breaking into the prison was an attempt to rescue Mark Parfitt, perhaps his son, or certainly a relation, who was held for returning from transportation.

It would be interesting to know what eventually became of the widow Bright, who held such sway over the young men, Isles and Scull.)

August

Eleven prisoners escaped from Stapleton prison by tunneling under the latrine. (DV)

11 October

An inquest on a coalminer, John Willis, aged 70, who survived a lifetime of dangerous work, only to die from a couple of broken ribs when he fell down two steps at home in Mangotsfield.

13 October

An inquest was held on William Rawbones, coalminer, age 36, who drowned at St George.

17 October

The marriage of Mr S. Yandle of Bristol and Miss S. Bush of Bitton was announced in the Bath Chronicle. (BaChr)

During October.....

The Oldland Court Leet met and instructed the proprietors of “Haw Lane” Colliery to fence off, with posts and nails, the quarry they had opened on Oldland Common, close by the highway, by the following 2nd February, or be fined 20 shillings. (GRO)

(This made me smile. “Haw” should of course have been “Hole”, a word practically impossible for any Kingswood person to pronounce. They probably said “Awl Lane” and the scribe in his wisdom “corrected” “Awl” to “Haw”. We had “awls” in our stockings as well. Another example is Crew’s Hole, St George: “Cruze [or Scruze] Awl”.

16 November

Thomas Burgess and Job Wilmot were killed in a coalpit at St George when a cart loaded with two hundredweight of rubble ran over them.

24 November

An inquest was held at the Queen’s Head, Oldland on Robert Brooks, coalminer, aged eleven, who fell down Stibbs’ Pit.

1800

More subscriptions were raised for the defence of the Realm. The agents and colliers of the Duke of Beaufort's Kingswood works raised £34. St George contributed liberally with donations ranging from £20 from the Rev Richard Hart, 10 shillings and sixpence from the workmen of Crew's Hole Bottle House, all the way down to sixpence from George Rudge, an aged labourer. The villagers of Siston, Pucklechurch, Yate, Westerleigh, Wick, and Mangotsfield likewise contributed to the general fund, so that eventually Bristol's contributions for King and County stood at the prodigious sum of £33,000. War or no war, the business of the Coroner continued unabated:

2 January

An inquest on Charles Flook was held at the New Inn, St Philip and St Jacob's, killed on 30 December, 1799 at Tippet's Pit.

3 March

An inquest was held at Mr. Quarman's house, Oldland Common, on Saul Greenway, coalminer, 25, killed at John Stibbs' Pit.

25 March

.....and another on John Jaye, coalminer at Upton, Bitton, killed when Joseph Parker's well fell in.

27 March

...and Moses Lovell, of Mangotsfield, was killed at the Duke of Beaufort's Lodge Pit.

19 April

450 more French prisoners were marched into Exeter from Plymouth, en route for Stapleton. (FFBJ)

26 April

EXECUTION

"Yesterday, about noon, Richard Haynes, alias Dick Boy, a native of Bitton in Gloucestershire and formerly a collier, convicted at our last Gaol Delivery, as having fired at ----- Driver and another officer, while in the act of apprehending him on suspicion of stealing a silver tankard, was taken in a cart from Newgate (attended by the Rev Mr. Walcam, the Ordinary, and Mr. Bundy, a Gentleman belonging to the late Mr. Wesley's Society) to the place of execution on St Michael's Hill, where he suffered the awful sentence of the law.

From the best source of information we are given to understand that the Rev. the Ordinary of Newgate, ever since the condemnation of the criminal, has always found him mild, gentle and easy to be led, when he was convinced of the truth of any argument urged or persuasively and affectionately called upon to make any compliance. With respect to the frame of his mind, he declared before receiving the sacrament that he had no ill will to anyone. He was visited the evening before he suffered by the Ordinary, at

ten o'clock, and before eleven he was joined by Mr. Bundy, both of whom continued with him in the dungeon of his prison till five o'clock in the morning – employing the time in prayer, singing of hymns and exhortations to cast off all worldly thoughts, looking only to GOD before whom his spirit was soon to appear that he might be numbered with those who were washed and cleansed from their sin by the precious blood of their Saviour and Redeemer JESUS CHRIST. And the behaviour of the criminal at the place of execution testified that their labour was not in vain. After a short return home, they joined the prisoner again, and continued with him till he left Newgate, when the Ordinary attended in a coach, Mr. Bundy accompanying the criminal in a cart, and they passed thro' the streets, singing hymns together. At the place of execution, the Ordinary ascended the cart and all three joined in a hymn, after which, Mr. B. offered up a prayer. The criminal then expressed his desire that there might not be a long delay.- upon which the Ordinary addressed himself to the spectators, observing that it was his intention to have addressed them in a discourse suitable to the melancholy occasion – but that the wishes of the criminal and the inclemency of the weather, prevented him from saying much, other than to testify to the gentleness and good behaviour of the criminal at all times to him and his fellow helper in the Lord and that he died in love and charity with all mankind. The criminal joined his ejaculations to the prayers made for him, but made no address himself to the surrounding multitude. The Ordinary then prayed and gave him the final offices after which Mr. Bundy took an affectionate leave. The Ordinary, after the cap was drawn over the face of the criminal gave him the last embrace upon which he left the fatal tree and retired to the coach where he continued on his knees until the moment of Haynes being turned off, [when] he exclaimed – Lord Jesus, receive his body! The body was taken off in a hearse and deposited in the crowd of St Michael's church, and to be buried in the churchyard.” (FFBJ)

The story told by a penny broadsheet, issued for sale during the above grotesque piece of theatre, was rather different. It states that Dick was 34, born of poor but honest parents, who worked with his father in the coalpits until he was thirteen, when he was put to apprentice as a hatter. His criminal activities, they say, had begun before this however, as he pilfered food from his parents and neighbours, and on one occasion spirited away a whitepot and puddings from the back of an oven, so dexterously that when the cook returned, she cried “I am sure this is done by a witch!” So far this chronicle of “crime” seems to be the desperate actions of a hungry boy. Though charged with the theft of clothes and comestibles from a house in Bitton, he was acquitted, but his life took a turn for the worse when he took up with John Carey, a boyhood companion. At Oldland Common they robbed a gin seller of two bottles of his wares. The man had them committed to Gloucester gaol, but once again Dick was acquitted. They became footpads, and robbed a Mr. Crach and another man at Downend. Mr. Crach resisted and Dick, now armed with a pistol, fired at him, but ran off. Mr. Crach was found dead the next morning, At Saltford in 1787, they robbed a man of his watch and five shillings, but made an escape, going on to Kelston where they held up another man, taking a silver watch and a guinea. They were arrested and taken to Taunton where Carey was convicted and hanged. Once more, Dick was acquitted. He carried his friend's body all the way home to Oldland, though later said, that had he known Carey had confessed to the murder of Mr. Crach, he would have thrown the body in the river. After robbing a man of a

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has forfeited his life to the laws of his country.

The prisoners in Newgate and Bridewell return
thanks to M. B. for one guinea to each place: Also to
J. B. and M. C. for one guinea each for Newgate, by
the hands of the Rev. J. Walcam.

EXECUTION.

Yesterday, about noon, Richard Haynes, alias Dick-
Boy, a native of Bitton in Gloucestershire, and formerly
a collier, convicted at our last Court Delivery, of having
fired at — Driver and another officer, while in the act
of apprehending him on suspicion of stealing a silver tan-
kard, was taken in a cart from Newgate (attended by
the Rev. Mr. Walcam, the Ordinary, and Mr. Bundy,
a Gentleman belonging to the late Mr. Wesley's society)
to the place of execution on St. Michael's Hill, where he
suffered the awful sentence of the law.

From the best source of information we are given to
understand, that the Rev. the Ordinary of Newgate,
ever since the condemnation of the criminal, has always
found him mild, gentle, and easy to be led, when he
was convinced of the truth of any argument urged, or
persuasively and affectionately called upon to make any
compliance. With respect to the frame of his mind —
he declared before his receiving the Sacrament, that he
had no ill will to any one. He was visited the evening
before he suffered by the Ordinary, at ten o'clock, and
before eleven was joined by Mr. Bundy, both of whom
continued with him in the dungeon of his prison, till
five o'clock in the morning—employing the time in
prayer, singing of hymns and exhortations to cast off
all worldly thoughts, looking only to GOD, before
whom his spirit was soon to appear, that he might be
numbered with those who were washed and cleansed
from their sin by the precious blood of their Saviour and
Redeemer JESUS CHRIST. And the behaviour of the
criminal at the place of execution, testified that their
labour was not in vain. After a short return home,
they joined the prisoner again, and continued with him
till he left Newgate ; when the Ordinary attended in a
coach, Mr. Bundy accompanying the criminal in a
cart, and, as they passed thro' the streets, singing hymns
together. At the place of execution, the Ordinary
ascended the cart, and all three joined in a hymn ; after
which, Mr. B. offered up a prayer. The criminal then
expressed his desire, that there might not be a long
delay—upon which the Ordinary addressed himself to
the spectators, observing that it was his intention to
have addressed them in a discourse suitable to the me-
lancholy occasion—but that the wishes of the criminal,
and the inclemency of the weather, prevented him from
saying much, further than to testify the gentleness and
good behaviour of the criminal at all times to him and
his fellow-helper in the Lord, and that he died in love
and charity with all mankind. The criminal joined his
ejaculations to the prayers made for him, but made no
address himself to the surrounding multitude. The
Ordinary then prayed, and gave the final benediction ;
after which Mr. Bundy took an affectionate leave. The
Ordinary, after the cap was drawn over the face of the
criminal, gave him the last embrace, which he received
with the utmost tenderness. The Ordinary then left
the fatal tree, and retired to the coach ; where he conti-
nued on his knees, till at the moment of Haynes being
turned off, he exclaimed—Lord Jesus, receive his
spirit! The body was taken off in a heart and depo-
sited in the crowd of St. Michael's church, and is to
be buried in that church-yard.

WINTER presents respectful Compliments and
Thanks to an unknown Gentleman, for his kind letter,
covering many papers received yesterday.
Oxford-street, April 25, 1800.

watch in Hanham, - (watches apparently having the same sort of currency we now associate with mobile phones) – Dick proceeded to Brentford, Middlesex, where the pattern continued. At Westminster Bridge, he again stole a watch, but this time he was convicted and sentenced to transportation. After three or four years in Botany Bay, he escaped by a fishing canoe, threw the fisherman overboard, and put himself at the mercy of the sea. After traveling in many parts, he worked his passage in a boat sailing for Germany. In Germany he was engaged as a servant by an English gentleman, for whom he worked for a few months before robbing him and making his way to England. He arrived in Oldland with a young woman who he said was the daughter of a German nobleman, but later was revealed as a native of Westerleigh. Deadpan, the narrative continues: “She went to London, committed a robbery and was hanged.” In 1794, Dick went to London again, and “got acquainted with the notorious Big Ben, became a noted bruiser, and when that entertainment was slack, he would have recourse to the trade of robbery.” (BRO 25262[4])

(It is hard to tell how much of the above account of Dick’s exhausting career is true, and how much is embellished to sell the sensational pamphlet. Carey was definitely hanged at Ilchester and buried at Bitton on 26 August 1787. The momentous return from transportation too may have some basis in fact. A man called Richard Haynes, tried at the Old Bailey in 1789, and transported in 1791 aboard the 3rd Fleet ship “Salamander” stowed away in 1794 on the “Indispensable”, bound for China, helped by a young officer, Midshipman Pitt, who on the death of his father, shortly afterwards, became the eccentric Lord Camelford. [see “What has become of Lord Camelford’s Body”, by Charles Reade.] With Haynes as his servant, they proceeded from Canton to England. If Camelford was the English gentleman mentioned in connection with “our” Richard Haynes, the fact was evidently unknown to the pamphleteer. Had he got wind of it, it would surely have been worth a few extra copies. As to “Big Ben” – the champion boxer Ben Brain – he was noteworthy rather than notorious, and had religious leanings to boot, so might well have been a good influence, rather than a bad.)

31 May

Joseph Sumner, belonging to Mr John Couch's barge, of Hanham, in going aboard at the Back, fell into the River and unfortunately drowned, leaving a pregnant widow, and five children, who depended entirely on him for support to lament his loss. (FFBJ)

10 July

An inquest was held at Mangotsfield on Sampson Bees, aged 16 and Thomas Britten, who died of broken necks when they fell 600 yards down the Duke of Beaufort’s Deep Pit.

26 July

“The following shocking circumstances occurred on Tuesday at Siston, Gloucestershire. As Mr. Fussell, landlord of The Crown at Warmley (a man of most unblemished character and universally respected) attended by a Civil Officer, seizing some hay (by power of a warrant for recovering the King’s taxes) belonging to an old opulent farmer named Edward Wilmot, the latter having locked himself in his house, fired a gun through

a dark window at Mr. Fussell, the contents of which lodged in his head and occasioned his instant death. He has left a widow and a large family to deplore his untimely fate. The wretch who has lamented he had not also killed Mr. Fussell's assistant, was secured and a loaded pistol, was found on him. He has since been committed to Gloucester gaol to take his trial for the offence." (FFBJ)

9 August

The Gloucestershire Assizes. Edward Wilmot's was an open and shut case. You really cannot say, "I am very sorry. I got one, but missed the other," as was alleged, and expect mercy. Wilmot, aged 64, was condemned as were William Stallard, 40, Thomas Cribb, 19, William Attwood, 25 and Isaac Burgess, 25, all for horse theft. Cribb and Attwood came from St George's, but all the surnames are well known in Kingswood. They were all executed at Gloucester. (FFBJ)

18 August

Isaac Garland of Mangotsfield was killed at Cock Pit, Stapleton by 6 hundredweight of coal falling on his neck and shoulders whilst at work.

7 September

An inquest was held on Mary Holloway, the wife of a Samuel, a coalminer of Oldland, said to be "in delirium" who threw herself down Lodge Pit.

4 October

Twenty eight prisoners made their escape from Stapleton by sawing off the grate of the sewer. All but three were retaken. (There was now an extreme water shortage at Stapleton gaol, possibly the one being due to the other.) (FFBJ)

7 November

The coroner's verdict was manslaughter when he enquired into the death of Hannah Bryant, aged 20, who died by a gunshot wound, sustained on 5th November. Charles Long, a labourer, of Stapleton was committed to Gloucester gaol.

20 November

An inquest was held on Louis Augeuneau, 25, a French prisoner, who hanged himself at Stapleton gaol.

24 November

An inquest was held at the Queen's Head, Oldland on William Townsend, killed by a fall of stone at one of Mr. Whittuck's pits.

29 November

(Shock! Horror!)

"A caution. Housekeepers would do well to be on their guard against the colliers who go about the streets, as some of them scruple not to steal any portable article that may be in their way. About two months since, a collier offered a silver dessert spoon for sale which was stopped, yet notwithstanding the same fellow has had the audacity to offer for sale

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and spirits, and with unimpaired faculties.

On the 14th instant the wife of John Sandall, under-gardener at Lord Sheffield's at Sheffield-Place, in Suffex, was taken in labour, and in the course of six hours was safely delivered of four daughters, who were baptized in the evening and appeared likely to live. Lady Sheffield attended to see that all possible care was taken of the family. The mother is remarkably well; she is 23 years old, has been married three years, and had only one child before.

The following shocking circumstance occurred on Tuesday at Siston, in Gloucestershire: As Mr. Samuel Fussill, landlord of the Crown at Warmley (a man of most unblemished character, and universally respected) attended by a civil officer, was seizing on some hay (by power of a warrant for recovering the King's taxes) belonging to an old opulent farmer named Edward Wilmot, the latter having locked himself in his house, fired a gun through a dark window at Mr. Fussill, the contents of which lodged in his head, and occasioned his instant death. He has left a widow and large family to deplore his untimely fate. The wretch, who lamented he had not killed Mr. F's assistant, was secured, and a loaded pistol found on him.—He has since been committed to Gloucester gaol to take his trial for the offence.

AT THE GENERAL QUARTER SESSIONS for this City last week.—Richard Phillips, for embezzling and converting to his own use the monies of his employers, Messrs. Fry and Co. brewers; Wm. Bickley, for stealing glass from his employers Messrs. Rickets and Co. glass-makers; Hannah Hunt, for stealing 25 yards of linen, the property of Messrs. Niblock and Burgess, with whom she lived a servant; and Sarah Tronnell & Mary Ganthony, for stealing ten muslin handkerchiefs, the property of Mr. Beck, haberdasher, were sentenced to be transported for 7 years.—John Pincock, for stealing a silver spoon, the property of Joseph Nickless, was ordered to be confined three months in Newgate and publicly whipped.—Elizabeth Stevens, for stealing three silk handkerchiefs, the property of Stephen Mosier, silk-mercier, was found guilty, but recommended to mercy by Mr. Mosier; ordered to be confined six months in Bridewell.—John Griffin, tried for stealing a pair of breeches, acquitted.—Wm. Bobbett, for stealing a tack, no bill.—John Thomas, for stealing leather, discharged by Proclamation.

COMMITTED TO NEWGATE.—John Jones Rosher, for stealing a large quantity of goods, the property of Mr. Isaac Cox, with whom the prisoner lived many years as a servant.—Elizabeth Waldron, for robbing a ready-furnished lodging.

IRISH MAILS—Arrived 6—Due 1.

another spoon of the same sort, both engraved with a man smoking a pipe with the following motto, 'superam venaber'." (FFBJ)

30 November

An inquest was held on Jean Derassier, a Frenchman, who was killed by Richard Billingham, a private in the Lincoln Militia, a sentinel, for throwing stones and other provocations, and also for an attempt to make his escape.

December

Mr. Batchelor, deputy governor of St Peter's Hospital and Mr. Andrewes, a Quaker, made a tour of inspection of Stapleton prison and were disgusted by the conditions there. Many of the prisoners were nearly naked. Four hundred and fifty were entirely without and nine hundred and sixty needed partial assistance. They were nearly all without shoes or stockings, and the courtyard was four inches deep in mud. Shortage of food forced some prisoners to eat dogs which they made into soup. In the last six weeks there had been two hundred and fifty deaths, an average of six to eight dying each day.

1801

January

In the first three weeks of the month there were 14 deaths at Stapleton Prison from debility and dysentery, 12 from weakness and 10 for pleurisy and typhus. (DV)

2 January

An inquest was held in the outparish of St Philip and St Jacob on William Cambridge who was killed in a pit belonging to Tippet's and Co.

7 January

An inquest was held on Sergeant Jean Marjoram, aged 24, a French Prisoner of War at Stapleton. It was alleged that he used to sell his provisions for the purpose of gambling and that he frequently stole from other prisoners. He stole a pair of trousers and was detected. He said he would go and make water, and then hang himself, which he did.

24 January

The Bristol Mercury stated: We fear that owing to the extreme depravity of the French prisoners, the humane attention of our government of furnishing clothing to protect them against the inclemency of the weather which their own virtuous Republican Government has refused to supply will prove of little benefit for those confined at Stapleton who have been clothed. A great proportion have already either sold their apparel or lost it by gaming and are consequently as destitute as ever. "

Bread, for the general populace was also in short supply. Felix Farley helpfully printed this recipe: "Take some rice and boil it loose. When it is quite soft, set it to drain, and when thoroughly drained bruise it in a mortar. Add a little salt and as much oatmeal or rye flour as will make it into a stiff paste. Cut it into thin cakes and bake it in a quick oven. This is a cheap and wholesome substitute for bread and approaches nearer to the taste of bread than any of the usually recommended substitutes." (FFBJ)

(It was probably just about bearable, provided you could get the rice, and even though the starch which might have supplied an extra bit of zap was all drained out. However, the next week the same newspaper was reporting a case of gluttony):

31 January

“A man known by the name of Frankey of the parish of Bitton did eat on Thursday at the White Horse, Keynsham, ten pounds of bullock’s liver, broiled, a sixpenny loaf, and drank near two quarts of beer within the space of half an hour.” (FFBJ)

5 February

Elizabeth Marsh, wife of Thomas, a Private in the 7th Dragoons, was removed from St James, Bath to Wick & Abson. (Bath R.O.)

7 February

The Duke of Beaufort sent a donation of £10 in aid of the St George’s poor “at this time of general distress.” (BMBJ)

14 March

“Badman and Jefferies, two notorious offenders who have long infested this neighbourhood” were committed to Gloucester Gaol for stealing sheep from Mr. Jefferies of the Griffin Inn, Warmley. (FFBJ)

21 March

“A desperate gang” was brought to trial through the vigilance of William Ludlow of Yate. John Tovey, alias Dando, John Dando, Robert Bryant, William Bryant, Joseph Matthews, Stephen Tovey, alias Dando, and James Williams were said to have broken into a barn when in possession of a gun loaded with slugs. Robert and William Bryant escaped, but the rest were taken to Gloucester gaol. (FFBJ)

22 March

An inquest was held on Francis Bryant, aged 10, a coalminer, who fell out of the cart when descending Mr. Quarman’s Golden Valley Pit at Bitton.

2 April

My great great great grandfather John Pillinger, his first wife Hester (nee Britton) and their children were forcibly removed from Bitton to Yatton Keynell, in Wiltshire, their alleged “home parish” whence the family had come some 50 years before. (BRO/P/B/OP/6b)55)

6 April

Thomas Burgess, aged 44, was killed at the same pit by a fall of stone.

9 April

“Colliers and other poor inhabitants of Bristol attempt to intimidate any farmer and others supplying the market with provisions and to lower the price of victuals” said the Duke of

Portland, the Home Secretary, in a letter to Maj-Gen Rooke, warning him that his further intervention with troops might be necessary. (HO 43/12)

17 April

The Duke of Portland wrote to the Rev Joseph Atwell Small that he hoped the handbill he had distributed would convince the lower classes that nothing could be gained by their riotous proceedings. (HO/43/12 330)

18 April

Steven Tovey, aged 20, of Coalpit Heath, and Joseph Matthews, 27, of Tytherington, part of "the desperate gang" above, were hanged for sheep stealing at Gloucester, along with two other men.

25 April

"Some children at play in Barton Hill discovered 30 or 40 pounds weight of counterfeit guineas, half guineas, seven shilling pieces, shillings and sixpences together with implements and dies for coining the same. (FFBJ)

Same day: An inquest was held on John Alsop of St George, killed at Tippet & Co's Pit by a roof fall.

30 April

Samuel Batman, aged 19, of Mangotsfield, was killed at Rudgeway Pit, belonging to Castle & Co.

6 June

"George Couch fell out of a barge belonging to John Couch at Crew's Hole and was drowned. This is the third person drowned with a year and half belonging to his employ." (FFBJ)

7 July

An inquest was held at the Queen's Head, Hanham on Abraham Jenkins and Isaac Strong who were killed falling down the Duke of Beaufort's Densley Pit, by the breaking of an iron spring crook attached to the rope whilst they were making their descent.

1 August

Captain J.P. Dyer became agent at Stapleton Prison, and his first action was to order one ton of soap. (DV)

An inquest was held on Stephen Stone, aged two, the son of John Stone, coalminer, at the Black Horse, Kingswood, who was burnt to death in the absence his parents when his linen bed gown caught fire.

21 November

"The Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal is now completely navigable from Semington to Chippenham, Calne, Dauntley Park and Bowden Farm near Wootton Bassett, and there is now uninterrupted communication by water by the junction of the above with the Kennett

and Avon Canal from those places to Bath and thence by the Avon to Bristol. The neighbourhood on the line will be materially benefited this season by obtaining a supply of excellent coal at a cheap rate before winter. (FFBJ)

1802

23 January

Thomas Haynes, coalminer of Oldland was killed by a ton weight of stone and rubbish falling on his head whilst at work.

9 January

"There was a melancholy incident at Kingswood, on Monday last. As a man and boy were descending a coalpit near Mr. Wesley's School, the spring crook to which the rope was suspended gave way and they were precipitated to the bottom. The man was dashed to pieces and died on the spot. The boy was lacerated so dreadfully that he died on Wednesday morning. Two men were likewise very much hurt by the unhappy couple falling on them". (FFBJ)

3 April

"We congratulate our readers on the news of the definitive Treaty of Paris" wrote Felix Farley in a leader. This was the Peace of Amiens, and sadly it was short lived and war broke out again the next year. (FFBJ)

30 July

An inquest was held at the Flower Pot Inn at Kingwood Hill on Daniel Jefferies aged 37, of Oldland, killed in a coalpit belonging to Leonard, Waters and Co.

6 August

John Bees was killed in a coalpit and buried at Mangotsfield. He was 39, and had been at work in the Duke of Beaufort's Lower Lodge Pit, in the parish of Stapleton. (Lodge Pit was in Lodge Hill, near where the present Cossham Hospital is situated.) (PR)

21 August

"At Downend, a man, his wife and four children were travelling in an Oxford waggon in which the driver, as is customary, left in the care of his boy. Immediately after the waggoner left, the man got out of the waggon and insisted on having the whip and driving himself. The lad reluctantly gave it to him, and no sooner had the man struck the hind horse than he kicked him in the side, through which he fell under the waggon, the fore wheel going over his head and crushed him to death in sight of his family. The boy being accustomed to driving, no blame can attach to him." (FFBJ)

28 August

"Several drivers of waggons were confined by magistrates at Lawford's Gate Bridewell. One of them, the driver of a coal waggon belonging to Samuel Cook of St George was fined 10 shillings and costs for rising in the shafts of his waggon being much intoxicated and in imminent danger of being killed." (FFBJ)

15 September

William Stratton, a labourer, was buried in a well at Hanham when 100 tons of rubble fell on him. He was brought out alive after rescuers strove for 45 hours to clear the debris, but sadly died of his injuries. An inquest was held at the Jolly Sailor in Hanham.

13 December

Charles Walter, aged 10, the son of George and Hannah Walter, fell to the bottom of a pit called the "15th November", at Westerleigh when trying to get out of a cart. He was buried at Westerleigh. (GRO/D260, PR)

1803

17 February

An inquest was held on the body of John Poole, an engineer, who was killed by an explosion of gunpowder when he was endeavouring to blow up part of a coalworks at Mangotsfield. (GRO/D260, FFBJ, 5.3.1803)

13 March

"On Tuesday sennight died Mr. Robert Baylis, of Kingswood Lodge, Stapleton, agent to the Duke of Beaufort's coalworks in that neighbourhood." (FFBJ)

14 March

Gloucester: Thomas Fox, capitally convicted, received sentence of death for stealing a mare, the property of Thomas Jefferies, butcher, of Siston. Fox, "an old offender" though only 22 years old, was "left for execution". He was hanged at Gloucester on 26 March. (FFBJ, 19.3.03, and list at GRO)

19 March

An inquest was held on the body of Francis Stone, aged 25, who was killed by a fall of stone at Pearce's Pit, Stapleton.

21 March

A lease from George Whitmore, esquire, of Lower Slaughter, Gloucestershire, to Thomas Jefferis of Warmley, carpenter, Isaac Llewellyn of Mangotsfield, coalminer, Samuel Jefferies of Wick, yeoman, Moses Jefferis of Pucklechurch, coalminer and Solomon Jefferis of Siston, yeoman, in respect of coalmines in Pucklechurch. (BRO 6098/7b)

13 May

An inquest was held at Fishponds on Robert Long, coalminer, who hanged himself in his bedroom. A verdict of "lunacy" was recorded.

27 May

An inquest was held on Isaac Peacock who was killed at Sandy Coalpit belonging to Dennis Butler at Pile March, St George by a fall of two tons of coal.

12 August

An inquest was held on Thomas Smith, coalminer, who was killed at Pile Marsh when at work. On the same day, the coroner hastened to Coalpit Heath, and heard an inquest on John Cook, also killed at work by half a ton of rubbish falling on him.

13 August

George Fry, aged 28, of Hanham, was hanged at Gloucester for Highway Robbery.

(List, GRO)

20 August

For fourteen months there had been a truce in the war against the French, but now hostilities flared up again. An invasion force lay in readiness across the Channel and the call went out for able bodied men between 15 and 60 years old to join the Colours. The government drew up a Grand Plan for National Defence. Everywhere, Volunteer Corps were being formed and local militias were gathering. The Press Gang went in search of those reluctant to answer. At New Cheltenham, the speltermen from the brassworks armed themselves with red-hot irons and successfully repulsed them in a fabled battle. The Vicar of Bitton, the Rev J.A. Curtis organized public meetings: "A meeting of the inhabitants is requested at the White Hart at Bitton on Monday, at the Blue Bowl, Hanham on Tuesday, and at the Flower Pot in Kingswood on Wednesday next at 6 p.m. to consult on the measures proper to be taken. It will then be proposed to those gentlemen who cannot offer their services to enter into a subscription for clothing the Volunteers." Secret digging went on at Stapleton Prison, under the hospital and punishment cells. Charles Bragge of Mangotsfield was re-elected a Bristol MP. In December he would become Secretary of State for War.

(FFBJ)

2 November

An inquest was held at the Flower Pot on Samuel Rawbones, killed at John Stibbs' Brown's Break Pit by 5 tons of earth and rubbish falling on him. Judging by the number of such accidents at this time, propping methods had hardly improved since the days of the bell pits, two centuries and more before.

10 December

An inquest was held on John Williams, aged 20, who was killed falling down Moses Sweet's Pit at Soundwell.

26 December

An inquest was held at the Half Moon, Coalpit Heath, on George Parker aged 13, who also fell down a coalpit.

1804

With the prospect of invasion growing ever closer, the Government issued an edict that non-combatants living near the coast should make immediate arrangements to move their livestock further inland. The Parish of Bitton with the chapelries of Oldland and Hanham made contingency plans to deal with the threat. Lists were drawn up of vital foodstuffs

59) John Hammers born at Weston near Bath was executed at Ilchester September 5th 1804 for Robbing Mr Joyce in company with others of cloths to the value of 400 and upwards aged 24. He made full confession of every thing that he knew—acknowledged the fact

60) Francis Cairns born at Wotton near Bristol was executed at Ilchester Sept 18th 1804 for being concerned in the above robbery and likewise for being concerned with the aforesaid Hammers in Horse Stealing—He would not say any thing of his former course of life for fear of involving his Relations in his crimes—acknowledged the fact

61) Charles Fuller born at Birmingham was executed Sept 18th 1804 aged 26. He was charged for ten days through the neglect of his friends for being concerned in Robbing Mr Joyce with the above—acknowledged the fact

62) George Inverness aged 23 born at St Neots was executed at Ilchester the 24th April 1805 for Horse Stealing—He denied to the last his having stolen the Horses for which he was convicted, affirming that he bought the of Edwin Davis but acknowledged that they were stolen and that he had stole the Horses they were named as above—

63) John Thompson aged 20 was executed at Ilchester April 24 1805 for passing a Gun round gauged Hole, and for having many more in his possession, he said that he saw two Men hiding cartridges in the earth, after their departure he went to the place and found the Holes he had in his possession when taken and for which he suffered—But from his own confession to a Jury in Great Britain and his Father got the Holes from Joseph Joyce who engaged at Bristol for the Lake Game April 26 1805 Thompson was born at Ilchester in the City of Bristol—

64 William Curtis was at Ilchester in this County aged 26 was executed at Ilchester September 11th 1805 for Burglary at Galloway near Ilchester acknowledged the justice of his sentence

65 Saml Harding born at Ilchester near Bristol was executed at Ilchester September 11th 1805 aged 22 for High Way Robbery. Acknowledged the justice of his sentence and confessed many other Robberies—

flocks and herds. Forty drovers and six waggoners were seconded to take charge of the evacuation should the need arise.

7 January

The Kingswood colliery owners raised the price of coal, but the Corporation of Bristol refused to accept the rise and bought from outside, from the collieries of Newport, Cardiff and Swansea, thus preventing the "alarming consequences" the City manufacturers had feared. The consequences to the poor workforce at Kingswood is not recorded..... (FFBJ)

17 January

.....though work went on. A little boy, with the sad, if apt, name of Pitman Price, aged 10, was killed when he fell down Mr. Leonard's pit, called Made for Ever.

14 March

An inquest was held on Joseph Price, aged 22, who fell down Siston Hill coalpit.

April

A militia patrol, out hunting escaped French prisoners, mistakenly fired on and killed a deaf civilian who did not hear their caution. (BMBJ)

7 July

Twelve boys were convicted before magistrates at Lawford's Gate for "exercising unlawful pastimes and games on the Lord's Day." They were fined 3 shillings and fourpence each, the money to be given to poor of St Philip and St Jacob's. Five boys from St George were dealt with the same way, their fines to go to the poor in their own parish. (FFBJ)

16 July

Though some had no time for play at all. An inquest at the May Pole, Warmley was held on James Jefferies, a coalminer, aged 13, who was killed falling down Siston Hill Pit.

18 August

Assizes were held at Ilchester in Somerset. John Manners, alias Maynard and Charles Fuller, alias "the Squire" were sentenced to death for breaking open a shop belonging to Mr. Joyce at Freshford, and from there stealing a quantity of cloth. The men were convicted on the confession of Joseph Smart, an accomplice, who turned King's Evidence. Robert Ball, who provided a cart to carry the cloth away, was sentenced to twelve months. George Caines, who was concerned in moving the cloth from a Coach House to Pulteney Street in Bath, was remanded to the next sessions. Francis Caines, an oyster and cider seller, likewise concerned in the robbery, and for horse theft, was sentenced to death, as was Henry Warn, also for horse theft.

The Gaol Chaplain, or Ordinary, visited the condemned men, and made notes as follows:

“Henry Warn, born at Bitton near Bristol was executed at Ilchester September 5th 1804 aged 26 for Horse stealing. Nothing in his conduct after condemnation that indicated the true penitent as he would not confess what he had certainly in his power except some trifling incidents.”

“John Manners born at Weston, near Bath was executed at Ilchester September 5th 1804 for robbing Mr. Joyce in company with others of cloth to the value of £400 upwards. Aged 27. He made a full confession of everything he knew. Acknowledge the fact.”

“Francis Caines, born at Bitton, near Bristol, was executed at Ilchester September 5th 1804 for being concerned in the above robbery and likewise for being a confederate with the aforesaid Warn in Horse Stealing. He would not say anything of his former course of life for fear of involving his relations in his crimes. Acknowledge the fact.”

“Charles Fuller, born at Birmingham was executed September 17th 1804, aged 26. He was respited for ten days through the interest of friends. For being concerned in robbing Mr. Joyce with the above. Acknowledge the fact.”

It is telling that Francis Caines would not implicate his relations, for they were already notorious in the Kingswood district, and the newspapers would christen the Caines family and their associates “The Cock Road Gang.” Francis’s body was claimed by his friends and brought back to Bitton for burial by candlelight according to custom. It is said that Benjamin, his younger brother, aged ten, sat on the churchyard wall and whistled throughout the proceedings. This whistling in the dark was a fearful portent of what was to come. We shall hear of brother George again too.

23 August

An inquest was held on George Bryant and Samuel Peacock who were killed by the breaking of the rope as they were descending a pit at Soundwell.

8 September

One hundred and fifty French prisoners of war were marched to Stapleton Gaol, escorted by men of the Wells Cavalry and the South Devon Militia.

4 December

James Legg, a coalminer was killed whilst at work at Pile Marsh by a roof fall.

22 December

Francis Anderson was killed at Pile Marsh in an almost identical accident.

29 December

Samuel Hall and William Sampson were killed at Evans’ Pit, Oldland, also from a roof fall.

1805

18 January

An inquest was held at the Ring of Bells, Cadbury Heath on Aaron Gardiner, coalminer, aged 14, who died of a violent fracture of the skull sustained when a large coal fell on his head of which he died 5 hours afterwards.

14 February

An inquest was held at The Crown, St George on William Britten, coalminer, who died at Tyler's Pit, belonging to the Duke of Beaufort when a cartridge box fell on his head.

9 March

"A few nights since the prisoners at Stapleton made an attempt to escape. A sentinel on guard thought he heard a noise under his feet and on placing his ear to the ground could distinctly hear that men were at work. He waited silently and soon a Frenchman's head presented itself and at the same moment a bayonet was advanced to his throat with the terrible word 'Surrender!' The Frenchman very practically complied and was immediately taken from a subterranean passage with thirty others. They were well provided with provisions hoping at least to have a run for it." (BMi)

These thirty odd men must have been among the lucky few with the energy to make such an attempt, for 240 cases of typhus at the gaol had been reported, but the Bristol Mirror reported optimistically that "the fever still continues, but lessens daily in malignity, and as none of the attendants have been affected there is every possibility it will soon be at an end."

13 March

An inquest was held at Oldland on Stephen Shepherd who fell down Messrs Bennett's pit at Staple Hill.

18 March

An inquest was held at the Ring of Bells, Coalpit Heath on James Garlick, aged 40, killed at "No.16" Pit by 10 tons of rubbish falling on him. He left a pregnant wife and 8 small children.

31 March

An inquest was held on George Rogers, aged 13, who fell seven fathoms from the waymouth of Brook Neale's Pit, Yate.

4 May

An inquest held on Charlotte Sidney, aged 2, who was supposedly starved to death by her stepmother, Ann Sidney, at St George. The body was emaciated, but the coroner brought in a verdict of natural causes, and Mrs. Sidney was exonerated. (FFBJ)

26 May

An inquest was held on Isaac Taylor, coalminer, aged 13, who drowned in a well at Starveall Pit, St George.

6 June

A bride far from home: William Godfrey of Bassaleg, Monmouthshire & Mary Wathen of Bitton were married at Bassaleg. (PR)

8 June

James Thompson of Sunderland had recently come to work at Mr. Morrison's colliery, bringing with him his wife Eliza and four young children. One of the children was playing near the water at St Philip's brickworks when she fell in. The mother who was nearby plunged in to save her. When she got into difficulties, the father attempted to rescue them both. All three drowned. Three little girls, the eldest only five, were left destitute. Donations were sought which would be used by Mr. Morrison, and the Rev Mr. Hart, the vicar of St George to support the orphans. (FFBJ 8 & 17.1.1805)

24 August

There was a fashionable wedding at Siston, when Philip Thomas Wykham esquire of Thame Park, Oxfordshire, a Fellow of All Souls, married Hester Louisa Trotman, Siston Court, the daughter of the Lord of the Manor. (FFBJ)

21 October

The victory at Trafalgar made Britain safe from invasion, but the joy and relief was tempered by sadness for the death of Nelson, which was not reported in the Bristol press until 16 November.

16 December

An inquest was held on George Alsop, coalminer, 46, killed falling 142 fathoms from the waymouth to the bottom of "No 6" Pit, Coalpit Heath.

1806

10 January

An inquest was held at the King's Arms, Oldland on Hester Powell, alias Fudge, aged 47, who was accidentally drowned in a garden belonging to Francis Palmer, coalminer.

31 January

At the King's Arms again: an inquest was held on Sampson Bryant, killed at one of Mr. Whittuck's pits, at Hanham

22 February

Arraigned before the Gloucestershire magistrates: William Barrett, John Barrett and Francis Cook, who were fined five shillings each for driving their jack-asses on the footway at St Philips. (FFBJ)

27 February

John Couch's Journal: "John Berriman was killed in the quarry exactly under the road leading to the Batch on Thursday Feby 27th 1806 and buried at Bitton March 2nd aged 52 years. His wife died Sunday Feby 20th 1850 aged 101 years and four months, buried Sunday March 7th at Jeffries Hill." (JC)

11 May

The vicar of Stapleton church christened a baby, "Felix, the son of Elizabeth Stone and Felix Perrot, a French prisoner." (PR)

(One of the most intriguing of all parish register entries. Was Felix a paroled officer? (see 5.9.1807). Did he strike as glamorous a figure as the GIs did in World War II? What was the attitude of the local people towards any woman who consorted with the enemy? Any girl who "got into trouble" was an object of shame – but when the father was a Frenchman? My imagination runs riot. If only I knew what happened to them.)

26 June

An inquest at Mangotsfield on Francis Punter, a coalminer, killed at Pucklechurch in a pit belonging to Jefferies, Llewellyn & Co.

9 August

At inquest at the King's Arms, Oldland on Thomas Haskins, 42, William Haskins, his son, aged 11, John Fudge, 60, and James Horwood, 15, killed by the breaking of the rope when they were descending Mr. Butler's pit at Pile Marsh. Another man, whose name was not given, lay seriously injured.

23 August

In Castle Street, a child of four was run over by a waggon loaded with coal. She was taken to St Peter's Hospital, but did not survive. (FFBJ)

1 September

James White, aged 13, and a lad called Lewton, fell 120 fathoms down John Stibbs' pit, called Babel's Tower, by the breaking of the rope. James was killed on the spot, but Lewton, who had both legs broken, was stated to be "in a fair way of recovery."

11 October

"Last week, died at her house in Mangotsfield, in her 82nd year, Mrs. Emet. She was deprived of her sight 45 years, but sustained through life with becoming propriety the Christian character and was universally respected." (FFBJ)

8 November

James Young aged 11, was supposed to have died through ill-treatment by his father, William Young, a mason. The body was buried but was exhumed after eight days interment and an inquest was held at the Lamb, Lawford's Gate. The Jury deliberated all day, but could find no reason to suspect death by other than natural causes. (FFBJ)

29 November

"A Frenchman of some distinction" visited Stapleton in order to view conditions there. However, he himself was arrested and confined. "During his imprisonment he devised several plans of escape by bribing part of the Glo'ster militia who were on guard at the prison. On the discovery of his flight *with a Sergeant of the guard**, some privates were arrested and are in custody for trial. It is said the fugitives have been taken in Dover where they had engaged a boat and were about to sail for France." (FFBJ)

* My italics. Whatever possessed the Sergeant? A moment of madness?

4 December

James Legg, coalminer, was killed at Pile Marsh by a quantity of rubbish falling on him.

1807

24 January

An inquest was held at Bitton on Hannah Hughes, aged 27, who was found dead in a dipping well at North Common, Warmley. Verdict: Accidental Death. (FFBJ)

21 February

The contractors responsible were convicted for not sufficiently lighting the lamps in the parish of St Philip and St Jacob's, and were fined 40 shillings each. (FFBJ)

7 April

An adjourned inquest was held at the New Inn, Lawford's Gate on the body of Aaron Isles, a coalminer aged 15, of Oldland, who fell down Cowhorne Hill Pit, which belonged to Messrs Kaynes & Co.

11 April

Inquests were held at the prison at Stapleton on Pierre Cornie, who had been taken in the French frigate "La Minerve", who cut his throat with a razor and Anton Celestin, who drank himself to death.

30 May

An inquest held at the King's Arms in the Hamlet of Oldland heard how a 17 months old infant, Samuel Stibbs, was found dead in a well belonging to Samuel Bryant, coalminer. Verdict: accidental death.

27 June

The marriage took place between Mr P. Kenefeck of Millbrook House, Stapleton & Miss Archer, the eldest daughter of the late Thomas Archer of Sutton Coldfield, and granddaughter of John Chivers, esquire of Stapleton. (FFBJ)

11 July

Obituary: Thomas Amos of Winterbourne, hat manufacturer, "a truly honest man".

(FFBJ)

15 August

David Morgan, aged 65, and J. Wilkins, 22, were executed at Dorchester for uttering a forged Bank of England note with intent to defraud a certain Richard Hillary. "Since their condemnation they behaved with great penitence." Morgan, a Bristol man was brought to St James church for burial. Wilkins came from Kingswood. (FFBJ)

5 September

Two French officers, who on previous occasions were alleged to have broken parole, attempted to bribe their way out of Stapleton Gaol by offering 10 guineas to their guards. but "the sentinels acting in a very honourable manner, acquainted their commanding officer with the circumstances who advised them to bring the business to maturity." Thus the prisoners were allowed to pass all the guard points but one, where they were met with a "six file, with fixed bayonets." (FFBJ)

(French officers were trusted on their honour as gentlemen not to escape, and thus apparently mingled freely with the populace of Stapleton, which perhaps explains how Felix Perrot and Elizabeth Stone had been able to conduct their clandestine romance – see 1806. It is alleged that between 1809 and 1812, 464 officers violated their "parole d'honneur". The term "French Leave" implies that no English gentleman would do such a thing! The privilege did not extend to the enlisted men, for the same report states "the common men also lately made an attempt to escape by undermining the walls." They too were caught.)

12 September

"Pugilism: Amateurs of the Fist held a great muster on Saturday last at Kington Down, near Marshfield to gratify their taste with a view of a pitched battle between Dick Horton, the navigator and Rodney Haskins, a fighter with some celebrity, living in Kingswood, which after 38 rounds terminated in favour of Dick, after which Rodney gave in, but not till he had received a sound beating and proved himself good game." (FFBJ)

26 September

On the following day, a sermon was due to be preached at St George's church, morning and afternoon, in aid of Missions to Africa, but perhaps Kingswood had not much changed since George Whitfield's friends had complained about him going to America to convert the Indians, when so many savages lived nearer home. Felix Farley, reported, somewhat tongue in cheek, but with a noticeable dig that one had been put over on the Somerset men:

"The Kingswood Diamond – or A cut right and left"

"About a week ago, two gentlemen near Taunton each lost a valuable horse from the pasture in the neighbourhood. After much trouble they traced them in the direction of Bristol, and suspecting they might have strayed towards Kingswood they hastened thither and found one grazing on Cock Road Common. The gentlemen seized the horse. As it was late they didn't think it prudent to bring it through the country but led it to a neighbouring inn, secured it in a stable and bespoke supper and beds for the night. In the morning, they discovered the stable door had been forced and not only the stolen horse

carried away, but the two others they had used in their pursuit with saddles and bridles altogether. Neither the horses nor the audacious felons have since been heard of and the gentlemen, returning home were congratulated by their friends that they had not lost their boots and spurs.” (FFBJ)

3 October

Not only were things taken into Kingswood highly suspect. Goods coming out roused suspicions as well. A correspondent wrote to the Mayor of Bristol suggesting that it was high time “A Public Engine for the weighing of coals was established.”

On the same day it was reported that “Yesterday sennight at 9 o’clock in the evening, fifteen French prisoners made an attempt to escape from Stapleton Prison, of which six got clean off and have not been heard of since.” (FFBJ)

7 November

James Porter, caught red-handed robbing the house and shop belonging to Lydia Peachy in the out parish of St Philip’s, “peached six others, all of whom are under 20 years of age.” Nevertheless only Porter stood trial at Gloucester Castle. He received a mandatory death sentence, and was reprieved for transportation. (ibid & 26.3.1808)

1808

12 March

Tensions at the French prison frequently triggered disagreements over trivial insults. Joseph Calliau was killed in a duel by his compatriot Francois Pierre and Charles Dicjon was killed by Francois Delore. Both survivors were sent for trial at the next Gloucester Assizes, but were acquitted. (GRO/D260, FFBJ 12 & 26.3.1808)

15 March

An inquest was held at Westerleigh on Thomas Bryant, coalminer, who was killed in a coalpit at belonging to Messrs Redderdone at Yate Common.

19 March

“The son of Mr. S. Harris of Langman’s Green*, Hanham, was returning from Bristol with a cart loaded with grain when the horse ran off near the May Pole at Hanham, and the lad in trying to stop it got entangled between the cart and a tree and was crushed to death.” (FFBJ)

* I suspect this should be Longwell Green.

2 April

George Wilkins, servant to Mr Brown, fell from a wagon carrying a load of penant, returning from Downing, a sober & steady man, leaving a wife and small family (FFBJ)

4 April

An inquest was held at the Rose & Crown, St George, on Joseph Strong, coalminer, killed at Castle & Co’s Pit at Stapleton by ten tons of rubbish falling on him.

May

"A brief account of the life and happy death of Thomas Smith of Kingswood, a youth of eleven years of age, the son of a collier in the Methodist Society at Kingswood, by Jonathon Baxter."
(Methodist Magazine, 1808, xxx1 415-19)

7 May

Charles Godfrey, a prisoner at Stapleton was kicked to death by fellow Prisoners of War when he discovered they were planning to escape. The verdict was "murder by person or persons unknown."

11 May

An adjourned inquest held at Oldland on King Bryant, killed in a coalpit.

17 June

An agreement between Mrs. Fremantle and Richard Haynes, Isaac Jefferis and Samuel Jefferis for coalworking on her estate at Hanham.
(BRO Haynes family papers)

2 July

Thomas Spicer, a sawyer of Westerleigh, went into the Ring of Bells where he bought a pint of rum and a pint of gin, which he took to the sawpit house, sat down and drank the lot. The verdict of the inquest was "self-murder" and he was therefore buried at the cross roads at Westerleigh, in unconsecrated ground according to the custom with suicides.

(FFBJ)

23 July

There was a great storm. The houses of Stephen Cave, esquire of Frenchay and J.R. Lucas, esquire at Stapleton were damaged.

(FFBJ)

13 August

Thomas Powell, alias Hall, alias Lovell, was sentenced to death at Gloucester Assizes for stealing a mare at Bitton, but was later reprieved for transportation.

(FFBJ)

5 November

Jacob Pillinger, the brother of John, who appeared above in 1802, who was married to a St George girl, Ann Muntin, was, with two other men, convicted of the theft of 4 hundredweight of sugar from Bristol docks. It is difficult to understand why this was not considered a capital offence when compared with some other cases, but he was sentenced to seven years and removed to the Captivity hulk at Portsmouth to await transportation. He escaped and was never heard of again.

(FFBJ 5.11.1808, 23.9.1809, Hulks Register, NA).

27 October

David Moreton of Oldland was killed at Cowhorne Pit by rubbish falling on his body.

26 November

"Last week, a man was committed to the prison outside Lawford's Gate charged with having entered pastures in the night and milked several cows and with stealing the said

milk. Since his confinement, the prisoner attempted to take away his life by cutting his throat with a glass bottle and now lies dangerously ill.” (B Mi)

17 December

George Groves, aged 17, embarked on a long career of petty crime, which would see him often before the bench. He was committed to Lawford's Gate Bridewell charged with stealing leather breeches from William Snellgrove of Keynsham.

(see I. Wyatt, “The Cock Road Gang” pamphlet at GRO)

1809

The slow drip of deaths in the pits continued.

9 January

An inquest was held at Mangotsfield on William Lovell, killed at Castle & Co's pit at Stapleton.

16 February

.....and again at Mangotsfield on Joseph Flook, aged 18, who was killed at the Soundwell works.

18 March

John Bryant, arraigned for burglary at William Batman's, in Bitton, and accused of taking linen and other articles, was acquitted at Gloucester Assizes. “No Bill” was found against his alleged accomplice Hester Ward. Likewise “No Bill” was found against George Groves, who was accused of stealing gloves at Keynsham, and he was freed. (FFBJ)

April

Miss Whittuck's house at Hanham was broken into and various articles stolen. (FFBJ)

20 April

An inquest at the King's Arms, Oldland on Robert Leonard, killed at Cowhorne Pit.

27 May

Letters of administration were granted to Samuel Cool, coalminer, in respect of the intestacy of his father, Isaac, deceased, which was witnessed by Thomas Cool, yeoman, William Jenkins, carrier, and Benjamin Caines, horsedealer. (GRO)

Benjamin Caines was married to Anne Cool, and though the parents were alleged to be honest – see 1817 – their offspring were less so. Benjamin and Anne had already lost Francis in 1804 and others would follow, through execution or transportation.

22 June

Charles Wetstone was killed when he slipped off a rope whilst descending the pit at Westerleigh.

24 June

"Monday, George Groves, a person from Bristol who attends the fairs around the country with gingerbread was committed to Monmouth Gaol on a charge of picking the pocket of Mr. Thomas Church of Tendee near Chepstow of a purse containing bills to the amount of £60 at Chepstow Wool Fair. (BMi)

29 July

Obituary: Mrs Humphrey Creswick of Hanham Court. (FFBJ)

5 August

A Naval Officer and Military Officer fought a duel at Stapleton Gaol in which Elie Masse was "run through the body" and killed by his fellow prisoner Francois Borderau. Borderau was removed to Gloucester Castle and charged with "wilful murder".

"The duelists were attended by seconds and fought in a room of the prison with pieces of sharp iron fastened to the points of sticks. The difference between the pair originated in a game of marbles fought the previous evening. So common is the practice of dueling that no less than 150 have been fought in the last three years. The average number of prisoners does not exceed 5,500." Borderau was acquitted. (FFBJ 9.8.1809)

(Complaints of overcrowding had been made in 1796 when the number of inmates stood at 2,700! Small wonder there was tension.)

12 August

Warmley Brass & Spelter Company sued the Bristol Dock Co. for damages of £40,000 in respect of injury sustained in consequence of their water mill at Netham being rendered useless. Judgment was found for the plaintiffs and damages set at £10,000. (FFBJ)

16 September

"A numerous gang" broke into the house of J.F. Edgar esquire, at Whitehall, Upper Easton and stole razors and wearing apparel. (FFBJ)

7 October

An inquest at Bitton on William Bolwin, 10, who was killed at Cowhorn Hill Pit by a quantity of rubbish falling on his body.

15 October

An inquest was held on Lazarus Isles who was killed at one of Mr. Whittuck's pits by "damp arising" – i.e. gas.

22 October

.....also, at Mr. Whittuck's, at Soundwell, William Flook aged 15, was killed by a large stone which fell on him whilst he was ascending.

18 November

James Bryant was killed when his hands slipped off the rope when ascending a pit at Stapleton.

28 November

Inquests held at Warmley on John Lewis, aged 12, of Siston, killed at Mr. Toghill's pit when a stone fell on his head, and on John Batt aged 53, killed at Mr. Leonard's Hole Lane Pit by a roof fall of five tons of rubbish. John Batt left a wife and six children.

1810

29 January

An inquest was held at the King's Arms, Oldland on Elizabeth Lewton, aged 19, the wife of John Lewton, coalminer, who was burnt to death in the absence of her husband who had gone to work. "It appears she was near the time of her accouchement, (ie confinement) and being seized in a fit or pain of labour, she fell on the fire."

3 February

Obituary of Mrs Emmet, the wife of Charles Emmet, of Downend, and the eldest daughter of Mr Harwell. (FFBJ)

10 February

Obituary: "On the 31st ult. at the Lodge in Kingswood, died Mr. Arthur Palmer, aged 93, brother to Mrs. Walters of Bedminster who is now in her 100th year." (FFBJ)

8 March

An inquest was held on James Taylor who was killed falling down Cowhorne Pit, belonging to Richard Haynes, esquire.

2 April

Edward Sweet was killed at the same pit, by rubbish falling on his body.

21 April

George Groves was admitted King's Evidence at the Bristol Assizes, in respect of a case against Joel Lovell, William Dunham and James Hull for robbing Francis Winbow.

(FFBJ)

25 April

"Samuel Gerrish, born in the parish of Westerley (sic) in Gloucestershire near Bristol aged 18 was executed for highway robbery near Chew Magna in this County. He conducted himself for some days before his death as a true penitent and disclosed fully every action of his past life. Acknowledged the justice of his sentence."

(SRO, Ilchester Gaol Chaplain's book)

27 April

Robert Williams, 17 and James Ball, 30, both of Mangotsfield were killed ascending Mr. Whittuck's Wimsey Pit at Soundwell.

28 April

Monday last owing to the neglect of the person who attends the machinery at one of the coalpits in Kingswood, three men were shockingly mangled that one died almost instantly and two others brought to our Infirmary died also on Tuesday. (FFBJ)

4 July

James Stibbs, 65, was killed, falling from the top to the bottom of the Duke of Beaufort's Lodge Pit. .

26 July

Henry Moreton was drowned at Made for Ever by the bursting of the water spout from an old pit. Four others narrowly escaped.

4 August

The Partnership between George Tippet and Joseph Monks, of St George, quarriers & well sinkers was dissolved. (FFBJ)

25 August

Joseph Chappell was fined £20 at Lawford's Gate for not appearing to train with the West Gloucester Militia, which penalty he was unable to pay, and was committed to prison for 6 months. (FFBJ 25.8.1810)

6 October

An inquest was held at Mangotsfield on Elizabeth Webster aged 3, whose clothes caught fire in the absence of her parents. (FFBJ)

Same date: "There was a shocking accident on Thursday last to a young woman in Hanham with a child in her arms. A neighbour coming in, she asked if he wished to purchase a gun as her master had one to dispose of. The gun was hanging in the room and the man taking it down presented it to her, not knowing it was loaded. He pulled the trigger and the whole contents passed through her thigh. She was taken to the Infirmary where her recovery is doubtful. The child is unhurt." (FFBJ)

29 December

An inquest was held on Joseph Brain, killed in one of Mr. Toghill's pits at Warmley.

1811

7 January

An inquest held at Warmley on Francis Churchill, killed by stone and rubbish falling on him at Soundwell Pit.

17 January

Sergeant Louis Fontaneilles was killed in a duel by Auguste Legendre, his fellow Prisoner of War. They fought with foils or sharp pointed rods. Legendre's rod entered between the third and fourth rib, through the right lung, and penetrated the sergeant's heart. (FFBJ)

2 February

Philip Bennett, a mealman of Downend, Mangotsfield, was declared bankrupt. (FFBJ)

The death of Mr Thomas Burchill, of Downend, in his 76th year was announced on this day. His wife survived him less than two months and her obituary appears on 6 April, 1811. (FFBJ)

25 March

"Monday morning, one of the most furious and prolonged battles ever witnessed took place on Yate Common between John Neale, a butcher and W. Giles, both of Yate. The contestants set to at twenty five minutes past eight and were separated by the friends of each party three minutes after 11 o'clock having fought 137 rounds. Victory seemed to favour Neale towards the end of the battle as Giles was completely blind." (BMBJ)

6 April

George Dark of St George was convicted at Lawford's Gate for "being an improper distance from his cart and horses". (FFBJ)

11 April

"Monday last, a cartel containing 200 French prisoners selected from the depot at Stapleton sailed from Pill to Morlaix. Many of the poor creatures were in a condition truly deplorable. They would however have been discharged long since if their Emperor would have agreed to an exchange on reasonable terms. They are now sent to France in exchange for some Englishmen which the French Government has allowed to come home." (BMBJ)

12 June

An inquest at Yate on Thomas Batt, killed by falling out of the cart at Wimsey Pit, whilst ascending.

2 August

Miss A Ball, the daughter of Mr E. Ball of Frenchay was married to the Rev George Shute at Winterbourne. (FFBJ)

13 August

An inquest on Aaron Lacey of Mangotsfield, killed on the 9th August falling from the landway of a pit.

22 August

A gang of the natives of Cock Road, Bitton assembled at Lansdown Fair on Monday last armed with bludgeons and in an unprovoked manner committed a general assault on the recruiting parties then upon the Down. The temperance of the soldiers resounds much to their credit as most of them were dreadfully beaten but forebore to use their side arms. In the dead of the night, the miscreants made a complete attack upon the owners of the booths, knocked them down with their bludgeons and with the most awful imprecations

dashed the cups and glasses to a considerable amount. Five of the depredators are taken into custody: Thomas Patrick, Henry Sweet, Henry Baker, George Caines and James Hudd, to take their trial at the next assizes. (They were all acquitted the following week! Make of that what you will – give a dog a bad name?)

(BGa,BMi, FFBj, 17.8.1811, 24.8.1811)

24 August

An inquest at Oldland on George Davies, 60, who broke his neck falling down Mr. Whittuck's Clay Pit.

9 September

However, the acquittal seems to have been the last straw. A lengthy communiqué was issued referring to the "many villains of the neighbourhood and the hucksters who were in alliance with them, the cartloads of stolen goods lifted to and from different places by night, complaining that the thieves were recognised by the colliers passing to and from their work at the mines, yet none dare impeach them for fear of endangering life and property." A committee had been formed, and donations were sought towards the cause of combatting this evil. (FFBJ)

20 September

An inquest at Oldland on George Whitehead, 15, killed falling from the Landway of Buff Pit, belonging to R. Haynes, esquire.

21 September

An inquest at Mangotsfield on Samuel Jones, 14, killed falling down Llewellyn's Pit, Pucklechurch.

30 October

An inquest at Oldland on John Lear, 35, killed by a roof fall at Mr. Whittuck's pit.

30 November

Pierre Andre Halbre and Jean Rosseaux, two French Prisoners of War who had broken out of Stapleton Prison were taken at Exeter on the road to Plymouth where they intended to steal a small barge or sloop and make off in the night for their own coast. On being recognised, one drew a dagger but was overpowered without incident.

On a happier note....."William Parry, shoemaker of Bread Street has a garden near Kingswood Chapel, St George with a bed of Alpine Strawberries in full blossom, some of the fruit nearly ripe." (FFBJ)

17 December

An inquest at Coalpit Heath on Joseph Dudfield, 9, and James Turner, 11, killed at Wimsey Pit by a stone crushing their bodies.

19 December

James Llewellyn, son of the late Thomas Llewellyn, killed in a coalpit and buried at Mangotsfield. (PR)

21 December

Sampson Fry and Mary Fry, accused of counterfeiting at St Philip and St Jacobs, and William Horwood for embezzlement, were held in Newgate. (Sampson Fry was found guilty, his wife acquitted, 18.1.1812.) Thomas Milsom, Sampson Cook and Thomas Belcher were accused of theft at the house of Job Phipps in St George. William Smith, alias Friday, and Thomas Cribb were accused of the theft of meat from Mr. S. Owen's slaughterhouse in Siston. (FFBJ)

An inquest was held at Mangotsfield on Francis Hayes, killed at Castle & Co.'s pit by stone and rubbish falling on him.

28 December

The Kingswood Association for the Prosecution of Thieves, Housebreakers, etc, had its inaugural meeting at the Flower Pot Inn at Kingswood Hill.

The long winded circular reads:

"Whereas the alarming depredations continually committed by a very daring and daily increasing combination of thieves, extending their ravages for many miles round the country, and well known to reside chiefly in this neighbourhood, have induced a few persons, desirous of promoting the welfare of the community, to unite their efforts in attempting to form a society for the suppression of such enormous evils; in order to adopt with unwearied diligence such measures as may tend to produce the desired effect, by striking at the root of such a system of iniquitous practice, as it is supposed, never was equaled in any other part of the kingdom.

"The committee in pursuance of their appointment, have met at Kingswood-hill, and resolved to use every exertion in their power to promote the designs of this institution; and having acquired a comprehensive view of this singular system as to the different modes in which their diabolical purposes are accomplished, conceive it not irrelevant to detail a few particulars.

The scheme has been progressively and uninterruptedly maturing for a long series of years; and such is the nature of their establishment that whole families are dependent on this combination for maintenance; many hundreds of the younger branches are well known to be now in actual training for the like purpose. It is also ascertained that they are in the habit of decoying labourers from their accustomed employment and formally admitting them into their society.

"Great numbers of hucksters, in this and the surrounding neighbourhood are in alliance with them; the vendors of the goods are seen passing with cart-loads to and from different places by night, none presuming to interrupt them; and although it seldom occurs that any of these plunderers succeeds in securing their booty without being recognised by colliers passing to and from the mines, before they arrive at their several places of residence, yet they consider themselves inviolably secure; for any one daring to impeach them would

endanger both property and life; consequently ordinary means adopted by societies in general in offering rewards would be altogether abortive.

“Should the statement of the circumstances create surprise or be deemed an exaggeration, suffice it to observe that the committee, several of whom have been long resident in Kingswood, close observers of the transactions alluded to, and for those peculiar reasons selected as most suitably qualified to meet the exigencies of the society, stand pledged to give the most positive proof of their existence which is sufficiently notorious to the majority of the inhabitants of these parts.

“The great number of persons resident in the neighbourhood of Kingswood might reasonably have encouraged us to expect extensive assistance; such however, is the astonishing terror prevalent in the minds of very many, arising from an apprehension that the incensed miscreants would reward their interference with still greater destruction; and so many are prevented from aiding an account of their relationship to them,...and that thousands are connected by way of receiving and vending the goods, it will not be surprising that very few remain sufficiently virtuous or courageous to unite with us; and it must be needless to hint at the unparalleled enormities we have to expect, unless prompt and energetic measures be adopted. Under the very impression therefore of their very urgent necessity, the committee have determined on such cautious and vigorous steps as are likely to accomplish their designs, and hope through the united exertions of many of the respectable inhabitants of Bristol, Bath, Kingswood and their vicinity, to be soon enabled to proceed to successful operation.” (A. Braine, History of Kingswood Forest.)

1812

2 January

The newspapers were swift to respond:

“The address of the Kingswood Association contains facts which are new only to those who are totally ignorant of that neighbourhood. This community of thieves has long ago reduced its operation to a regular secure and effectual system and the gentlemen who have stepped forward to arrest this programme of organised villainy are certainly entitled to the thanks of the public. On Christmas Day last, a man and his wife returning home in a cart through Kingswood were stopped by two fellows who endeavoured to back the horse into a ditch but assistant coming, they made off. (BMBJ)

25 January

The Rev John Adey Curtis, vicar of Bitton, died aged 50, leaving a widow and 8 children. (FFBJ)

28 January

A ten year old girl called Slip (possibly Shipp?) was burnt to death during the absence of her mother at the coalpit.

12 January

An inquest held at Bitton on Ann Britton aged 40, who fell 50 fathoms down Cowhorne Pit.

29 February

John and Thomas Watkins were accused of stealing a she-ass from Thomas Stoneham, at Wick. (FFBJ)

28 March

Philip Smith, 40, of St George, hanged at Gloucester for housebreaking. (pamphlet, GRO)

6 May

Caroline Thornton, the widow of Edward Thornton, late of Warmley House, died at Hambrook. (FFBJ)

22 August

An inquest was held at Siston on Jane Woodington, 73, who was found dead supposedly by ill-treatment, but the Jury found death was by apoplexy, not violence. (FFBJ)

5 September

Sam Skull, who lived near the New Church, Kingswood, fell asleep whilst driving a coal cart and collided with a gentleman's gig at Lawrence Hill. Skull made two attempts to escape, but was committed and fined. (FFBJ)

3 October

Pinprell Musgrove, gardener to the Rev S. Parker of Winterbourne, who had been employed in the Rectory Gardens for between 30 and 40 years, sadly died by a fall from a mulberry tree. (FFBJ)

11 October

On the 4th October Thomas Shillitoe, a Quaker, set off from his home in Sheffield and travelled to Bristol, mainly on foot, to meet Ann Fry of the Frenchay Meeting House, who needed a companion to visit "the colliers, miners and a description of men called the Gang at Kingswood and its neighbourhood." He arrived on 11th October and remained in the Kingswood area for a month, visiting the people on a daily basis. The following are edited extracts from his Journal:

"We bent our course towards Mangotsfield. A man was thrashing in a barn. His countenance appeared care-worn and weighed down with anxiety of mind. We found him more intelligent than the generality. It appeared he had a wife and nine children to support and his own earnings were all he had to meet his expenses. Our counsel was received as a cordial to his poor tried mind. "

"We proceeded to the cottage of a collier; on entering which my nature recoiled at viewing the filth that surrounded us. The neighbours crowding in, the place was nearly full. Our visit appeared to be kindly received by most of them."

"We visited three public houses in which we found much company, some full of liquor; and had opportunities both with the keepers of the houses and their customers by whom we were treated with great civility."

“In one visit to a young couple, three young men came into their cottage whilst we were sitting in quiet, that appeared giddy and disposed to interrupt us, but by our endeavouring to keep under our exercise, it spread like leaven through the whole company.”

“[We visited] an aged couple whose situation in every way appeared deplorable; void of outward comforts, and from remarks which escaped their lips there was every reason to fear they were totally unacquainted with the Comforter within. We laboured to bring them to a proper sense of their dangerous situation, but all appeared to no avail.....they were on the very edge of eternity but a confirmed indifference prevailed respecting things of the greatest importance. Our next call was at the cottage of another aged couple, if possible more void of outward comforts than those we had just left, but abounding with that inward consolation that sweetens every cup. We went on our way rejoicing.”

“At Downend, in the first cottage we entered we found three small children left quite by themselves. Inquiring after their parents, we found that the father had been killed in a coalpit and the mother was gone to a day’s work. We deplored their unprotected situation and yet we had met with more pitiable cases, much larger families left to struggle with almost starvation. The repetition daily assailed our ears, ‘my husband, my sons, were killed in the pit.’ The destitute situation in which these widows and their fatherless children were left was cause at times of our going mourning on our way, especially on observing the apparent indifference manifested by some of the men so employed, to the dangers they were daily exposed.”

“At Kingswood, our first visit was to a young collier who had once been awakened to a sense of his sinful state. Strength had been given him to break from his evil practices and to turn his back on his wicked associates, but he sorrowfully lost ground again, thereby crucifying the Son of God afresh, by totally deserting every place of religious worship. We laboured to encourage him to seek earnestly for the return of that help he once had found to be all-sufficient, but this he considered unavailing. We left, deploring his miserable situation. Our next visit was to a collier and his wife, Wesleyan Methodists, the man fast advancing to his final close, but in such a sweet resigned frame of mind that our sitting with them was cordial, labouring as we had been under the painful feelings our last visit had excited.”

“At Siston, the next two cottages were occupied by widows whose husbands had been killed in a coalpit: they were left in a destitute situation so that they were obliged to force their boys to work in the pit almost before their strength was equal to the labour, to get bread for the family, and thus were thrown into a society of those whose example was likely to corrupt their morals.”

“Our next visit was the poor but comforting cottage of a blind woman, who lived alone and was far advanced in life. We found her scraping potatoes with great dexterity, and she informed us that the parish allowed her two shillings and sixpence per week, and this was all she had to live on. I could not see how she could spare anything for rent and concluded the cottage was her own, but it belonged to her next neighbour and in

exchange, she weekly washed the linen for his family, herself finding soap and firing. She had no means to heat her water but an iron pot on the range which she carried herself and poured into the washtub, which appeared almost incredible, and we were surprised she had escaped serious injury. On enquiry we found she was a clean washer, and the neatness of her cottage and the cleanliness of her apparel, though very old, was striking. Above all her state of mind abounded in gratitude for the bounties heaven daily bestowed on her."

"We made a call at the dark miserable abode of a collier who told us he had a wife and nine children, of whom four sons had just returned from their work in the pit. Their black and grim faces exhibited a discouraging appearance that my nature first recoiled at the thought of sitting down with them, but keeping in the quiet I was raised above all opposing difficulties."

"We went to the Cock-road, notorious for more than half a century as being the settlement of persons called the Gang. The chief part of them live by plunder, robbery, coining, horse stealing and every evil practice and have long been a terror to Bristol and the neighbourhood round; all attempts to get rid of them have as yet proved unavailing."

"We continued visiting [Cock-road] house to house until we felt the need of our dinner which mostly consisted of milk and slices of bread and butter. Whilst taking our repast we were surrounded by a number of poor children, among them a girl about sixteen years of age, clad as miserably as can be conceived. On asking her why she did not go to work, she told us work was not to be had, saying 'Sometimes I have victuals, sometimes I go without.' We proceeded to her house, an abode of misery in every sense of the word. The mother, this girl, two other women and three illegitimate children were living together obtaining what support they could by their evil practices. We endeavoured to lay before the tendency of their manner of life and at first they appeared to soar above what we offered and resented our interference and we were in danger of receiving some gross insults, but.....strength being given to us to plead with them, they were obliged for the counsel we had given them. In the afternoon we had a large meeting with some of the Gang which was quiet and openness manifested to receive that which was communicated.....The days being so short and the roads being in such a state as not to admit our going quickly over ground, lodging was provided for us in the Cock-road, the best our kind friends were able to procure."

"We had been previously informed that the house was swarming with rats, that they came into the bedrooms. We had not long been in our sitting rooms, before we heard them passing between the partitions from which I expected a sleepless night, but aware of the difficulty to procure suitable accommodation for us, we endeavoured to submit, and thus the night was passed over better than I could have expected."

"[At a public house] in this part of Cock-road, we met a considerable company of men who appeared to live in idleness and fullness of bread, producing idleness....and we had no doubt they were a party of those called the Gang.They behaved towards us with much civility and appeared to receive kindly what we had to declare.....We did not

apprehend danger from the Gang..... from the information we received that we need not fear travelling amongst them day and night, for no one should insult us.”

“[One man] from his own confession proved to be one of the Gang [who said] he passed his time amidst hope and fear, hoping at all times he should escape being detected in his evil practices, but fear at other times so tormenting him as to almost overcome hope, adding the way he was getting his livelihood was the way his father had brought him up, and he could not live as he did by hard labour, not having been brought up to it, and pay five shillings a week to the parish for three children; but he must continue his course of life, viz. to plunder, trick and cheat every way he could.....he appeared about 26 years of age, of a fine strong, healthy constitution, was unable to read, and had never, but twice, entered a place of religious worship. We parted from him sorrowing on his account.”

“We proceeded to Cadbury Heath, to a cottage of a young man, whom we found lounging at his fireside, appearing as if he had been on a night’s ramble. His house abounded with good things. It did not appear we were welcome guests, for he treated our observations with contempt....[but later] appeared to soften and parted from us in a friendly manner.”

“As we were passing along two men caught our eye, catching birds, a way some of the Gang spend part of their time as a cloak for their nightly depredations. We attracted their attention [but] they determined to avoid us and separated to the right and left, but one, being an old man, and having a high gate to get over to make his escape, I was upon him before he was aware. The other man crossed the road to a cottage where I prevailed the elderly man to accompany us. Upon reaching the cottage, the younger man was not to be seen. Inquiring for him, the woman of the house declared he had gone out again. My companion cautioned her against persisting in untruth, saying she saw him come into the house and there was no back way for him to make his escape again. Upon which the woman called ‘Richard, come downstairs’, but no Richard replied. The woman called again ‘Richard, come down, or I must come and fetch thee down.’ No reply being made, I found the strength to go up to his chamber, where I found him couched down behind the head of the bed. A large boned, hale young man, I should have been nothing in his hands had he resisted me. I told him we wanted his company, and took him by the collar and sent him downstairs before me. After a pause, my companion began to address him. His wife manifested astonishment as if she wished him to receive it. At first he appeared disposed to shout [*sic.* presumably reject] it, yet after much labour he became more tender..... From the kind manner they all took leave of us, we were disposed to hope our labour would not be in vain.”

“To Oldland Common. We were now amongst hatters....from the anxiety they labour under to provide for their numerous offspring it is feared their good desires are too frequently overpowered. From the high price of bread they have been compelled to begin their potatoes before the usual time, which it seemed probable would not carry them through the winter as heretofore. These scenes of misery and woe, in addition to our inward exercise, at times plunged us into suffering.”

"Our call was at the miserable abode of a man who informed us he was 75 years of age. By a hurt in the coalpit, 30 years ago, he lost one of his legs. About the same time, his wife and ten children were taken with a fever. Shortly after their recovery, his children all had the smallpox. Two years ago, his wife became deranged, and set fire to her clothes and was burnt to death. Since when his house was broken into and part of his bedding and wearing apparel taken away. All of which he related with the utmost composure and such sweetness of countenance as indicated the truth of what he further added. He hoped through it all he had been preserved from murmuring. A more perfect example of contentment and Christian patience I had never before beheld."

On education: "We were comforted in observing so much sensibility in things of the greatest importance which we met with amongst this degraded and uneducated portion of our fellow creatures and that First-day [i.e. Sunday] schools were establishing in this dark and long neglected part of the nation: yet we had to lament the want of better qualified teachers in these schools: but a hope was awakened in our minds that time would apply a remedy."

[At a meeting house called "a Bethel" Shillitoe observed that about 200 children were being educated. There were also a considerable number at a Sunday school at Cock Hill, and at another at "Upper-road". He also visited "the great school near Cock-road." They took tea with a Mr. Stevens who had been active in the establishment of these schools. Stevens appeared surprised that members of "the Gang" had welcomed Shillitoe and Mrs. Fry so cordially. Mr. Stevens had "taken much pains to have meetings with them, changing the times and places for holding them, in hopes of accommodating them, but these attempts had proved fruitless."]

Shillitoe was shocked to discover that "those called the Gang, and the colliers generally, had large families of children, but very few of them who were living together as husband and wife were married." He thought it was his duty to ask the Methodist society not to let any become members until they were lawfully married.

He concluded with a full transcript of the printed circular of the Kingswood Association which he said "may furnish some idea of the state of desperate wickedness many of those we have been visiting must be sunk into; *and yet, their conduct towards us was unimpeachable from day to day.*" (my italics) (TS)

Coalmining casualties this year, the wives and mothers of whom may well be among those visited by Shillitoe prior to and during his visit: 12 January, Samuel Coles, Mangotsfield, who fell down Mr. Whittuck's Wimsey Pit; 20 January, on Joseph Isles, 49, Oldland, killed by a fall of rubbish, Cadbury Heath; 24 February, Simon Green, 19, killed by a fall of stone at Wimsey; 12 July, at the Flower Pot, Kingswood, on Edmund Isles, 10, killed by a fall from the landway, Leonard & Co.; 9 October, at the Ring of Bells, Coalpit Heath on Charles Garlick, 25, killed by two tons of rubbish and stone; 17 October, at Oldland, on Robert Paul aged 11, who fell down the landway of Mr. Whittuck's Clay Pit. Deaths continued after Mr. Shillitoe's departure: 10 November, at St George, John Fisher, killed by the breaking of the rope at Solomon Leonard's pit; 12

November, at Oldland on William McCarthy who fell out of a cart whilst ascending Mr. Whittuck's pit at Hanham. The dates are those of the inquests. The deaths seem to have been treated as an unavoidable hazard of the trade. As Mr. Shillitoe observed many of the colliers showed indifference to their daily danger.

10 December

Charles Bryant, and Emanuel Jay, both aged 18, were charged with stealing gunpowder from Mr. Samuel Whittuck. (Glos Gaol Calendar, Lent 1813)

(It would seem that Emanuel Jay committed other offences, for a man of this name was sentenced in Gloucester to transportation for life in 1818, and left via the "Isabella".)

1813

1 February

An inquest was held on Samuel Bryant, aged 22, a coalminer, who fell down No.4 pit at Coalpit Heath.

20 March

Mr. W. Parsons of the Fleur de Lys, Pucklechurch died, and his obituary appeared on this day. (FFBJ)

27 March

Timothy Bush, Thomas Wilmott and Joseph Willis were charged by Richard Haynes esquire, the magistrate at Wick, with stealing two horses from Richard Emerson Gerrish, a Bitton farmer, two weeks before. They were condemned to death but were reprieved for transportation. Timothy Bush was the common law husband of Elizabeth (Betty) Caines, sister of the executed Francis. Timothy and Betty had two sons, James Caines Bush then aged 8 (later executed in what I believe was a miscarriage of justice) and Francis aged 6, later transported.

Thomas Wilmott was a bit of a "Jack the Lad". He had already been sought by Bitton Overseers of the Poor in 1810 who stated that "his family shall be allowed support and the man sought for and sent to prison when found." He is described as a labourer, aged 30, 5 feet 2 and three quarters tall, with a dark fresh complexion, dark brown hair and hazel eyes. He was transported on the "General Hewitt" which left the Portsmouth hulks on 28th August, 1813, and arrived at Hobart, Tasmania on 7th February, 1814, by which time thirty four out of 300 prisoners had died of scurvy. Thomas however survived, and was assigned as a servant to a Captain William Campbell at Cowpastures. In 1828 he gave evidence about an armed robbery at the house of John Waite. The same year he married, bigamously, Maria Robinson, who was John Waite's sister in law. His legal wife, Dinah, and their children remained at home in Bitton. He seems to have prospered, owning 30 acres of land, 13 horses and 70 cattle, and in 1825 was reunited with his brother Jasper, who had also been transported in 1818! By 1833 Thomas had a convict assigned to him! He died in 1846, intestate, and Dinah applied for letters of administration of his estate, under £200, which was granted in 1854.

8 April

An inquest was held at Oldland on Solomon Britton, aged 9, and Thomas Lear aged 11, coalminers, who drowned whilst at work in Whittuck's Pit.

8 May

Moses Bryant alias Woodington was committed to Gloucester Gaol by Henry Creswicke, esquire, accused of stealing a sack of wheat from Mr. Hobbs' mill at Mangotsfield.

(FFBJ)

14 June

An inquest was held at Westerleigh on James Williams, killed at Neale & Co.'s pit when the bucket fell on his head.

19 June

Obituary: Micajah Malbon, at Stapleton, after a few days illness, Captain, Royal Navy, leaving behind an amiable widow, 4 children and many friends to deplore his loss. He had devoted 34 years of his life to His Majesty's service and distinguished himself in many engagements.

(FFBJ)

26 June

James Hathaway, "a fellow who has recently committed so many daring robberies around Bath was apprehended at Warmley in the Cock Road vicinity through the vigilance of the police officers", was committed for trial.

(FFBJ)

2 July

Job Bennett aged 19, was killed by falling more than 100 feet down Mr. Stockham's pit.

6 July

John Black, aged 15, was killed when he fell from the Landway of Castle & Co.'s pit.

13 July

The laying of the foundation stone of a school in Cock Road: "The inhabitants were so conscious of the benefits to their children they gave their labour free to clear and level the ground and dig the foundations."

(FFBJ)

17 July

Henry Allum was charged with pick pocketing two pound notes from Richard Fanning, esquire, of Bitton.

FFBJ)

24 July

A senior French officer, General Brune, who had been confined at Stapleton Prison for some time was visited by his lady, from France.

(FFBJ)

14 August

The home of William Ludlow, senior, at Yate was unroofed and robbed of half a ton of cheese.

(FFBJ)

A mob stormed Bitton lock up. William Powe, Henry Willis, Samuel Brain, John Fry, Hester Britton, Hannah Jones, Sarah Lacey and Ambrose Willis were charged with assaulting constables Charles Bull and Moses Batt and attempting to rescue from them William Lacey, alias Hay, who was alleged to have stolen a loaf of bread from Sarah Townsend at Oldland. (FFBJ)

An inquest was held on a new born child discovered in a mine shaft at Doynton. Sarah Bryant, a single mother confessed she had thrown the child in, twelve hours after birth. She was committed to Gloucester Prison for murder.

21 August

Committee to Superintend the Building of a schoolroom at Cock Road:

Donations to be made to banks, and to Andrew Pope, Unity Street, Mr T. Bonville, James Square, Mr James Davis, Brunswick Square, Mr Thomas Sanders & Messrs John Thomas & Son, Bridge Parade, Mr H.O. Wills, Redcliff Hill, Mr Thomas Gadd, Somerset Street, Mr Arthur Tozer, & Mr J. Hall, King Square, Mr Peter Arrive, Upper Berkeley Place, Mr George Withy, Castle Street., Mr Joseph Storrs Fry, Frenchay, Mr H.H. Budgett, Kingswood Hill, Mr Cornelius Cross, treasurer and Mr W.B. Cross, secretary.

Subscriptions were received from: Dr Cox, Fishponds, Peter Maze, esq., J.D. & S. Sanders, G.M. Davison, esq., Warmley, Hugh Vaughan, esq., Frenchay, Edward Brice, Frenchay, Dr Lovell, Frenchay, Mr Henry Warner, Frenchay, Mr Richard Hall, Frenchay, Charles Jones, Frenchay, Samuel Brice, Frenchay, Andrew Pope, Mr H. Hunt, Mr William Baylis, Miss Whittuck, Hanham, Mr Bradford, Frenchay, Mrs Brice, and many smaller donations. (FFBJ)

On the same day, an obituary was printed for Thomas Baylis, who died at Kingswood Lodge, the residence of his brother. (FFBJ)

23 August

An inquest was held at Mangotsfield on Abraham Coles, aged 13, who was killed falling down a coalpit at Pucklechurch.

11 September

John Parker, 30 and Thomas Rodway, 36, both of St Philip and St Jacob's were hanged at Gloucester for burglary. (Pamphlet, GRO)

9 October

Robert Barrett and Samuel Barrett were accused of stealing two she-asses, one from Jacob Hollister, valued at 40 shillings and the other from George Burley, value 30 shillings. (FFBJ)

16 October

Advertisement: A Reward of 2 guineas offered for the capture of John Richards, of St Philip and St Jacob, shoemaker, who absconded leaving his wife and family chargeable to the parish. Aged 26, 5 feet 2 inches tall, dark brown hair, grey eyes, Roman nose,

bowlegged, hard of hearing. Believed to be with one Pratley on a cobbler's (*sic*) stall, Haymarket, London. Signed: Thomas Christopher, Overseer. (FFBJ)

30 October

In a political turnabout, orders were received to release the Dutch prisoners who were required to help liberate their country from the French! There were 400 Americans, now at Stapleton, mostly the crews of captured privateers. They caused such a nuisance with their frequent escape attempts, they were soon taken to Dartmoor. (DV)

John Maynard, gardener, of Lawrence Hill, was robbed of £60 cash, six teaspoons and wearing apparel. A poor man, aged 84, thus deprived of his hard earnings of 50 years. (FFBJ 30.10.1813)

19 November

"Henry Isles lost his arm by the Crane at Bath Novr 1st and died in Bath Hospital Novr 19th 1813. The Compy gave his wife £20.0.0d. J[ohn] C[ouch]. gave her £5.0.0d." (JC)

27 November

Obituary for Mr Daniel Gould, of Siston, "a very worthy man and faithful steward of Mr Trotman of Siston Court whose family he served for near 70 years".....

.....and also for Rev. William Stevery (*sic*) "At his Academy, Kingswood Hill, itinerant preacher of the Gospel amongst the Methodists. His widow's obituary, name given as Stevens, appears 12.4.1817. (FFBJ)

1814

22 February

An inquest was held at Warmley on George Martin killed when a large coal fell on his head at Jefferies Pit.

17 March

An inquest was held at Pucklechurch on Samuel Cowles aged 11, coalminer who fell to his death down Llewellyn's pit.

19 March

William Hathaway, drinking at the King's Arms, Westerleigh got into an altercation with a certain T. Gibbs, junior, a relative of the landlord. Hathaway, who was drunk, fell back against a fender, hit his head and died. He left a widow and 13 children. (FFBJ)

21 March

Petty theft was still in full spate despite the efforts of the Kingswood Association. James Purnell was accused of the theft of a black mare from Richard Matthews of St Philips, and Samuel Chilcott of taking a silver watch from William Chilcott of Bitton (which at least seems to have kept it in the family.) (FFBJ)

2 April

William Ettle was charged with his brother Joseph with stealing four bushels of wheat and chaff, the property of his master, Thomas Ashley of Wick. The Jury found "No Bill" and the pair were discharged. But much worse for both would follow. (FFBJ)

9 April

The charmed life of George Groves continued when he was charged with stealing £8 in notes from William Carter, a St Philips butcher. Again he was found not guilty. (FFBJ)

11 April

Peace was declared, and the Congress of Vienna was convened to carve up Europe between the victors. At Iron Acton, 700 villagers sat down to a celebration dinner of roast beef, plum pudding and strong beer, with dancing far into the evening. The employees of Harford's Brass and Copper Company at Warmley were served roast and boiled beef, plum pudding and "a bountiful supply of stingo." (whisky!) But nobody could have been more pleased than the wretched French prisoners at Stapleton.

16 April

Robert and Samuel Barrett were cleared of stealing she-asses, but for Samuel worse would follow and he would come to a very bad end. (FFBJ)

Obituary: "Tuesday at Hanham, aged 16, Mary, the only daughter of Henry Creswicke, esq., a young lady whose mild and amiable disposition endeared her to all who had the pleasure of knowing her." (FFBJ)

14 July, 29 July and 4 August

Inquests were held on Simon Iles who worked at Whittuck's Pit, Hanham, Charles Hendy at Engine Pit, Mangotsfield, and John Fray, aged 17, at Hole Lane Colliery, Bitton, all killed at their work.

4 June

"Detachments of French Prisoners, 300 each day, have for several days marched from Stapleton Prison on route for Portsmouth for immediate embarkation to their native land and on Thursday last permission arrived for the immediate release of all that remained who could furnish themselves with £5 to defray expenses. They mostly appeared in good plight, in high spirits and many sported the white cockade. One of them who had obtained a considerable sum by the sale of some ingenious trinkets was eased of the greater part of it by an abandoned *fille de joie* in the suburbs of Bath. Two thousand prisoners are still at Stapleton, of whom five hundred are Americans. (FFBJ)

(The "ingenious trinkets" were of course the famous scrimshaw work which comes on the market occasionally.)

25 June

An inquest was held at Horsley on Francis Cook of St George's who was killed when he fell from his horse. (FFBJ)

19 July

An inquest held at the Horse Shoe, Downend, on Priscilla Burchill, aged 61, one of the famed "Kingswood Market Women" who carried their produce by donkey cart into Bristol. She was found dead in her cart. There were no suspicious circumstances according to the Coroner who brought in a verdict of "Visitation of God."

20 August

An inquest was reported on George Bush of Wick & Abson who shot himself after the loss of his wife in childbed. (FFBJ)

10 September

"The notorious offender Groves who continues to head for the gallows" was charged with picking pockets at Bradford on Avon, but was released through lack of evidence. (FFBJ)

6 October

"Monday morning. Seven men and two women, part of a desperate gang of housebreakers were apprehended by police of this City in the neighbourhood of Cock Road after a desperate conflict. A quantity of stolen property was found concealed on their respective premises. Thomas Caines, styled "Captain" underwent an examination yesterday before justices and a warrant was made out for full commitment to Gloucester Gaol. He appeared also with two females, Cribb and Friday to take their trial at the next Assizes. Committed last week were Thomas Caines, the son of the above, Henry Willis, Sampson Fry, James Hodges, Samuel Leonard, and Hannah Pratt." A great quantity of gold and silver was said to be in the possession of Caines when taken. (FFBJ)

8 October

James Baker, alias Joy, was accused of assaulting William Brimble of Bitton, aged 84, and stealing from him his hat and wig. (FFBJ)

16 October

Commitments to Gloucester Gaol: Thomas Caines, Henry Willis & Sampson Fry, charged with violently assaulting Moses Batt and Charles Bull, constables in the execution of their duty and rescuing from them, Isaac Cox, alias Lewis, a prisoner apprehended by them on suspicion of stealing two horses; likewise James Hodges, Sam Leonard and Hannah Pratt, charged with having riotously assembled and put Moses Batt and William Long, constables in bodily fear and attempted to rescue, Isaac Cribb, a prisoner apprehended by them for felony. (FFBJ)

(George Caines went "in vengeance" against James Francis, a previous Crown witness, and discharged a pistol into the room where his children were sleeping. Fortunately, no-one was hurt. Betty Caines whose common law husband Timothy Bush had been transported the previous year was charged with the theft of 6 pigs in Bath. A collective madness seems to have been abroad in Kingswood, the swingeing penalties for crime against property seemingly having little deterrent effect. The execution of Francis Caines nine years before may have turned the heads of the rest of his family so that they placed

themselves continually in such appalling danger and in so doing drew in the likes of Timothy Bush, the Frys and the Wilmots who were related by blood and co-habitation.)

A few days later a report stated that the “Banditti” were now safely housed until March next. “We trust the approaching winter will now be divested of many of its terrors and that peaceful individuals may now sleep in safety.”

1815

7 January

George Bowden of Hanham was fined 10 shillings at Lawford’s Gate Petty Sessions for not attending to his horses. James Stone, his master, was fined £5 for not having his name painted on his cart. (FFBJ)

9 January

Charles Bryant, aged 14, was killed at Engine Pit when scaffolding under which he was working gave way.

2 February

Francis Caines and Richard Joy, both aged 11, drowned in a fish pond near Warmley when ice on which they were sliding gave way. The inquest was held at the King’s Arms, Oldland, where Aaron Stone was landlord.

18 February

Two horse stealers, “part of the notorious banditti at Cock Road” were arrested in Liverpool, having ridden the horses there. Their names were Moses Owen and James Cribb.

7 April

Elizabeth Caines, alias Bush, 31, was acquitted at the Somerset Assizes of stealing the six pigs, the property of R. Tidman. (Fragments, BRL 3068)

15 April

At the Gloucester Assizes, Mary Hickman was charged with passing counterfeit money and William Britten was charged with a burglary at John Packer’s. Both came from Bitton.

George Caines, the elder brother of the executed Francis and of Elizabeth, and brother in law of Timothy Bush, appeared at the same Assizes charged with shooting Benjamin Curtis with intent to kill. Sentence of death was passed, but commuted to transportation for life. George left England on the “Fanny” and arrived in Sydney in 1818. He was described as a native of Bristol, a carter and horse dealer aged 40, very tall for the time, 6 feet and a half inch, with a ruddy complexion, light hair and hazel eyes. As his sentence was for life, there was no question of his ever leaving the colony. He was eventually granted a conditional pardon, and opened a pub in Sydney, with the familiar name of “The Jolly Sailor” which he must have remembered from Hanham. He wrote his will on 24th March 1838, leaving all his personal goods and chattels, including a horse, cart, dray

etc., to his brother Samuel Caines, (who had been transported per the "Mary" in 1832) and was now a ticket of leave holder at Prospect. Samuel was also to be allowed to live in his house for a year. After that, all his property, houses, land etc was to be sold and his executors, John March of Sydney, stone cutter and Sampson Cook, (another ex Bitton convict) were to invest the assets. The total to be held in trust for his natural son, George Caines, by Elizabeth Ivory, daughter of John Ivory of Hanham, "a prisoner of the Crown at Norfolk until he becomes free or pardoned." If he died before this, the monies were to be divided between Elizabeth Ivory and his natural daughters, Eliza, Esther, Sarah, Elizabeth and Ann Caines. He died at Castlereagh Street, Sydney aged 68 on 23rd November 1839, his funeral being held at St Lawrence Church, and his body interred at the Old Sydney Burial Ground where a headstone still exists. George Caines junior was transported per the "Hive" in 1834, aged 23. He was alleged to have stolen a silver tankard, 12 silver dress covers, 30 shirts, a gold brooch, gold seals and other property worth £50 from William Blathwayt esquire at Dyrham, a large haul, from a big noise in the neighbourhood. His trial notes at Gloucester describe him as alias "Avery", which name was previously a mystery to me, and is now solved by the will. His sentence was for life, and he lived to inherit, dying in 1885 at Parramatta. On the 1851 census his mother, Elizabeth Ivory, is shown as Elizabeth Caines, widow, pauper, aged 74, and was living at Hanham with her widowed daughter, Elizabeth James.

(FFBJ, & Wilmot papers)

22 April

Moses Owen of "the notorious Cock Road Gang" was executed at Lancaster for the theft of a valuable mare from a Mr. Chadwick of Long Ashton and a brown gelding from the Rev F.C. Grevile of Bristol. James Cribb was also found guilty and sentenced to transportation for life. He was embarked on the "Atlas", arrived in New South Wales on 22nd July, 1816 and was "forwarded to Windsor for distribution" seven days later. He sought permission to marry at Castlereagh on 27th November 1820, and died in 1841. Josiah Holder, another alleged member of the gang, was said to be still at large in April 1815. The Bristol press congratulated the Long Ashton Association on their successful prosecution of the villains." (FFBJ 15.5.1815, Lancs R.O., NSW State Records reel 6005 4/3495, p62, reel 6007 4/3502 p 463)

27 May

It was reported that another "noted horse stealer, Edward Tyler of St Philips, a member of the Cock Road Gang", was apprehended in Liverpool for stealing two black mares, the property of a Mr. Smith of Stourbridge. He was removed to Gloucester gaol. (FFBJ)

3 June

The Cock Road Gang had sent the newspapers into frenzy. Every petty crime could now be put down to the existence of an (allegedly organised) thieves' den on the borders of Bristol. This in turn had the effect of stepping up hysterical vigilante activity. More thoughtful people, of whom there were a few, were inclined to take the view that there might be a connection between the cheapness of life as demonstrated by the carnage in the pits and the judicial blood letting on the gallows with the abject conditions in which the people existed. One correspondent wrote passionately to the Journal in defence of Kingswood, and sought the CAUSES of the trouble:

"I have read with pain several paragraphs in the newspapers of late replete with sarcasm on the inhabitants of this celebrated place, such as "COCK ROAD GANG", "COCK ROAD WORTHIES" and the like. I assume it as granted that these epithets may be truly to blame? The scarcely humanised uncivilized natives or we, their neighbours? May we not adopt the language of Jacob respecting Joseph? 'We are verily guilty concerning our brother.' What efforts have WE made to rescue them from a state of semi-barbarity? What religious information have WE afforded them? Have they not been proscribed as the offscourings of all things? Have they not been hurled down as unworthy of existence? Are they not always expected as soon as known? Are they not driven to associate almost exclusively with one another? Is not every man's hand turned against them? And is it not to be wondered at if they make reprisals that they consider all property lawful plunder? Mistake me not, Mr. Editor, as advocating nocturnal predatory excursions against them or extenuating any species of their guilt. No Sir! They are WRONG, decidedly WRONG – but are we right? Have we done all in our power to teach them better? To obey the laws, to fear God, to honour the King. Has not a system of EXTERMINATION been acted upon? Have not many, VERY MANY, been sent prematurely out of this world exclaiming 'No one careth for my soul!' Are they not to this moment ex-parochial? A state of uninstructed nature, without a Bible or the ability to read it. Without a church or a minister? Let us be sparing in our invectives against our sadly neglected neighbours – let him that is without sin cast the first stone. Let us aid those who compassioning the pitiable state of the rising generation who have built a school room capable of educating several hundred but which FROM WANT OF FUNDS can only be occupied on Sundays. Remember him who said 'as much as ye did it to one of my little ones, ye did it to me.' £80 per annum would educate some hundred children daily. Take it on the principle of insurance to protect our property, our lives. (signed) JUSTICE."

(I believe it is possible that the anonymous writer was Henry Hill Budgett, grocer and philanthropist, and founder member of the Kingswood Benevolent Society. If he was not the source, then he was certainly in sympathy with the views expressed by "Justice." Compare the poster issued at his own expense which defended the Kingswood colliers after the Bristol Riots of 1831. See my monograph "The Budgetts of Kingswood Hill.")

12 June

An inquest was held on Joseph Summerell, aged 24, who was killed falling down Jefferies & Co's Hole Lane Pit at Bitton.....

19 June

.....and on George Fletcher, 32, at Coalpit Heath who let go his hold on the cart rope and was dashed to the bottom of No. 11 Pit.

Meanwhile, on the world stage, Napoleon had escaped from his exile on the island of Elba, and war resumed, finally ending on the battlefield of Waterloo on 18th June. The ranks of the poor, (always with us), were swollen by the addition of returning soldiery out of employ. The first Corn Law was passed to safeguard agricultural interest by keeping the price of grain artificially high. In a time of glut, many could not afford to buy their

daily bread. Kingswood had long ago learned the futility of marching on Bristol to protest: instead thefts of grain became commonplace, usually attributed to the Cock Road Gang. There were some who tried to alleviate the situation, like Henry Hill Budgett and his fellow members of the Kingswood Benevolent Society, those who had given towards the founding of Cock Road School, so that minds at least did not starve, albeit for one day a week, and such worthies as William Webb of St George, who died in his 82nd year. His obituary appears on.....

2 December

.....and refers to his “unremitting personal attention to that uncultivated neighbourhood” and says that many had been rendered useful members of society by his support of the Benevolent School. This inspired another correspondent to go into print on behalf of Cock Road:

23 December

Signing himself “a grateful father”, he thanked God for the bounty of the past, the victory at Waterloo, the charitable donations towards the widows and orphans of that decisive battle; the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in France and not least the establishment of Universal Peace – but – “Permit me” – he said “to suggest one more topic of conversation: the poor neglected children of Cock Road. While we lift our grateful hearts to our Father, let us remember that Charity begins at home. About half the required sum has been collected to make a day school. Let all the gentlemen within the circuit of a few miles in the vicinity of Cock Road exert themselves to provide the remainder.” (FFBJ)

1816

6 January

W. Johnson, described as “one of the Bitton Gang”, though it seems unlikely, was taken to Shepton Mallet gaol charged with stealing a number of candles from Clandown colliery. (FFBJ)

17 February

The Kingswood Association appealed for funds. Whilst firstly they congratulated themselves that four years ago they had drawn public attention to the “formidable gang of thieves in Cock Road”, and secondly that a number of notorious villains had been taken and capitally convicted, they bemoaned that others had got away to distant parts of the Kingdom, not through lack of vigilance, but through lack of money. They had been obliged to dismiss some of the irregulars for lack of the wherewithal to pay them. If the momentum was not kept up, everybody could look forward to increased depravity, and so on. It is plain that some, if not all, members of the Association, had a whale of a time riding round the country, making citizens arrests of pathetic small-fry, and that they were reluctant to give up their sport. A meeting was called at Stephen Cave’s schoolroom in Downend for 11 am on 20th February to discuss destroying “the combination of thieves at Cock Road” once and for all.

In a glowing editorial, Felix Farley endorsed the aims of the Association, and stated unequivocally that cure was vastly preferred to prevention and dismissed the views of "Justice" and "A Grateful father" out of hand.

"We are happy to announce that the Kingswood Association is unremitted in full activity. Crump, a notorious thief who has lately been concerned in robbing poultry yards has been taken to Gloucester by the means of the Committee. THERE IS NO INSTITUTION IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD MORE DESERVING OF SUPPORT AND TO THOSE WHO THINK IT IS BETTER TO PREVENT CRIME THAN TO CURE IT, THIS ASSOCIATION HAS PECULIAR AIMS."

19 February

Samuel Bryant was killed at Yate coalworks from concussion of the brain.

24 February

The meeting took place at Stephen Cave's at Downend, and solicited subscriptions and public support for the Kingswood Association. An offshoot called "the Bitton Troop" was formed. (FFBJ)

2 March

Whilst the *infamous**, (and hungry), John Crump mouldered in Gloucester gaol awaiting trial for the outrageous crime of the theft of two geese at Siston, eight hundred of the quality gathered at Berkeley Castle for the annual Hunt Ball in a scene straight out of Jane Austen. They sat down to a sumptuous dinner at 4 o'clock, with the feast followed by glees and comic songs until 9 pm when the gentlemen retired to dress. At ten, the ballroom was thrown open and filled with all the beauty of fashion from the neighbourhood. At two the dancers sat down to supper "consisting of every delicacy the season could afford" during which a choral entertainment was provided. Dancing began again at five and the ballroom was not cleared until eight in the morning. (FFBJ)

(*newspaper italics. I was recently in the ballroom as a tourist and said a silent prayer for poor Crump.)

9 March

The intrepid Association captured two more hardened, desperate villains, Thomas and Daniel Gibbons, at Wick, with a bag of stolen hay in their possession. Meanwhile, the Birmingham Coach was stopped between Petty France and Bath, and jewellery and banknotes to the tune of £700 taken. There was no news of the offenders and for once the Cock Road Gang was not mentioned. Presumably it was way out of their league. (FFBJ)

13 April

J. Naish, of Bitton, engineer, was on the list of the national bankrupts for this week. John Crump, who had already spent two months in gaol was found guilty. (FFBJ)

1 June

The anniversary of the Cock Road Bible Association was celebrated. I know they meant well. The Rev Dr. Jennings spoke so movingly about the blessed effects of the Bible upon a starving peasant (perhaps he ate it?) that the whole company was reduced to pious tears. The Rev Dr. Randolph gave his own "brilliant address" and afterwards introduced "an old friend to grace the collecting box, a golden guinea." (FFBJ)

14 July

Bitton was visited by a smallpox epidemic. The burial register shows 13 children's deaths of the disease between July and December:

Mary daughter of Samuel & Mary Crow of Mile Hill, 17 months, 14.7.1816

Thomas Stone, Mile Hill, 10, 14.8.1816

Hannah Iles, Crew's Hole, 14 months, 25.8.1816

Mary Ann Jenkins, Hanham, 16 months, 4.9.1816

Richard son of John & Elizabeth Stone, 6 months, 8.9.1816

Harriet Wild, Longhurst's (sic) Green, 2, 2.10.1816

Mary Baker, Whipper's Hill, 5, 16.10.1816

Elizabeth Webb, Oldland, 8 months, 27.10.1816

Eliza Cook, Oldland, 14 months, 27.10.1816

Charles James, Oldland Common, 4, 5.11.1816

David Moreton, Grimsbury, 10 months, 8.12.1816

George Hawkins, Oldland Common, 3, 15.12.1816

15 August

In spite of everything there was occasional pleasure to be had. A grand peal of changes was rung at Frampton Cotterell by the ringers of Winterbourne, Wick and Abson, Westerleigh and Siston. An elegant silver cup was won by the youths of Wick, and afterwards the company sat down to an ordinary – a plain dinner – at the Inn at Frampton Cotterell. (BGa)

19 August

More shock, horror! "Caution to Colliers and Others" cried the Bristol Mercury. Moses Lewis, John Thorn and George Stokes had been sent to the Assizes for the theft of some cut grass from Mr. Isaac Britton at Corston. The value of the grass was not the point. This growing evil had to be suppressed and examples must be made shrieked the newspaper. "It is a well known fact that the generality of colliers' horses are wholly maintained at the expense of other people from thefts of the above description." – so there.

2 September

There was an inquest on George Osborne, coalminer, of St George, killed at Castle & Co.'s pit by a stone falling on his body.

19 September

Hannah Milsome and five children, were removed from St George to St James, Bath. (Bath R.O.)

26 September

"Highway Robbery. Between Gloucester Lane and the Turnpike leading to Lawrence Hill, a person WAS KNOCKED DOWN AND ROBBED OF CASH NOTES IN THE VALUE OF £300 BY A PERSON KNOWN AS William Garratt Smith, alias Tally. He is aged about 30, 5 feet 8 inches tall, broad set, sallow complexion, dark skin, short dark brown hair, dark eyebrows, full black eyes, a scar or mark on one cheek from a musket ball, speaks with a Yorkshire dialect and has the appearance of a Jew. Reward, £50, Any accomplice turning King's Evidence will be entitled to the above reward and every means used to obtain his pardon. (FFBJ)

10 October

Francis Stone and Isaac Roberts were taken to Gloucester accused of the theft of a pocket book with a £5 note from a farmer, James House of St George. (FFBJ)

24 October

The Bristol Gazette carried a public notice addressed to the subscribers to Cock Road School:

"Tomorrow, the 25th instant, the school will be opened for children of both sexes where the rules and other interesting information will be brought forward and addresses will be delivered to parents and children. The chair will be taken at 11 o'clock precisely.

(Signed) P. Arrive.

W.B. Cross. Secretaries.

10 November

An inquest was held on Thomas Spicer aged 15, and Stephen Summers aged 50, who died when they fell out of the cart coming up Wimsey Pit, Soundwell. The newspaper report, dated 18 November stated that Summers was 54, and had left a wife and six children and that two others were badly hurt in the accident. (GRO/D260, BMe)

With the opening of the school, the socially conscious gentlemen had evidently exerted themselves. Prevention might after be better than cure. For some, as we shall see, it was too late, and matters continued as usual.

1817

2 January

A farmer, William Boyd of Frampton Cotterell caught Francis Lear raiding his potato patch. In the ensuing scuffle, Farmer Boyd's gun went off, killing Lear. Boyd was charged with manslaughter and remanded to the next Gloucestershire Assizes where he was found guilty and imprisoned for six months. (BGa, 2, 9 .1. & 10.4.1817)

Thomas Johnson, aged 59, a coalminer, was killed falling 70 fathoms down Castle & Co's pit by the breaking of the rope whilst he was descending.

18 January

A poor man called Spicer was robbed of provisions when returning to Downend, near Fishponds, and on the same evening a man called Golding was robbed of 7 shillings and left lying in the road. (FFBJ)

13 February

The Treasurer of the Kingswood Benevolent Association spoke of "the wretched abodes where frequently hunger, nakedness and disease are preying on the vitals of our fellow creatures." (BGa)

17 February

Francis White, a coal carrier was killed in a fight at Yate. The coroner's jury brought in a verdict of manslaughter and George Hook was sent for trial.

3 March

The Oldland Vestry, hoping for a contribution to its overstretched funds wrote "The Committee for the Association for relieving the distressed, manufacturing and labouring poor" – thus: "Our hamlet is composed of colliers, quarrymen and the lowest class of husbandman. There are few rich persons....." (BRO Oldland Minutes)

8 March

A previous acquaintance: "We understand that the notoriously well-known George Groves attempted yesterday to make his escape from Gloucester gaol. He has since been honoured with a large quantity of leg irons. (FFBJ)

19 March

An inquest was held at Oldland Common on William Gay, killed at Leonard & Co's pit when one ton weight fell on him.

20 March

Hannah Reece was charged by Henry Creswicke, esquire of breaking into the house of Amy Hutton of Bitton, and stealing various articles. (BGa)

1 April

An inquest was held at the Tennis Court, Warmley, on John White who fell 17 fathoms from the Landway to the bottom of Baynton's pit.

3 April

Henry Phipps and James Stone were charged with breaking into the house of George Robbins, carpenter, of Bitton. They were capitally convicted, but no sentence was passed.

William Ettle aged 22 and Jacob Pool, 37, were found guilty of robbing an old woman, Hannah Ship of Yate, with such violence that she lost an eye. It was said they left her for dead in the fear that she would recognize them. They were also found guilty, of robbing Thomas Ashley of Wick and Abson, Ettle's employer. They were sentenced to death.

(BGa 10.4.1817)

12 April

Bristol Assizes: George Groves, aged 26, was removed from Gloucester to gaol by Habeas Corpus, charged on oath of Samuel Snell and others with having, at the parish of St George, received 50 yards of bombazine, the property of Edward Leigh Lye, esquire, knowing it to have been stolen. He was acquitted, having an alibi that he was in gaol at Fisherton, Wiltshire. Though "it is whispered the whole story is a hoax invented by the Captain himself and that when reported at Fisherton he was exercising his vocation in Bristol."
(Fragments, BRL 3068 & BBFJ 11.9.1819)

23 April

An inquest was held at Oldland Common on Samuel Harvey, killed at Hole Lane by a quantity of rubbish falling him.

24 April

Ettle and Pool were executed. "Ettle's wife took her leave of him in great distress. She had an infant only six weeks old. Pool also had a wife and children, but separated from them long since due to his ill-treatment of her.

Neither spoke a word at the scaffold, either to the crowd or to each other. All animation in Pool ceased after about four minutes. The convulsive struggles of Ettle seemed to go on much longer."
(BGa)

2 June

The Cock Road Bible Society once again held its annual meeting. It was still hoped that the scriptures would be taken into every cottage in this long neglected district, that the inhabitants might learn the way of life more perfectly. Dr. Randolph gave an animated speech and was followed to the rostrum by Messrs Dermott, Jaggar, Maurice, Biddulph, Day, Cowan, Elwin and Whish, and then by Charles Bompas and Stephen Prust. (FFBJ)

16 June

The occasion of King George III's birthday and the Bitton Troop dined in style at the George in Bitton. On the way home, William Batman, a young farmer from Wick, who had recently enrolled as a private, encountered three men on horseback, carrying sacks of wheat. With considerable courage, he cautioned them, but one drew a pistol, and threatened to blow his brains out. William slashed the nearest ruffian with his sword, and they dropped their booty and galloped off.

3 July

"Captain" Thomas Caines, presumably recognised by Private Batman, was committed to Gloucester Gaol for the theft of the three sacks of wheat valued at £4 from a loft belonging to Mr. C. Dolling, an innholder of Cold Ashton.
(BGa)

14 July

Five men from St George, driving a cart and seven horses were stopped in Hampshire. The cart was found to be full of counterfeit coins. They were named as William Stevens, and four brothers, William, John, James and Francis Weeks.

A club treasurer, Mr. Mountain, living near Cock Road was burgled by three masked men who broke into his house and took £6. They were disturbed and in their haste to escape missed the larger cash box which contained £50. (BGa)

20 July

The notorious George Groves was now out and about again. He was arrested in Penn Street, Bristol, accused of stealing watches, knowing them to have been stolen. When Mrs. Groves read the warrant to her husband he cried "I'm damned if it isn't nuts for me now!" (BGa)

7 August

"It is to be lamented that a gang of desperate villains mounted and armed so near this City should be allowed to bid defiance to all civil power. Not a night passes in which they do not plunder houses, gardens and fields. It is not long since they burnt the corn ricks belonging to Mr. Abbot. Thursday night, they, in the most inhuman manner houghed a horse belonging to a constable in Bitton and on Friday night he was alarmed by his dog when he saw the villains from the windows and fired at them, which they immediately returned and broke the windows. A fine cow also fell victim to their savage resentment, being houghed and mangled in the same manner." (BGa)

11 August

Benjamin Caines, the brother of Betty Bush, had been cleared in 1816 of an assault on Parish Constables Batt and Bull. He was described as 5 feet 7 and a quarter, with a light, fresh complexion, dark grey eyes, and a short turned up nose. He was the younger brother of Francis who had been executed, of George who had been transported, and Thomas who was currently awaiting trial. He came up again charged with burglary at the house of Sarah Prigg at Bitton. Miss Prigg had retired for the night when she was woken by three masked men entering her room. She screamed "Murder!" and was knocked down by one of them, who demanded money, and "muttering dreadful imprecations" seized her pockets which were lying at the foot of the bed. Miss Prigg's nephew, James Evans, who was downstairs testified that that he had been pushed on to his bed by the intruders, and covered with a quilt. By lifting the corner he was able to recognise one of the men whose mask had slipped and saw it was Benjamin Caines. He was threatened by a sword and a pistol. Benjamin is alleged to have said: "Wag and you die!" (BRL, Ellacombe Mss)

At the same court hearing Henry Willis was charged with killing the constable's bay mare and hamstringing the cow.

George Haskins was charged with attempting the rescue of Thomas Pratten, who had held by the constables for felony.

James Long was charged with burglary at the house of Samuel Brain and taking two feather beds, sheets and wearing apparel, to the tune of £20.

John Pool and Aaron Haskins were charged with the theft of four sash lights and a leaden light from Aaron Haskins, value £4

Stephen Horwood, alias Locking, was charged with highway robbery at St George

Richard Moreton and Thomas Sweet were charged with two separate burglaries at Bitton

And finally, Ambrose Willis, Francis Britton, Henry Moreton, Dinah Powe and Elizabeth Powe were charged with affray at Bitton.

25 August

When the cases came up at the Gloucestershire Assizes, 30 people were sentenced to death. Three, for murder, were summarily executed. Of the rest, all but two were respited and sentenced as follows:

Thomas Caines, seven years transportation for the theft of the wheat.

Henry Willis, for the sadistic mangling of the animals, two years in gaol.

Ambrose Willis, 21, a collier and Francis Britton, two years for obstructing the constables.

Richard Moreton and the two Powe women, Dinah and Elizabeth were acquitted.

The remainder awaited removal to the hulks for transportation.

The two who remained for execution were Patrick Dalton, aged 20, an Irishman from Sligo, for highway robbery and the theft of a silver watch, and Benjamin Caines.

6 September

“By the Gazette of 26th August, we observe that the Prince Regent has granted a free pardon to any offender (except the person who actually committed the outrages) who shall discover his accomplice or accomplices in a desperate gang who have lately not only maimed a hackney mare, but also a bullock, the property of George Haskins, and who also fired at him in his house the same night, which outrages it is supposed were committed out of revenge to him for having so zealously discharged his duty as constable of the Hamlet of Oldland. A reward of 25 guineas is also offered by the Cock Road Association. (FFBJ)

8 September

“Benjamin Caines for burglary and Patrick Dalton for Highway Robbery were executed at Gloucester on Saturday last. They had attended prayers in the chapel in the morning and died with apparent penitence. Caines was in his 22nd year and was born at Bitton. His employment was travelling with oranges and fish and his parents were considered as honest and industrious but several of their children have turned out depraved characters and two other sons have been transported.” (BMe)

The body of Benjamin was brought home to Bitton and displayed (on payment of a small fee) to all who wished to see it to defray the expenses of the funeral, which was indeed a lavish affair. Six young girls dressed in white acted as pall bearers, and they carried the coffin through massed crowds to St Mary's, Bitton. By the time the cortege arrived it was dark, and the ceremony took place in the mellow glow of candlelight. The Rev Henry Thomas Ellacombe, aged twenty seven, who had only recently been installed as curate, preached an impressive sermon on the theme “Let him who stole, steal no more.” The body was then lowered into the ground to join that of Francis who had been hanged thirteen years before.

The bizarre nature of the proceedings fired the imagination of the young minister, and he determined to find out as much as possible about the extraordinary nature of the place to which he had been called. He remained thirty three years, and in that time collected memorabilia from his parish and the surrounding area with magpie like fervour. When a handbill was issued, Henry saved it. When there was a property sale Henry collected the brochure. Odds and ends of manuscripts which may have been thrown away as so much rubbish were rescued. When the Creswicks of Hanham Court gave up their long struggle with the receiver and emigrated to Canada, Henry was there, and saved a treasure trove of material, some of it centuries old. He traced the ancestry of the notable families of the district and attempted the same with some of the lesser beings, the colliers, hatters and felons. He kept press cuttings. His enthusiasm knew no bounds. He pasted all the material into scrapbooks in a manner which would make a modern archivist wince. He eventually published "The History of Bitton" in two volumes, a sanitised version of the manuscripts, more suited to Victorian sensitivity, but it is in the manuscripts where the people are preserved for posterity.

When H.T.E. retired aged 60, he was succeeded by his son, Henry Nicholson Ellacombe, who served Bitton until his death in 1916 making ninety nine years of two incumbencies between father and son. H.T.E. died aged 96, and his collection of manuscripts came to Bristol where they still remain in our Reference Library.

19 September

Anne and Betty Wilmot of Bitton were committed to Ilchester, charged with uttering base and counterfeit coin. (BMe)

27 October

Elizabeth Baker was charged with stealing from a room in Niblett's Court, St Philips: five £1 Malmesbury banknotes and 18 shillings in silver belonging to Joseph Stone, collier, of Bitton. (BMe)

10 November

"Early Wednesday morning last, the school at Kingswood founded by the late John Wesley was broken open by a numerous gang of robbers which infect that neighbourhood. After ransacking every part of the school, they decamped with a few books and mathematic instruments. Many depredations during the last 70 years have been committed in the premises belonging to the Institution but this is the first instance of burglary. It is another glaring proof of the deplorable degeneracy of those whose ancestors venerated the School and revere the memory of its founder." (BMe)

1818

10 January

Sarah Naylor of Lawrence Hill, William Perryman of Crews Hole, Hannah Lane of Hanham, Hannah Prat, of Hanham, William Smart, of Kingswood. Mary Stone of Hanham, Mary Wilkins of Kingswood were among those included in a list of poor "Persons Receiving Pay from Clifton Parish for themselves and their families." (FFBJ)

7 February

Eleanor Alderwick, nee Silk, a native of Devizes had been missing from her lodgings in Lawrence Hill, since February 1815, described as being "in a deranged state of mind". A reward was offered for information. (FFBJ)

11 April

The marriage was announced of the Rev H.T. Ellicombe, MA of Bitton to Anne, 4th daughter of William Nicholson of St Margaret's, near Rochester. (FFBJ)

(Later the vicar would note in the parish register that he had altered the spelling of his name to Ellacombe, which he believed was the more venerable version.)

5 May

Thomas Caines arrived in Australia by the "Neptune". He was described as a carter, aged 30, 5 feet 9 and a quarter inches tall, with a fair, ruddy complexion sandy hair and grey eyes. In 1822, at Sydney, on the general muster, he was making a living as a horse dealer. On the muster 1823/4/5, he had become "free by servitude", and appears living with his brother George. He died at Narellan in 1846, his age given as 63. (Wilmot papers)

9 May

"A notorious culprit, George Williams, a native of Bitton, was taken at Dowdeswell Hill, Gloucester, and conveyed to Worcester Gaol, charged with stealing three horses, one from his father in law at West Bromwich, where he is also wanted for burglary." (FFBJ)

25 July

Captain William Britton of New York and Miss Sarah Parker of Warmley were married. (FFBJ)

24 August

"William Thomas aged about 14 and another lad were last week committed to Ilchester for picking pockets at Lansdown Fair They were pupils of the noted George Groves who was on the Down mounted on a fine charger and very well dressed."

Captain Bevan, (from Wick), now at the head of "his newly formed North Somerset Yeomanry attacked a large assembly of riotous colliers and succeeded in dispersing them." (BMe)

"Persons and families who receive weekly relief at St Peter's Hospital" (the Bristol Workhouse) in this year included: John Atwood and his wife of near the Queens Head, Hanham, Ann Bateman and bastard, pinmaker, of near Two Mile Hill, Kingswood, Charles Brown, soldier, and wife of Lawrence Hill, Francis Burley, collier and wife, at Giles Peacey's Gloucester Lane, Esther Harvey of Warmley, Emma Hunter, gardenwoman, of Hanham, Thomas Hussey, hatter & wife, Bitton, David Morgan, labourer & wife, of Made For Ever, Hannah Smith, garden woman, of near the New Church, Kingswood, John Watson, collier and wife, Mangotsfield: he absconded; James West, bargeman, of Hanham, and Mary Williams, straw bonnet maker, of Bitton.

(BRO P/StM/OP/6)

1819

23 January

Samuel Brain, alias Black, was charged with the theft of thirty one shillings and wearing apparel from J. Willis of Bitton. (FFBJ)

8 May

"Saturday last at Mangotsfield, died a cow with every symptom of hydrophobia. Persons in the family thought it necessary to undergo ordinary precautions of dipping in the sea, (!) and we hope they will have received no injury." (FFBJ)

22 May

James Ballard, Joseph Parker, William Bryant, alias Dagger were charged with housebreaking of Stephen Flook's at Oldland, and stealing a blue coat and three waistcoats value £5. Later, Jane Baker was also charged. (FFBJ 22.5.& 29.5.1819)

31 July

Samuel Goss, aged 15, was drowned when he fell out of a barge going up the Avon. (FFBJ)

14 August

George Groves, the notorious thief, "alias George Crossman, well known in this City, was charged with attempting to pick the pocket of Stephen Hill, shoemaker at Salisbury." (FFBJ)

(George, as you may have noticed, was always reported by the newspapers tongue in cheek, as if he was some kind of Robin Hood figure. He escaped the law on so many occasions that I am quite certain he was a common informer. It appears that by 1822, the façade could be maintained no longer and in January of that year he was transported from Derby. He is believed to have been murdered in Australia. - See Pamphlet, BRL 3068).

5 December

"An alarming conflagration which had taken place in one of the Pits at Coalpit Heath near Frampton Cotterell, Gloucestershire was happily extinguished without occasioning further damage. Three unhappy sufferers lost their lives, and the other miners who were very seriously injured are in affair way to recovery." (Gents. Magazine)

1820

Electors, Bristol Poll, 1820:

William Beaven, cordwainer, Hanham

John Bush, labourer, Hanham

Peter Bush, labourer, Oldland

Thomas Clark, sawyer, Hanham

James Coggins, St George, basketmaker (ex Brislington)

James Green, carpenter, Mangotsfield

George Hoare, edgetoolmaker, Mangotsfield

George Wilmott Hulbert, accountant, Hanham

John Hulbert, yeoman, Hanham

James Jefferies, yeoman, Mangotsfield
William Nicholls, butcher, Mangotsfield
Edward Rider, Crews Hole, St George, waterman
Thomas Stone, carpenter, Mangotsfield

26 January

The following anecdote under the title "Surprise in a Coalmine" appears in this edition of Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, and is anonymous apart from the initial "W."

"A young West Indian Creole girl, a sweetly sunburnt beauty of wealth and family was sent to England to be educated as a young lady and innocent of the world fell to the blandishments of a rascally attorney, a noted roué whose business was on the brink of collapse due to his extravagant expenditure and notorious gallantry. He married her and they set up home together in a Bristol mansion and he carried on in his old ways until all was lost and he was carried off to Newgate as a debtor where he eventually died. The young woman now in destitute circumstances, shunned by friends and branded as a felon's wife succumbed to providence. The young son of the union was taken in by an old woman who had been employed under his father's roof in the days of prosperity who had received great kindness from his unfortunate mother. Being very poor she was compelled to find employment for the youth as he grew up and he became a labourer in the coalmines of Kingswood for a long period.

"One summer's morn, on returning from my accustomed walk, I thought there appeared an unusual bustle amongst the miners who were congregated in a group around the mouth of the pit. It first struck me that some disastrous accident had occurred but as I drew nearer I perceived by their gesticulations that it must be some occurrence of a grateful character. They were surrounding a person respectably attired with pleasurable emotions and at the same time many were eagerly gazing down the shaft of the pit, the windlass of which was drawing something up, a young man in a bucket who was quickly surrounded by all eagerly shaking hands, laughing, jumping and exhibiting other expressions of delight and congratulations towards the young miner.

"He was now called up to enjoy the proceeds of a very handsome property that had been litigated during his unfortunate parents' lifetime but had not been finally adjusted till a short time prior to this agreeable 'surprise in a coalmine'"

23 April

Rebecca Worlock of Oldland was charged with the murder of her husband Thomas by poisoning his beer with rat poison which she had obtained from an apothecary on Kingswood Hill. Thomas, aged 40, was buried on this day at Bitton.

29 July

"Whereas I, Emma Brain, wife of John Brain of North Common in the parish of Bitton, labourer, have disseminated false and unwarrantable reports prejudice to the character of Charlotte Jefferies of the same parish, spinster, and she hath threatened to prosecute me therefore but in consideration of my promising not to do the same again and paying the

attendant expenses she hath kindly consented to forego such prosecution for which lenity I hereby offer her my best thanks. Dated Bristol July 25th, 1820. The mark of Emma Brain, witnessed by Joseph Jacob.” (FFBJ)

29 July

Details of the Bitton Inclosure Act are to be found on page 2 of Felix Farley's Bristol Journal on this day. The following are named:

Public Carriage Road:

Martha Quarman, Dr. Woodward, William Isles, James Hollister

Private Carriage Road and Public Footways:

Dr Woodward	T. Hignell	A. Drummond, esq
T. Baynton	H(enry). Creswicke	Isaac Ship
John Couch	A. Whittuck, esq.	George Burgess

Private Carriage Roads:

Mrs. E. Pearsall	George Wilmot	Richard Brain
George Short	Robert Young	Jacob Short
Samuel Edwards	Isaac Lovelock	Late Wickhams
William Olds	George Whittington	R(ichard) E(merson) Gerrish
Widow Hix	T. Gerrish	Aaron Brain
Isaac Gay	Thomas Harvey	Isaac Jefferies
William Flower	William Warne	George Robbins
Robert Williams	John Gerrish	James Baine
William Water	A. Drummond, esq.	Thomas Stevens
George Potter	William Stevens	S(amuel) Whittuck, esq.
A. Williams	James Gulley	D. Pedigrove
Rev J. Pring	S. Willis	Joseph Whittuck, esq.

(NB. Names which appear twice in the list have been omitted.)

16 August

Rebecca Worlock, aged 36, was hanged at Gloucester Gaol and her body handed over for dissection. The remains were buried at Bitton on 18 August.

(PR, FFBJ, 19.8.1820. For the full unhappy story see “Until she is dead”, by Penny Deverill.)

7 October

John Crib, a collier, in the habit of bringing coals to the City of Bristol fell down on his return to New Church (i.e. St George) and expired in a fit of apoplexy. (FFBJ)

A MOST AWFUL CATASTROPHE.

A true, full, and particular Account of

WILLIAM JONES,

Labourer, of Crew's Hole, near Bristol,

Who, as he was returning home on Tuesday Night last, Nov: 16, from his daily Work,

**WAS ATTACKED BY A MONSTER
AND NEARLY
TORN TO PIECES.**

We have received several communication of the above most melancholy and awful circumstance — Far be it from us to induce a belief of supernatural appearances ; but the facts related in the following narrative are so extraordinary, and so strongly attested by the unfortunate sufferer himself, that we shall leave the Reader to form his own opinion on the subject.

As the above William Jones was returning home from his daily labour, on Tuesday night last, between seven and eight o'clock, he was attacked and violently assaulted by a Figure, of an extraordinary appearance, near his home, which dragged him over walls and hedges, and beat him in such a manner, that his jaw-bone was broken, his teeth knocked out, and he also received a violent bruise on his thigh, the mark of which has every appearance of its being done by a cloven foot. The Monster then endeavoured to drag him into the river, but the poor man crying "Lord have mercy upon me," it had no further power over him, but vanished in a moment. — The great exertions the man made in struggling for his life, together with the wounds he had received, almost deprived him of life, and he was picked up in a senseless state by some neighbours the same night, and conveyed home. — He lay in a dreadful state, attended by a Medical Gentleman, until Wednesday night, without uttering a word, when being a little recovered, he related the facts above mentioned, declaring the Figure had cloven feet. — So great are his horrors, through the power of imagination, at the present period, that it is feared he cannot survive, as he protests that he is fully persuaded it was the Devil that attacked him ; the Figure he says first appeared in the shape of a horse, and from that to a shape he can scarcely describe.

1820

Harry Bonner, Printer, Bristol.

HARRY BONNER, TYP

11 November

"The workmen digging the New Road on Rodway Hill, Mangotsfield discovered a stone coffin of large dimensions in which was a perfect skeleton, supposed to have been there since the days of [King?] Stephen". (FFBJ)

16 November

"A Most Awful Catastrophe" took place when William Jones, a labourer of Crew's Hole "was attacked by a monster and nearly torn to pieces."

"As the above William Jones was returning home from his daily labour on Tuesday night last between seven and eight o'clock, he was attacked and violently assaulted by a Figure of an extraordinary appearance near his home which dragged him over walls and hedges and beat him in such a manner that his jaw bone was broken, his teeth knocked out and he also received a violent bruise on his thigh, the mark of which has every appearance of its being done by a cloven foot. The Monster then endeavoured to drag him into the river, but the poor man crying "Lord have mercy on me," it had no further power over him but vanished in a moment. The great exertion the man made in struggling for his life, together with the wounds he had received almost deprived him of his life and he was picked up in a senseless state by some neighbours the same night and conveyed home. He lay in a dreadful state, attended by a Medical Gentleman until Wednesday night without uttering a word, when being a little recovered he related the facts above mentioned, declaring the figure had cloven feet. So great are his horrors, through the power of imagination, at the present period that it is feared he cannot survive, as protests he is fully persuaded it was the D---l that attacked him. The Figure he says first appeared in the shape of a horse, and from that to a shape he can scarcely describe. "

(Pamphlet, Harry Bonner, Printer, Bristol, BRL)

(The words "more water with it" spring to mind.)

.....and with Kingswood evidently "gone to the Devil" there we must leave them for the time being.

A DAY AT THE Hat Factory
see Elcombe MSS Vol NO 9 (B Ref lib)

APPENDIX I.

SOLDIERS FROM THE WARS RETURNING. (The following men from the Kingswood area served in the Napoleonic Wars. The names of those who were killed are not known.)

Name	Parish	Regiment	Service	Age at discharge
Abraham Amos	Bitton	Royal Artillery	1795-1814	42
Daniel Baun	Stapleton	35 th Foot	1809-20	28
John Bennett	Frampton Cotterell	Somerset Militia	1807-29	39
Stephen Bird	St George	28 th Foot	1806-14	29
Thomas Bryant	Wick	19 th Dragoons	1810-17	26
Wm Butler	Bitton	64 th Foot	1799-1819	43
Wm Cambridge	Stapleton	15 th Dragoons	1799-1816	41
Henry Cook	Bitton	23 rd Foot	1813-23	29
Aaron Fudge	Hanham	3 rd Foot	1816-38	40
Lewis Harding	Bitton	3 rd Foot	1800-22	42
William Harper	Stapleton	41 st Foot	1813-39	44
Joseph Hignell	Bitton	1 st Foot	1816-39	40
Wm Hillier	Bitton	3 rd Foot	1822-44	46
Amos Hobbs	Pucklechurch	82 nd Foot	1812-16	29
John Hooper	Stapleton	56 th Foot	1800	27
Charles Jaques	Bitton	3 rd Foot	1801-09	28
Wm Jefferys	Wick	40 th Foot	1821-42	39
Charles Jones	Stapleton	15 th Dragoons	1801-17	37
John Jones	Stapleton	15 th Dragoons	1805-21	31
John Jones	Stapleton	6 th Dragoons	1805-29	43
John Lear	Stapleton	66 th Foot	1813-21	36
Wm Leonard	Stapleton	12 th Dragoons	1795-1816	40
John Marsh	Winterbourne	Rifle Brigade	1818-41	39
Edward Marshall	Abson & Wick	67 th Foot	1785	46
Isaac Millett	Frampton Cotterell	40 th Foot	1807-14	32
John Moon	Mangotsfield	50 th Foot	1807-10	21 (Trade: labourer, lost an arm)*
George Moore	Stapleton	38 th Foot	1805-14	32
Wm Moorman	Mangotsfield	3 rd Foot	1813-14	26
Michael Moseley	Iron Acton	46 th Foot	1817-34	36
Elihu Moss	Bitton	9 th Dragoons	1813-41	45
Charles Palmer	Wick	3 rd Foot	1808-30	39

Samuel Palmer	Stapleton	59 th Foot	1804-28	41
Stephen Parker	Wick	22 nd Dragoons	1815-37	48
Daniel Pullen	Iron Acton	60 th Foot	1815-27	50
Daniel Rogers	Hanham	28 th Foot	1807-33	40
Jacob Smith	St P & St J	3 rd Foot	1807-14	26
John Stone	Bitton	11 th Dragoons	1800-06	26
Samuel Strong	Stapleton	11 th & 18 th Foot	1790-98	30
Stephen Sweet	St George	50 th Foot	1804-14	27 (28.4.1813, service 8 years 5 months, wounded left leg at Almaraz, of "New Church" Bristol, (i.e. St George), Trade: labourer, 5' 6 and a half inches, grey eyes, fair complexion, dark hair, died 4.1.1830.)*
Charles Taylor	Winterbourne	32 nd Foot	1817-43	46
Samuel Taylor	Bitton	9 th Dragoons	1813-38	42
Samuel Tippet	Bitton	3 rd Foot	1798-1818	38
John Tovey	Westerleigh	47 th Foot	1798-1810, (12y 4m service)	45
John Tovey	Westerleigh	50 th Foot	Information differs from above. Is this the same man	(7.2.1811, aged 56, 50 th Foot. Service 4 years 6 months. Complaints "Chronic Rheumatism & worn out", of Westerly, Glos, Trade: Labourer, 5 feet 10 & a half, dark hair, brown eyes, complexion fair".)*
James Waite	Mangotsfield	2 nd Dragoons	1805-18	37

Jacob Walter	Westerleigh	102 nd Foot	1798-1812	53
Wm Whitaker	St George	27 th Dragoons	1796	28
John Wickham	Bitton	1 st Foot	1793-1816	46
Robert Willis	Hanham	52 nd Foot	1804-17	40
Job Witchell	Westerleigh	40 th Foot	1807-19	36

* see "The Blind Half-Hundred" Royal Army of Reserve, Glos FHS Journal, no 21.

APPENDIX II

SEAMEN AND ROYAL MARINES FROM THE KINGSWOOD AREA WHO WERE AT TRAFALGAR IN 1805:

Name	Parish	Rank
William Adams	St George	Private, Royal Marines
Robert Boyde	Downend	AB (Able Bodied Seaman)
William Brook	St George	AB
Joseph Buxton	Hanham	AB
Peter Bush	Kingswood	Boy, 2 nd class
Isaac Cole	Hanham	Ordinary Seaman (OS)
Samuel Cole	Downend	OS
Thomas Coles	St Philip & St Jacob	Private, Royal Marines
Joseph Cooper	Siston	Landsman
Samuel Cowles	Downend	AB
Charles Cox	Stapleton	Landsman
Moses Dagger	St Philip & St Jacob	Private, Royal Marines
Samuel Eyles	Stapleton	Private, Royal Marines
Thomas Hall	Bitton	Landsman
Samuel Harris	Winterbourne	Private, Royal Marines
Francis Hicks	Bitton	Private, Royal Marines
George Hodges	St George	Private, Royal Marines (served on "HMS Victory")
William Howell	Mangotsfield	Landsman
James Hughes	St Philip & St Jacob	Private, Royal Marines
George Jefferies	Siston	Private, Royal Marines
Stephen Watts Jefferies	Mangotsfield	OS
William Loveless	Winterbourne	Landsman
Moses Llewellyn	Mangotsfield	Private, Royal Marines
George Skidmore	Iron Acton	Private, Royal Marines
John White	Bitton	AB
Joseph White	Mangotsfield	Private, Royal Marines

Appendix III

The French:

The following are just a few of the French POW escapers at Stapleton, 1811-1814:

Name	quality	Date of escape	Details of escape	remarks
Jean Antonio	seaman	25.2.1811		
Pierre Allen	seaman	25.2.1811		
Jean Baptiste	seaman	25.2.1811		
Fras. Belliard	surgeon	30.7.1811 from Wincanton	Recaptured 1.8.1811. taken to Stapleton	3 Englishmen aided escape. £5 reward paid to Mr. Mapiter for his recapture
F.A. Bron	gentleman	12.12.1812	From Welshpool. Recaptured Shrewsbury	Reward of 10 guineas paid
J.M. Biche	Servant of Captain Barbaud		From Whitchurch	Sent to Stapleton Sept. 1812
Louis Conor		29.6.1813	Escaped Oswestry	Sent to Stapleton
Pierre Douinivere		18.12.1810	Recaptured 28.10.1810	Escaped again
Jean Depeyron		25.2.1811	Retaken Congresbury, with Lefebvre	
G.F. Devignon	soldier	25.7.1811		
Jean Fortin	seaman	25.2.1811		
Jacques Lefebvre	seaman	25.2.1811	Retaken Congresbury, with Depeyron	
J.B. Gallet	Midshipman	19.11.1811	Escaped from escort, Conway	From Wincanton to Stapleton
P.A. Halabre	seaman	9.11.1811		Sent to Plymouth, 14.11.1811
Christian Hanson	seaman	26.11.1811		
Pierre Liot	seaman	18.12.1810	Recaptured 26.12.1810	Escaped again 15.2.1811 with Douinivere and Pierre Laborde

Stan Legache		7.10.1811	Recaptured 25.11.1811	Sent to Chatham 17.12.1811
L.J. Martin	surgeon	5.6.1813	Escaped from Whitchurch. Recaptured 7.6.1813	Sent to Stapleton
Joseph Penau		18.12.1811	Retaken 21.12.1811	
Pierre Proverot		22.2.1811)		
Guillaume Pouldebarque		22.2.1811)	These three escaped with four others	A woman in Bristol was alleged to have harboured Pouldebarque
Juan Pedro		22.2.1811)		

Two of the “French” prisoners had Spanish names, and one was a Scandinavian. The French Navy, like the British, took on all nationalities.

Appendix IV

Addenda to Annals of Kingswood II, 1776-1795:

Removals from St James, Bath:

Job Brewer, his wife Mary and 2 children to Oldland, Bitton, 26.7.1781

Ann Rockwell to Bitton, 20.2.1781

Samuel Jeffreys, (soldier) Elizabeth his wife and 4 children to Siston, 10.2.1794

Samuel Harris, his wife Mary and 3 children, to Siston, 28.8.1794. (Bath R.O.)

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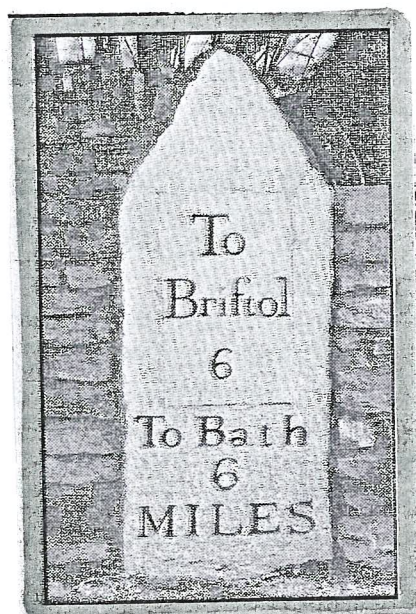
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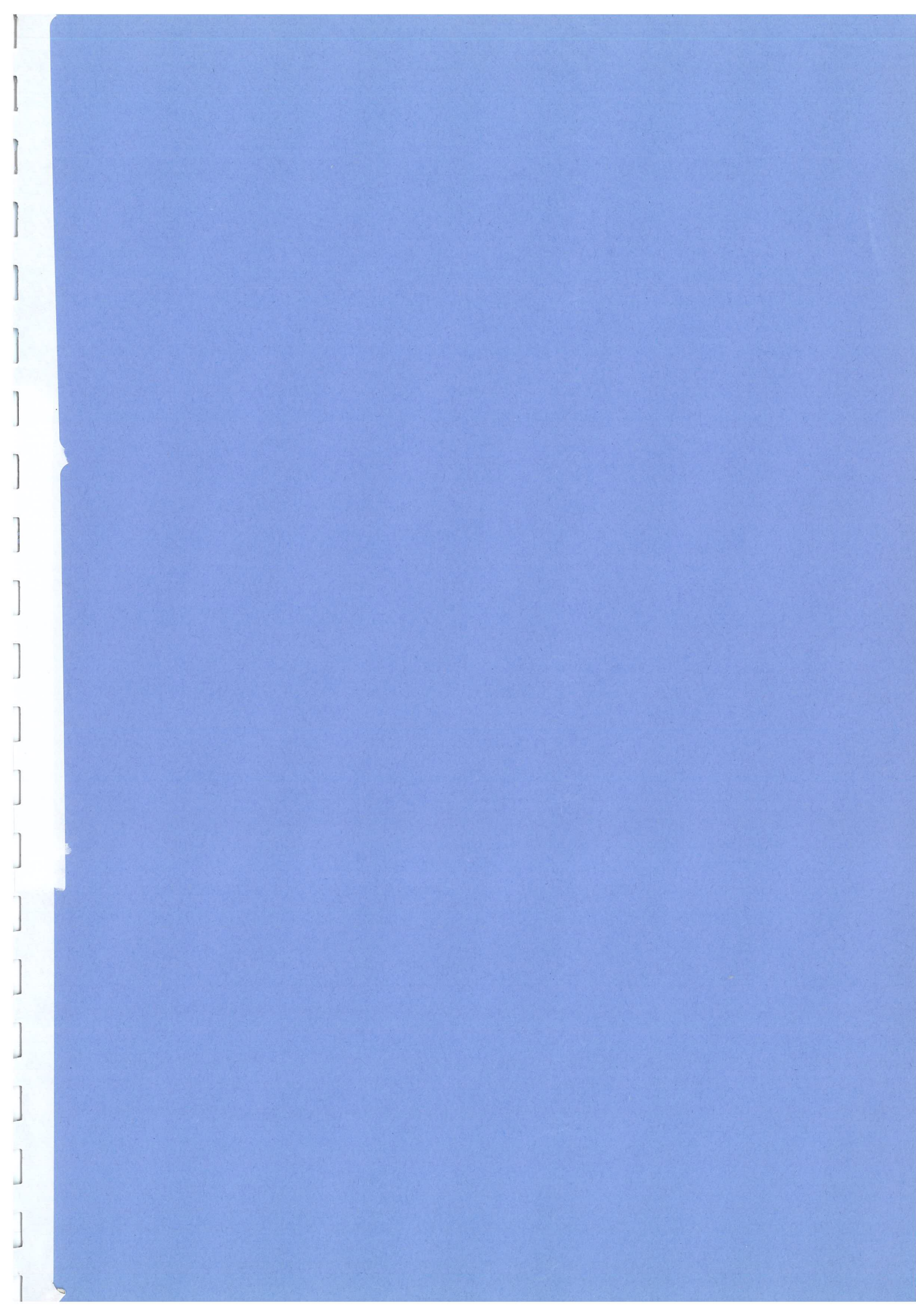
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