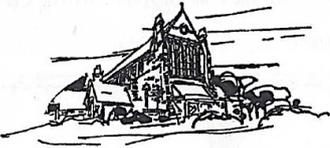


St. Hildeburgh's *Dispatch*

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A fortnightly on-line paper to entertain all during the Coronavirus pandemic



The Captain and the Ghosts!

A True Story.

It would be difficult to find a more sceptical, pragmatic, and no-nonsense sort of character from the 18th century than John Jervis, later to become Admiral Sir John Jervis, Earl St. Vincent. Born in 1735 at Meaford Hall, near Stone, Staffordshire – about 75 miles from Hoylake – Jervis went to sea with the Royal Navy at the age of 14 and began a brilliant career that culminated in him defeating a Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent in 1797, serving as Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean fleet, and between 1801 and 1804 as First Lord of the Admiralty where he rooted-out corruption and malpractices in the King's dockyards. A brilliant seaman and a strict disciplinarian, he hauled down his flag for the last time in 1807, retiring to Rochetts, his home in Essex where he died in 1823, his remains being brought quietly – without pomp and ceremony – to be laid to rest in the family mausoleum at the parish church in Stone.



Jervis's sister, Mary, married William Henry Ricketts whose father owned extensive plantations in the West Indies. In 1765, when this ghost-story begins, William was parting for Jamaica to be about his father's business, leaving his wife and their baby son in a house he had rented in a tiny and remote Hampshire hamlet called Hinton Ampner. It was a large house and the Ricketts employed eight servants to wait upon them. Even before moving in, Mary had heard stories of some odd goings on inside the house,

but Mary, like her brother, was a sensible, down-to-earth woman who dismissed such tales as country superstition and downright nonsense. She had heard that the previous tenants had moved out, rather suddenly, leaving their groom, Joseph, alone in the house as caretaker of their belongings. Mary had heard that Joseph, “being in bed in the attic, saw a man in a drab coat with his hands behind his back in the manner his late master held them, looking steadfastly upon him.” Mary was not impressed with the story and had no intention of being disturbed by the gibberish of ill-educated country folk.

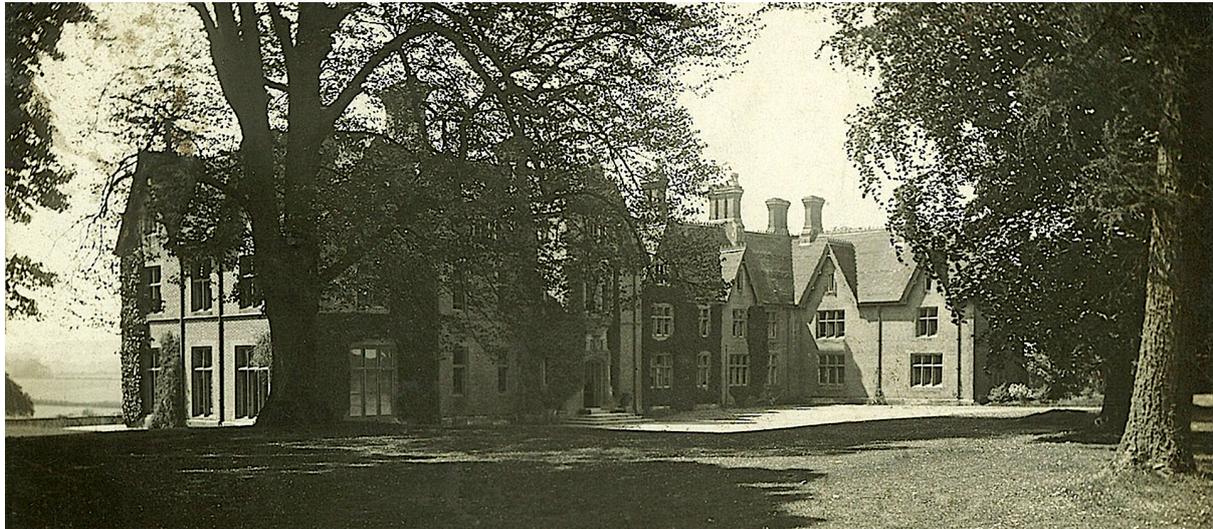
Mary was to remain at Hinton Ampner from 1765 to 1771 and during that period she kept a day-to-day journal that makes compelling reading. This journal can be consulted today in the British Library’s Manuscript Room (under ref. 30,011). Mary begins by making a list of her servants, each with a character sketch against their names, such as “of reputable parents and virtuous principles” ; “quiet and regular” ; “of strict integrity” etc. These observations are significant given that the strange occurrences began with testimonies from three of her servants. Mary was convinced that it was no malicious scheme on their part, besides, she writes, “... in truth [it] was far beyond the art and reach of man to compass.”

Little is known about the early history of the house, located only 8 miles east of Winchester, with Portsmouth about 20 miles to the south. The Domesday Book records the ground as being the property of the Bishop of Winchester, and the Dean and Chapter remained the landlords until 1863. Over the years many wealthy tenants hired the Tudor manor house, including Edward Stawell, a member of a prominent Somerset family. Lord Stawell, as Edward became in 1741, lived at Hinton with his sister-in-law, Honoria Stewkeley. He died of apoplexy in 1754, and Honoria died four months later. It was this pair that was said to haunt Hinton Ampner in what the National Trust describes as “one of the best recorded ghost stories of the eighteenth century.” Since the Ricketts lived there, the house had been rebuilt more than once. The 2nd Lord Stawell rebuilt it in 1793, the Victorians made their mark around 1867, and a disastrous fire caused major damage in 1960. During the 1793 demolition, a box was discovered containing a small skull. It was seen as proof of a story that had long circulated in the neighbourhood, that the spirits of Edward and Honoria haunted the house on account of them having done away with a bastard child that they had produced between them.

The first time Mary Ricketts became uneasy was on a hot summer’s evening when her frightened nurse came running in to her. She said that she was sitting in the nursery with baby Henry (then about 8 months old) when through a door directly opposite leading into Mary’s bedroom, she “plainly saw a gentleman in a drab-colour’d suit of clothes” walk into the room. She was not surprised at first, until a housemaid came in on the man’s heels and no one else was in the room. The nursemaid could not be persuaded that she had imagined it, stating that the room was light and bright “being sufficient to distinguish any object clearly.”

Nothing further occurred until the autumn when a man-servant “crossing the great hall to go to bed, saw at the other end a man in a drab-coloured coat whom he

concluded to be the butler who wore such coloured clothes, he being lately come and his livery not made.” He thought no more about it until he got upstairs and found the butler and the other male servants in their beds. So far, all this had been hearsay to Mary. But that was about to change.



Hinton Ampner Manor

Mary’s bedroom opened on one side into the nursery, on the other into a small lobby or vestibule to the bedroom proper. This had no windows, only a second door to the hall. When she went to bed, she not only locked this hall door but also her bedroom door, thus making of the lobby a small sealed enclosure with two locked doors and no other openings of any kind. The door into the nursery, where the nursemaid slept with the baby, was always left open. Mary writes : “Some time after Mr. Ricketts had left me, I heard the noise of someone walking in the room within.” The room within was the lobby. Not frightened at this stage, Mary got out of bed to investigate but found nothing. “In the summer of 1770 one night” Mary continues, “I had been in bed half an hour, thoroughly awake and without the least terror or apprehension on my spirits. I plainly heard the footsteps of a man, with plodding step, walking toward the foot of my bed.” This time, Mary shot out of bed and into the nursery, where a rushlight was kept burning. Rousing her maid, they both went back into the bedroom but saw nothing. “This alarm perplexed me more than any one preceding, being within my own room, as distinct as ever I heard, myself perfectly awake and collected” wrote Mary.

From this point on, the sounds began to increase in character and variety : “One night I heard three distinct and violent knocks as given with a club, or something very ponderous, against a door below stairs,” and for a long time after Mary “was frequently sensible of a hollow murmur that seemed to possess the whole house, it was independent of wind, being equally heard on the calmest nights, and a sound I had never been accustomed to hear.” Four weeks later : “I waked between one and two o’clock. I lay thoroughly awake some time and then heard one or more persons walking to and fro in the lobby adjoining. I got out of bed and listened at the door for twenty minutes, in which time I distinctly heard them walking.” Mary again woke the nursemaid and they

nervously ventured into the lobby but found the doors locked and the room empty. "I stood in the middle of the room pondering with much astonishment, when suddenly the door into my bedroom sounded as if ployed to and fro by a person standing behind it. This was more than I could bear." Mary stirred up the men-servants who checked all the doors and windows and found them locked with their bolts shot as usual. The night of the 7th May was particularly loud and continuous, and in the night chill and the deep country silence, the frightened women got up and stood at the lobby door for half an hour, when suddenly "the great hall door directly underneath was clapped to with the utmost violence, so as to shake my room perceivably." From that night on, Mary had a maid sleep in the room with her, and both women experienced the same disturbances. By now Mary was convinced that she was not the victim of some trickery. She wrote : "On the contrary, I became convinced it was beyond the power of any mortal agent to perform. After mid-summer the noises became every night more intolerable and were heard till after broad day in the morning." But things got worse. "I could frequently distinguish articulate sounds, and usually a shrill female voice would begin, then two others with deeper and warlike [quarrelsome ? hostile ?] tone seemed to join in, yet tho' this discourse sounded as if close to me, I never could distinguish words." The walking, talking and banging of doors continued night after night, but Mary was heartened to hear that her brother's ship had arrived in Portsmouth and that he was coming to spend a few nights at Hinton.

John, duly arrived, but Mary could see that he was tired after his time at sea and decided to say nothing about the disturbances ; not to burden her brother with a matter of so incredible a nature. Anyway, he was bound to witness it for himself. "So great was my reluctance to relate anything beyond the bounds of probability, that I could not bring myself to disclose my situation to the friendly brother who could most essentially serve and comfort me." Incredibly, while John remained in the house, nothing happened ; nothing was heard. But the *very* night he returned to his ship, "I heard with infinite astonishment," Mary records, "the most loud deep tremendous noise which seemed to rush and fall with infinite velocity and force on the lobby floor adjoining my bedroom. I started up and called to Goden [the nursemaid] Good God ! Did you hear that noise !" Goden could not have failed to hear it and lay in bed half-dead with fright. "Just at that instant we heard a shrill and dreadful shriek repeated three or four times, growing fainter and descending until it seemed to sink into the earth." Hannah Streeter, a friend of Mary's, was sleeping next door to the nursery. She had been derisive of Mary's tales of disturbances and had rashly invited '*them*' to appear. Now she spent the next two hours paralysed with fear ; "deprived of sense and motion. From then on until she quitted the house there was scarce a night that she did not hear some person walk toward her door and push against it, as though attempting to force it open." The toll was beginning to tell on Mary's health. Lack of sleep and constant fear had induced "a slow fever and deep cough." News arrived that her brother John was back in port and coming up to stay again. This time, Mary decided, she would tell him everything.

The arrival of her brother had a soothing effect on Mary's nerves but at first, she did not broach the subject with Captain Jervis. On his first night, there had been noise

and disturbance, but when she indirectly asked John at the breakfast table whether the 'servants' had been noisy during the night, her brother replied that he had slept soundly. Mary, however, was now at the end of her tether and, beginning falteringly, she told her brother that she was going to tax his powers of credulity but that he must trust her and hear what she had to say. Mary, however, need not have worried. Jervis had every confidence in his sister and knew her to be a steady and sensible woman, not given to hysterics or wild imaginings. He listened with growing astonishment as he welcomed a neighbour, Captain Luttrell, who was joining them for breakfast. Luttrell offered to stay and help them investigate the cause of the phenomena.

That night, Jervis and his hard-bitten sailor-servant, John Bolton, went around the house checking door and window fastenings in every room, particularly those on the first and second floor, and then checking any place where someone might be hiding. Satisfied that all was as it should be, John Jervis slept in Mary's room, Luttrell and Bolton sat up in another room, and Mary went to bed in a third room, with Goden for company. "So soon as I lay down, I heard a rustling as of a person close to the door" wrote Mary. Almost simultaneously she heard Luttrell, rooms away, call out "Who goes there ?" This was followed by Jervis calling from his room "Look against my door !" He had heard, Mary said, the sound of someone walking from room to room. Investigation revealed nothing, but thereafter the antics continued into the daylight hours. Doors opened and slammed violently shut. John could offer no reasonable explanation but advised his sister to leave the house as soon as possible. The disturbances continued up to the time when he had to return to his duties in Portsmouth. The matter, however, was never far from his mind and his letters to Mary were full of enquiries as to the latest situation and reiterating his advice to get out. Mary hesitated to do so in her husband's absence. Her final experience involved "a favourite cat that was usually in the parlour with me, and when sitting on table or chair with accustomed unconcern, she would suddenly slink down with the greatest terror, conceal herself under my chair and put her head close to my feet." The cat would later emerge as if nothing had happened. Mary's husband eventually returned home and experienced the manifestations for himself. The Ricketts had no wish to incur the expense and inconvenience of moving house, but after six years of disturbances they were literally driven to it. After they left, the noise became so violent and unrestrained that people passing the house at any hour would stop and listen before moving swiftly on. The manager for the property was unable to rent it, and he could not even find a caretaker. Convinced that it was all a hoax, he offered a reward of 50 guineas for anyone discovering the culprit or culprits. A small fortune as this was, the reward was never claimed. In the end, in 1793, the house had to be pulled down.

Forty-seven years later at Rochetts, the subject came up at Earl St. Vincent's breakfast table with Mary present. Several guests gave varied suggestions as to the cause, all of them dismissed by Mary with a wave of her hand. St. Vincent was asked what he thought was the cause ? He replied that he remembered at the time a neighbouring clergyman saying that the noise was "the commerce of the sexes". The Earl said this very, very seriously, but Mary knew her brother well, and saw the twinkle in his eyes.



Laughter ~ the best medicine



The Early History of the Bible in England from Tyndale to the Authorised Version

2 : MILES COVERDALE



Miles, or Myles, Coverdale (1488-1569) during the years when Tyndale was engaged on producing an English Bible, was equally hard at work with the same object in view. It was Coverdale who produced the first complete Bible printed in the English language, and this was issued on the 4th October 1535 – the year Tyndale was kidnapped and imprisoned.

Coverdale was born in York and became an Augustinian friar but left the Order because of his belief and support for the Reformation movement. In 1528 he fled to the Continent but returned to England a year prior to Tyndale's execution. A rapid change of outlook had taken place, and now the English authorities were willing to accept a complete translation of the Bible. It makes the feeble efforts to save Tyndale's life all the more tragic. Unlike Tyndale, Coverdale prospered under the wings of powerful protectors. He was induced, some say unwillingly, to undertake the translation by Cromwell and probably Sir Thomas More, and all his expenses were defrayed. There has been some doubt as to when and where the translation was commenced, but Antwerp seems the most likely place where Coverdale worked alone, and we know from the imprint that the translation was finished in October 1535. Two title-pages were printed, one with the same type as the Bible, the other in English black letter. It is a matter of bibliographical debate as to which was issued first. The Bible was dedicated to Henry VIII who is compared to Moses, David, Solomon and Jehosaphat. Coverdale, whether flattering, or condemning, always laid on his colours with a thick brush !

A friend of Tyndale, John Rodgers, undertook a revision which welded together the best of Tyndale and the best of Coverdale. However, he felt compelled to work under an assumed name – Thomas Matthew – and in 1537 'Matthew's Bible' was published, probably printed in Antwerp. Rodgers was later to fall victim to the gory reign of 'Bloody Mary', becoming one of the Protestant martyrs.

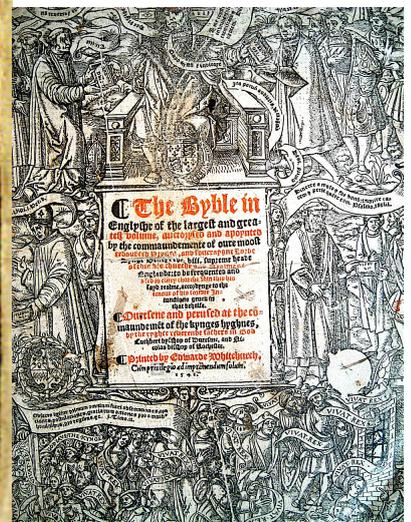
In 1536, before the Dissolution, an edict was issued requiring the clergy to provide a Bible in Latin and English, and to lay it in the choir of every parish church for all to read. The order was repeated in 1537, 1540 and 1541. Even then, the Bible was still a rarity and though nearly all the copies were chained, few complete examples remain today. Latimer complained that local clergy were slow to obey the edict. At this time, only 1,500 copies had been printed and there were almost 8,500 parishes. Of Coverdale's Bible, the Castle Ashby library, home of the Marquis of Northampton, housed a perfect copy with the exception of the map. It is supposed to be the only copy so nearly complete to

exist and in exactly the state in which it was first issued. The Rylands Library in Manchester, however, has two copies, and what is thought to be the only surviving copy with the first title-page is in the library of the Earl of Leicester at Holkham Hall, Norfolk. One of the Ryland copies has a facsimile of this title.

More Bibles were required to fulfil the edicts. Reprinting 'Matthew's' it was thought would provoke hostility, and Coverdale's 1535 version was not translated (unlike Tyndale's) from the original Hebrew and Greek and was therefore felt to be insufficiently scholarly. Coverdale was sent to Paris to oversee the printing of what was to be called, the 'Great Bible'. This was to be printed by Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch, but in France, not England, as the art of printing at that time was less advanced in England. Coverdale had several assistants (including some of the bishops), and printing began in May 1535. At first, the overseers were pleased with progress, but things soon began to go seriously wrong. One of the English team was accused of heresy, some of the English bishops were accused of collaborating with the French to halt printing altogether, and Coverdale reported from Paris that some 2,500 printed copies had been confiscated by the Inquisition. The work came to an abrupt halt and Grafton and Whitchurch fled to London. What had been thus far printed was seized and burnt. In 1539, in exchange for diplomatic favours, the French agreed to release paper, type and printing presses, but not the finished books. Grafton and Whitchurch returned to Paris to collect these goods and managed to also bring back some salvaged unbound copies obtained from corrupt French officials. All bound copies had been destroyed. Printing began afresh in Grey Friars. 3,000 copies were printed by the end of April 1539, and another 3,000 copies, fulfilling the royal injunctions, by the Spring of 1540. The 'Great Bible' was born, a title fully justified since it measured 16 ½" x 11" (337 x 235 mm).

Intolerance soon raised its ugly head again, and in 1540, newly married, Coverdale fled England into his second exile, this one lasting eight years. Two days after fleeing, Robert Barnes was burnt alive at Smithfield, and Thomas Cromwell lost his head on the block at Tower Hill. In 1548, Coverdale was invited to return home. He toured the country preaching, and in 1551 became Bishop of Exeter. When Mary came to the throne, Coverdale was in danger once again, but he was eventually allowed to go into a third exile, this time in Denmark. When Mary died in 1558, Coverdale, busy on further translations, did not rush home, and when he did return, he refused to be reinstated at Exeter, but in 1564, accepted the bishopric of London. Coverdale died in January 1569 and was buried under the communion table in the chancel of St. Bartholomew's near the London Exchange, remembered as producing the "Bible of the largest size" – the Great Bible. This version had been received with huge acclaim. Here at last were the Holy Scriptures in a tongue everyone in England could understand. Two magnificent copies were printed by Grafton on vellum, one for King Henry and the other for his Vicar-general. They were embellished and illuminated ; their covers richly embossed in brass. The one made for Cromwell is now in the library of St. John's College, Cambridge. The title-page to the Hagiographia shows Henry VIII seated on his throne, presenting the Great Bible to clerics on the one side and to laymen on the other. Below, to the left and right, are Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Thomas Cromwell, distributing Bibles. The political message is clear. Rome no longer has authority over the English Church, and the Pope's supremacy has been replaced by Henry VIII's. Also, from henceforth, the Bible is to be available to every man in the land, rich or poor, and in their native tongue. After Cromwell fell from grace and was beheaded, his coat of arms was cut from the engraving, leaving an ugly space which is to be seen in all editions after

1540. See black & white version below. The arms were situated at the feet of Cromwell on the right. The coloured version below has no sign of the arms as the area has been touched up and skilfully coloured in.



Title-Page of the Great Bible of 1539

[Seven editions were published, three in 1540, Archbishop Cranmer's and others a year later]

In the final part of this trilogy, we will trace the history of the English Bible down to the Authorised Version of King James.

Wirral Quiz

*How well do you know our Peninsula ?
Test your knowledge with these ten questions.
(Answers will be found on pages 19 & 20).*



- {1} Who designed St. Hildeburgh's Church ?
- {2} Where would you find the 'Monks' Stepping Stones, sometimes referred to as 'Roman Road' ?
- {3} What is the name of one of Wirral's oldest families who have occupied Poulton Hall for around nine hundred years ?
- {4} Where would you see Thor's Stone ?
- {5} Where was Sir Wilfred Grenfell, of Labrador and Newfoundland fame, born ?
- {6} After Ringo Starr became the drummer for the Beatles, their first appearance together took place on this peninsula. Where was the venue ?
- {7} Outside a cottage at Parkgate, stones have been laid out in the form of a name. What is the name ?
- {8} Where was the famous 'One o'Clock Gun' located ?
- {9} One of the limits to the Port of Liverpool is on the north Wirral coast. Where is this boundary ?
- {10} What was the name of the ill-fated submarine built at Cammell Laird in 1939 and lost in Liverpool Bay ?



A Trip to the Hoylake Races in 1828

[From *The Liverpool Mercury*, Friday 24 October 1828]

(With thanks to Nigel Hall for sending this in).

Note: The racecourse stood on the land now occupied both by St Hildeburgh's Church and the Royal Liverpool Golf Links.

It is with pleasure that we learnt that in the remote corner of the Peninsula of Wirral in Cheshire, races are intended to be run annually ; and our pleasure was enhanced on witnessing the first of a series of sports, which will no doubt be continued with increased spirit and success.

The inhabitants of Hoylake and the surrounding villages were on the march at an early hour on Monday morning, preparing to attend the long-expected races. Every vehicle was in requisition to convey parties from the various ferries on the Cheshire shore, opposite our good old town [Liverpool], to witness the sports of the day. Induced by the novelty of the scene, groups of both sexes, and of all ranks and ages, were seen hurrying towards the scene of action.

The race-ground in front of the [Royal] hotel presented an animated and picturesque appearance ; and what with the assembled multitude, the humble carts, smart drays, and elegant gigs, the sluggish and purblind hacks and prancing racers, moving about among booths and tents, and stalls and tables, which creaked under the load of apples, pears, oranges and nuts, pies, gingerbread, and candied confectionary, old Hoylake never saw so much bustle since the day when King William embarked his army at that place for Ireland.

Every window in the front of the [Royal] hotel, which commands a full view of the course, was occupied, chiefly by elegantly-dressed and beautiful females, the wives, daughters, and relations of the more wealthy of the gentlemen farmers who reside in the neighbourhood ; and to judge from the nods and smiles passed from the course to the windows, many a heart must have been captivated. The races passed off with much éclat. Many of them were well contested and gave great satisfaction. The utmost praise is due to the gentlemen who acted as stewards, for their unremitting exertions in preserving order and regularity, not a single accident having occurred to interrupt the hilarities of the day. The ground is admirably adapted to the purpose, being of a sound and turfy nature, and not liable to be injured by wet weather. The view of the race from every part of the ground is distinct and satisfactory ; and it may be concluded that, from their proximity to Liverpool, Hoylake races will, in a few years, be more fashionably attended than any of those lately established at Neston, Holywell, or elsewhere.

In the evening a ball took place at the [Royal] hotel. The company was numerous and respectable ; and a finer display of grace, beauty, and fashion could scarcely be imagined.



GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL

A TRUE STORY

by William Wordsworth



OH! what's the matter ? what's the matter ?
What is't that ails young Harry Gill ?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still !
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle gray, and flannel fine ;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill ;
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill ;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still !

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he ?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover ;
His voice was like the voice of three.
Old Goody Blake was old and poor ;
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad ;
And any man who pass'd her door
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling :
And then her three hours' work at night!
Alas ! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
—This woman dwelt in Dorsetshire, —
Her hut was on a cold hill side,
And in that country coals are dear,
For they come far by wind and tide.



By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old Dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage ;
But she, poor Woman ! dwelt alone.
'Twas well enough when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the *canty* Dame
Would sit, as any linnet gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh ! then how her old bones would shake !
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead !
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed ;
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

Oh joy for her ! whene'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout ;
And scattered many a lusty splinter
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile before hand, wood or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could any thing be more alluring
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake ?
And, now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake ;
And vowed that she should be detected,
And he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
And to the fields his road would take ;
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand :
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble land.
— He hears a noise—he's all awake —
Again ? — on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps — 'Tis Goody Blake,
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill.

Right glad was he when he beheld her :
Stick after stick did Goody pull :
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about,
The by-road back again to take,
He started forward with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.



And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast,
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, "I've caught you then at last !"
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall ;
And, kneeling on the sticks, she prayed
To God that is the judge of all.



She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm —
"God ! who art never out of hearing,
O may he never more be warm !"
The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray,
Young Harry heard what she had said :
And icy cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
That he was cold and very chill :
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
Alas ! that day for Harry Gill !
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he :
Another was on Thursday brought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter, —
And blankets were about him pinn'd ;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry's flesh it fell away ;
And all who see him say, 'tis plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old ;
But ever to himself he mutters,
"Poor Harry Gill is very cold."
A-bed or up, by night or day ;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill.

This poem was first published in Bristol in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798. Of this original edition only three copies are known to survive. It was re-published in London in the same year, a copy of which sold last year for £11,000. *Lyrical Ballads*, an experiment in verse, inaugurated the Romantic movement in English literature and poetry. It contained 23 poems – 19 by Wordsworth and 4 by Coleridge including his epic *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Anatomy of the Book

Part One ~ External



This essay examines the structure and arrangement of the book and explains a number of bibliographical terms used to describe its composition. We begin with the book's outer covers.

Before the 1830s, bookbinding, like printing, was carried out by skilled artisans working either individually or in small binderies with only a handful of people. The binder, unless he had his own press, took delivery in bundles from the printers of SHEETS (a sheet being a printer's unit. Two pages for a folio, four for a quarto, eight for an octavo) and turned them into books ready for use by folding and sewing the leaves and placing them in protective covers which would typically be covered with leather. All this changed in the 1830s when an advance was made in creating a cloth-covered binding which could be mechanically decorated and lettered – although binding in cloth was first introduced in 1822. This development hastened the move away from leather which had been the standard outer covering since the Middle Ages. Cloth was cheaper than leather. For many years, publishing as we think of it today, did not exist as a separate profession : printing, publishing and bookselling often overlapped and were carried out by the same man or firm. During the 18th century, publishing houses began to emerge, many of their names remain familiar : Rivington in 1711, Longman in 1724, John Murray in 1768, Constable and Nelson before 1800, etc. Publishers were also booksellers. Some booksellers printed, bound and sold books ; others published and sold them but would employ outside printers and binders.

Many books sold between 1740 and 1780, and most books between 1780 and the 1830s, were sold in BOARDS : cardboard, backed with paper, normally blue-green or grey in colour ; with a paper TITLE-PIECE (a small strip of paper printed with the title of the book and author) applied to the spine ; the edges of the leaves left UNCUT (i.e. edges left untrimmed). The general practice was for the purchaser to then take his book to his own binder where the boards would be discarded, the edges trimmed, and the book bound in leather to the owner's personal taste. Some books survive today bound in 'original boards' which, to the collector, can be as exciting as finding a copy in the choicest leather array. Edges left uncut, whether still in their boards as issued, or after being bound in leather, are cherished by

collectors, and quite rightly, as copies with ample margins are preferable, and uncut edges are more attractive than smooth trimmed edges. Hence, books published during the 20th century by private presses – perhaps in limited editions using hand-made rag paper – often left at least the fore-edges and lower edges uncut. Prior to the 1830s if the owner was wealthy, he might have the top edges or indeed all edges cut smooth and gilded. Gilt edges not only look luxurious they have a practical purpose too. They help to keep out dust which can have a chemical reaction with the paper and cause FOXING – those brown blemishes you see in books. Pure rag paper in some antiquarian books look as fresh and crisp today as when they were run off the printing press a few hundred years ago. Such paper is less susceptible to foxing. Damp and poor ventilation can also accelerate foxing. No one is quite sure from where this curious term originates, but it was first noted in 1848.

When books were bound in leather, it was the normal practice to bind the entire book in skin. However, as early as the 17th century, HALF CALF, said to be an English invention, was introduced but it only really took hold in the 18th century. Half morocco is rare before 1800. Half bound means that the spine and outer corners are covered in leather (or vellum), while the rest of the sides are covered in paper (or later, cloth). If there are no leather corners, the book is said to be QUARTER BOUND. There are four main kinds of covering material derived from animal skins used in England : calfskin, sheepskin, goatskin and vellum. The first three are tanned leathers, the fourth is not. Vellum is de-greased and specially treated.

With the breakthrough of being able to mechanically decorate and letter a binding in the 1830s, it was suddenly possible to issue whole editions of books in genuinely identical bindings, and it brought about the development of pictorial covers and DUST-JACKETS. The earliest recorded dust-jacket dates back far earlier than most people think – 1832 – although surviving examples earlier than the mid-1880s are extremely rare. To many, dust-jackets having performed their prime function of delivering the book to the customer clean and sound, could, with an easy conscience, be jettisoned as not being an integral part of the book. This misguided practice is, thankfully, less common today, but it is probably true to say that dust-jackets prior to 1900 have survived more by accident than design. Dust-jackets are now seen as having artistic merit in themselves, and with the great resurgence of collecting modern first editions in the 1920s, dust-jackets slowly took on a greater importance spreading to books of all kinds.

To return to cloth bindings. As the 19th century progressed, the beauty and variety of decorated cloth-covered boards and spines became truly breath-taking. The Victorians took the art to new heights and the finest

examples in clean, sound and bright condition, are eagerly sought by collectors. Many have survived but mostly in a worn and faded condition. When I had a bookshop on Market Street in the late 1970s, I was called out to look at some books and was amazed to find myself opening a small bookcase that had clearly not been opened since before the First World War. Most of the books therein were of little value, but about fifteen or so were in fine Victorian and Edwardian pictorial bindings, their covers as bright and as dazzling as the day they were published. They had languished undisturbed in this time-capsule at the back of a shop, in a dark corner away from daylight, for about sixty years. To appreciate the sheer variety and exquisiteness of publisher bindings of this period, I would recommend Ruari McLean's *Victorian Publishers' Book-Binding* (Gordon Fraser, 1974).

Let us go back to leather bindings, which by no means disappeared with the mass introduction of cloth. These too can be highly decorative and imaginative in design, beautifully tooled in gilt or blind by highly skilled craftsmen. Even modern examples by young book-binders today are as stunning and original as those of their forebears. Spines are often enhanced with RAISED BANDS – cords or bands, usually four or five in number, the ends of which are then laced into the boards and covered in leather to form attractive ridges. By using precision-made binding tools, the sides and spines of books are richly ornamented. ROLLS (a wheel-shaped tool) produces attractive patterns to create continuous and elaborate lines. PANELS (for sides and spines) are introduced to provide a rectangular area marked out with rolls or FILLETS (another wheel-tool). The inside of the panel is then tooled in gilt to produce an ornate pattern or picture. DENTELLES (from the French = lace) is a binder's term for the lacy rich pattern, usually gilt, running around the edges of the covers. For the past 150 years or more they are also used to decorate the inside edges. Decorative HEAD/TAILBANDS, usually made of silk or cotton, plain or coloured, are part of the binder's process of securing the inside of the spine and can add to the beauty of the book. Lettering to the spine (and/or front board) can either be applied directly, or leather title-pieces – often in a contrasting colour – can be laid down. The end result, especially for an antiquarian book, has a dignity that only leather can lend – a compliment to its age and maturity. See a couple of examples on the following page.

In Part Two we will turn our attention to the inside of the book.



TWO LEATHER BINDINGS

LEFT : A particularly fine 18th century SCOTT binding in tree-calf. The book entitled *The Naval Achievements of Admiral George Lord Brydges Rodney ...* by A. Tweedie, a type founder, was published in Edinburgh in 1782 – the year Rodney won his decisive victory over the French at the Battle of the Saintes in the Caribbean. Dr. Graham Hogg, Curator at the National Library of Scotland, thinks this copy might have been presented to Rodney on his return to England. The book was bound by the Edinburgh binder, James Scott and may have been completed by his son, William. They were the most celebrated book binders of the 18th century.

The binding is decorated with a profile of George III, war trophies, men-o-war, foliage tooling and, most bizarrely, an enemy ship blowing up (all in gilt) with seamen being blown into the air (tooled blind). This binding and some of the tools are unique.



RIGHT : A Royal binding in full morocco, the Royal Coat of Arms in a centre panel with a blind-tooled border ; the whole surrounded with three richly gilt-tooled borders. All edges gilt ; gilt inner dentelles ; marbled endpapers. The book is an Admiralty Signal Book of 1839. There is a manuscript letter tipped in from Captain J. E. Davis RN., presenting the book to Admiral Philip Colomb. Davis had served with Fitzroy in the *Beagle* and was about to sail with Crozier in the *Terror* during Ross's Antarctic voyage of discovery 1839-1843. The book was bound by James Hollings, a Covent Garden binder.



Answers to the quiz questions on page 10.

- {1} **Liverpool architect Edmund Kirby (1838-1920) who studied under Pugin, hence the Gothic style of St. Hildeburgh's built between 1897 and 1899. One of his most notable designs is to be found in the Sodality Chapel for St. Francis Xavier's Roman Catholic Church in Liverpool.**
- {2} **'Monks' Stepping Stones stretches from Storeton to Woodchurch. It is almost certainly mediaeval in origin, used by packhorses and locals to avoid the muddy fields.**
- {3} **The Lancelyn-Green family have lived at Poulton-Lancelyn and claim descent from Scirard who, in c.1080, gave to Chester Abbey the tithes of the manor. Their crest of three stags is reflected in the name of the pub nearby.**
- {4} **Thor's Stone is to be found on Thurstaston Common. Picton, the Liverpool historian, considered that on this stone the Dane's made sacrifices in honour of their god, Thor. There is no sound evidence for this theory and most historians and geologists today think that the rock is simply of natural formation, although Norsemen were certainly at Thurstaston.**
- {5} **Sir Wilfred Grenfell (1865-1940), medical missionary, was born at Parkgate, his father being Headmaster of Mostyn House School. Grenfell is said to have been the last person to have walked across the Dee to North Wales.**
- {6} **Ringo Starr joined the Beatles in 1962. The first performance as the 'Fab Four' took place at Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight, on the 18th August 1962.**
- {7} **The stones at Parkgate spell out 'Nelson', but, contrary to popular belief they do not commemorate the famous Admiral. In 1822 the cottage was owned by a Chester artist named Burt, an ardent admirer of Lord Nelson after whom he named his son. In December 1822, father and son were aboard the ferry from Liverpool to Ellesmere Port when the vessel sank in collision with a flat (a local barge) during a storm. The father survived but the boy did not. In his grief, Burt collected the stones from the beach at Parkgate, painted them black, and laid them out in his son's memory (they were later cemented in). Nelson Burt's grave can be seen today in Stoke churchyard, Wirral.**

{8} The gun was mounted near Morpeth Dock, Birkenhead, and was fired at 1 o'clock each day so that Mersey shipping could check their timepieces. Fired electronically from Bidston Observatory, the original cannon was a relic of the Crimean War and was first fired from Birkenhead in 1867. Firing was suspended during the Second World War, and the gun was fired for the last time on the 18th July 1969.

{9} Dating back to the early 18th century, one of the points of limit set for the Port of Liverpool is Red Rocks, or, to give it its ancient name, Red Stones, at Hilbre Point, Hoylake. This is where the ports of Liverpool and Chester convene.

{10} H.M.S. *Thetis* was the submarine built at Birkenhead and lost during her diving trials. She had 103 onboard, almost double her normal complement. Only four men escaped. With the coming of war, the submarine was salvaged, repaired at Birkenhead, and renamed *Thunderbolt*. She was lost again in 1943, sunk by an Italian depth charge in the Mediterranean. There were no survivors.



Editor's Endnote :

My thanks to Nigel Hall for his welcome contribution to this issue.

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