Bridgwater Borough Archives, 1200-1377
Somerset Record Society, Vol. XLVIII
Edited by T. Brice Dilks
1933

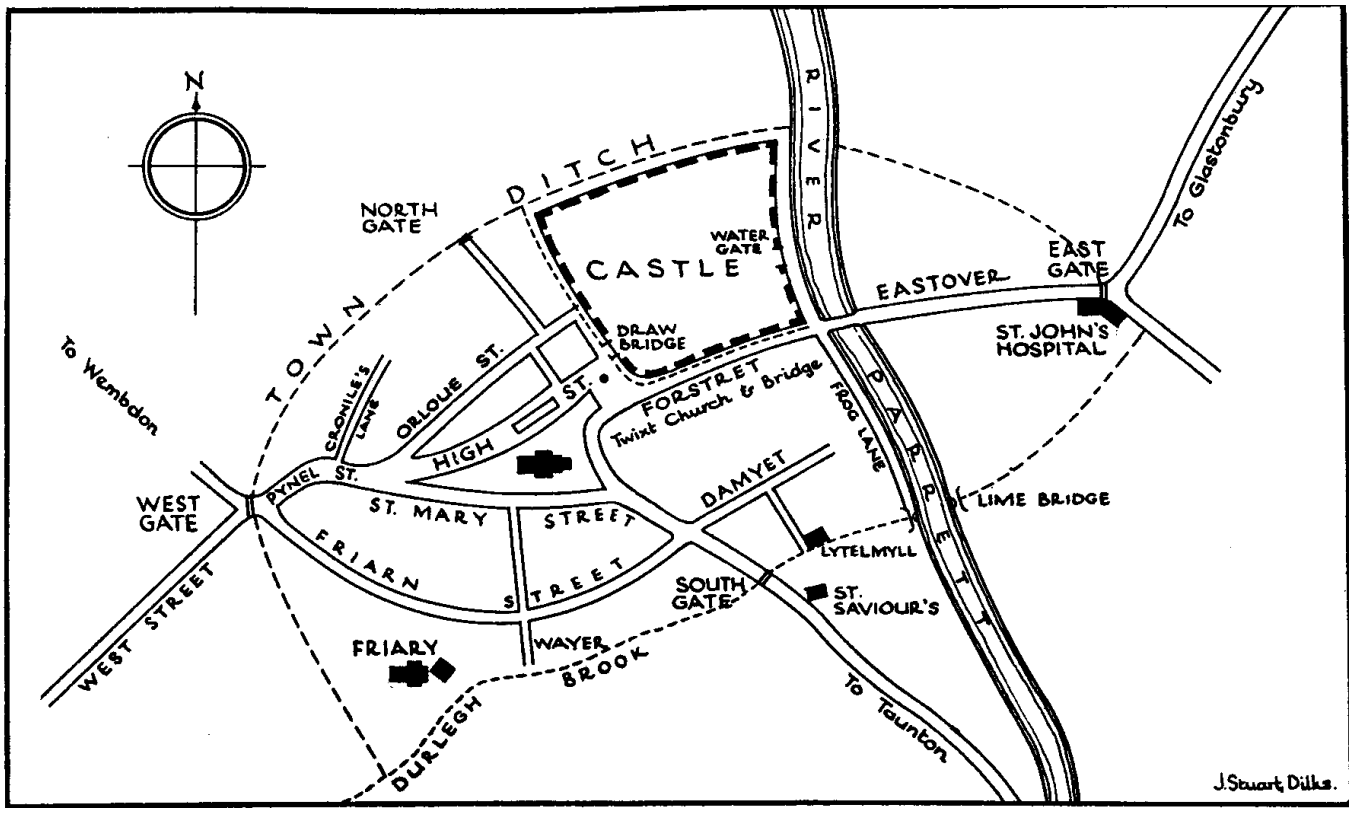
## Editorial note

The original volume was small quarto in format, and here the format is double column in A4. The footnote numbers were not continuous, but began anew on each page, so here they have been re-numbered continuously and placed at the end.

This version was digitised from the editor's personal copy. The map originally appeared before the section on Topography. The table of contents at the beginning has been added anew.

Tony & Jane Woolrich, 14/08/2019

The figures enclosed in round brackets ( ) refer to the order of the documents in this volume ; those in square brackets [ ] to the order in Dr. Birch's catalogue in the Town Clerk's office.



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## INTRODUCTION

In one of the rooms devoted to the administration of our municipal affairs stands an old oaken box of considerable antiquity and no little interest. It is devoid of ornamentation, if we except the roughly fashioned scutcheons of iron, and was formerly secured with three locks, the middle keyhole of which is shaped curiously in the form of an S. Within, it was fitted with 'tilles' ; or pigeon-holes for the reception of documents. There is good reason to believe that it is coeval with the mayoralty, and that it dates from the latter part of the 15th century. Around this box, in a late year of the reign of King James I, we may picture the chief burgesses gathered when, urged possibly by some *quo warranto* mandate from the Chancery, they decided to draw up A Calendar and Memorandum of writings and things in the great chest.

This calendar [795] is the first attempt to catalogue the muniments that has come down to us. It contains well-nigh 200 entries of documents either single or grouped. The care and method attending their preservation are shown in the manner in which the position of each item is indicated — this in 'bagge B' that in 'a white, linnen bag' a third in 'a lether bag' — altogether a satisfactory condition of arrangement and gratifying to the mind of the archivist.

The accumulation of another hundred years had been added to the store before the appointment of Moses Williams [1] to the incumbency of the parish church brought to the borough a ripe scholar, fitted by his learning and by his experience in the Ashmolean Museum to investigate the records of our past. He summarized with accuracy in a *catalogue raisonné* 127 MSS., chiefly of the 14th and 15th centuries [79]. Though not placed in chronological order, he assigned numbers to these, but he went no further. The good work was stayed. Again is manifested a certain care in the contemporary custodian; why else these jotted receipts with the vicar's signature ?

More than a hundred years passed before the curtain was again lifted, and even then the antiquarian world does not seem to have paid more than a passing tribute to the treasures of the corporation. In August, 1856, the congress of the British Archaeological Association visited Bridgwater, and Mr. W. H. Black, having 'spent the morning in an 'examination of the contents of the strong room belonging to the corporation,' addressed the congress in the afternoon and again in the evening on the subject matter of 'a large mass of ancient charters, deeds, rolls, books of expenses, etc.,' which had been laid upon the table, 'such,' he declared,' as it seldom fell to the lot of an antiquary to unfold on such an occasion.'

Though their value thus received public recognition, our muniments were once more withdrawn into oblivion. But only for some few years, for in 1869-70 the newly appointed Royal Commission on Historical MSS. made the Bridgwater collection one of the first objects of its research and sent their inspector, Henry Thomas Riley, to examine it. Mr. Riley made two reports, the former of which appears in the appendix of the Commission's First Report, 1870, and the latter in that of the Third Report, 1872. The second is by far the more important and occupies ten closely printed, double-columned pages of the blue book. Some scores of documents or groups of documents are recorded, many in detail and a few verbatim, sufficient at least to prove the value of the collection.

About the end of the 19th century, the borough became involved in a law suit for success in which it was necessary to prove a certain prescriptive right. The services of an expert palaeographer were required, and Dr. Walter de Gray Birch of the MSS. Department of the British Museum was engaged to examine the borough archives. While seeking for the required evidence, which he found, he drew up a *catalogue raisonné* of more than 2,300 documents. This valuable index is that in use at the present time, but unfortunately the numbers are not in chronological order.

This defect it is hoped to remedy in the volumes now contemplated, in which the true sequence will be followed as strictly as possible. The new number of each document will be placed first in bold figures and will be used in the index. The number pencilled on the document and used by Dr. Birch will appear immediately afterwards, enclosed in square brackets.

### EXTERNAL FEATURES

These parchments of the 13th and 14th centuries, with their pleasantly sour smell, are to-day kept in strong ventilated boxes, housed safely in a fire-proof room. But at some time in the past, before such provision was made, damp crept in here and there and worked mischief, obliterating the text with ruthless nonchalance. Fortunately, in the mass, they are unspoiled and the ink of the 13th century is often almost as

black as when it flowed from the pen 600 years ago. In documents of the middle 14th century the ink has had a tendency to turn yellow, but from this defect there is a recovery before we reach the 15th century, when the ink is often wonderfully black. In the 13th century, when Art was at one of her supreme moments and with her touch was waking stone and wood and glass to beauty, it was unlikely that writing would escape her magic. The 13th century script is indeed beautiful and one can only wonder at the skill with which the scribe, using one and the same instrument, could produce threads as delicate as a spider's as easily as broad strokes of strong and indelible character. In the following century there is a decline from this high achievement.

As to form, the deeds of this period may be divided into three categories. There is the *deed poll* with the smooth or 'polled' edge. There is the *indenture.* And there is the special kind of indenture which it is convenient to distinguish as the chirograph. Indentures were written in pairs, head to head, on the same skin. They were then divided by the pen-knife with a cut, toothed (indented) or wavy, and the two copies were then handed to the respective parties to the agreement. In the chirograph the risk of subsequent forgery was lessened by the simple stratagem of writing a word or a sequence of letters on the line through which the knife was to pass. To prove genuineness in future it was necessary only to require that the two indentures produced should fit each other and in the chirograph that the severed parts of the letter should return to legibility.

## SEALING

Sealing was a most important adjunct to the medieval legal document. The mere fact that a party to a deed could not sign his name—and few laymen were able to write—made it imperative that he should have some other means to show his assent to the contents. The seal performed this necessary confirmation and, on the owner's death, the matrix was destroyed in order that it might be used no more.

Impressions of many private seals remain attached to these documents, more or less perfect. Many have disappeared and the seal strip with fragments of wax adhering to it alone survives. Some are round, others are oval or vesica-shaped, the last being generally an ecclesiastical characteristic. On private seals there may be a merchant's mark, or a shield of arms, or an emblem such as a fleur de lys, a squirrel or a ‘pelican in her piety,' and round the edge is generally a legend indicating the owner's name. We may take as an example *Sigillum* (often abbreviated to S') *Radulphi Hilting* (21), i.e. 'The Seal of Ralph Hilting.'

Most important for us, however, are seals of office, and what may be called *corporative* seals, though we must beware of using the word ' corporation' as yet. If we turn for a moment to the Jacobean Calendar already mentioned [795], we shall find reference to three such seals belonging to this early period, impressions of each of which have fortunately survived.

> (1) ' Burgus de Bridgewater. They were first called Burgenses Burgi de Bridgewater & weare founders of our ladie Chantery in Bridgewater; there comin seale then was the signe of our Ladie.'

This seal of the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the most ancient of the Bridgwater chantries, is vesica-shaped and represents the Mother seated and nursing the Child. Beneath, under an arch, is a votary with raised hands. The legend is 'S'. Beate Marie Virginis' (16). Of this more will be said presently.

> (2) ' Prepositi et Burgenses sigillum suum commune, signum navis & insculptum hoc modo, viz. sigillum aque prepositorum de Brugeswater.'

Here we have an official seal. It is that of the provosts or reeves of the borough. It is round in shape and there is a beautiful design of a one-masted ship on which two sailors are standing back to back against the mast, hauling on ropes. The inscription is ' Sigillum prepositorum de Br[ige]wateri.’

> (3) ' Senescalli et communitas. Sigillum fuit signum castelli et pontis.'

This, used by the seneschals or stewards of the Gild Merchant, (*senescalli*) is definitely the borough seal (*sigillum commune*), the forerunner of the present seal of the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses. A triple tower with portcullis, surmounting a triple-arched bridge under which flows the river, is the design. As yet there are no royal emblems—no lion's head or fleur de lys. The shape is round and the legend reads ' S[igil.] Commun[e de Brige]walte'.'

The finest personal seal surviving from this period is that of Lady Maud Mortimer (43), of whom we shall say something in the section on the mesne lords of the borough.

Very interesting are the mottoes which occasionally take the place on the personal seals of the owner's name. The reader will be able to find these by referring to the word ' mottoes ' in the index.

## LANGUAGE

With the exception of four only, all the documents printed in this volume were written in medieval Latin, generally abbreviated. The remaining four are in medieval French, which, though it was the language of the law courts, was not as a rule used in legal forms of everyday occurrence. Fortunately for students of our own tongue, English words are found here and there embedded in the Latin where the scribe has found it easier to use them than to find Latin equivalents. Surnames and place-names also supply some Early and Middle English uses.

In a perfect scheme the complete text of the originals, all words extended, would have been laid before the reader. But exigencies of space have made it necessary to condense. It will be found that oft-recurring forms, such as the enfeoffment clause, the warranty clause, the sealing clause, have here been simply indicated by their initial words, for though the phraseology may vary, the general sense is standardized. Words of frequent occurrence have been shortened. It is hoped that no great inconvenience will "be experienced on this account. Important documents and sentences are given verbatim, and translations are added where it has seemed specially desirable.

## DATING

The great majority of the documents here recorded are dated, not with the year of the Christian era, but with that of the reigning sovereign. As a rule the month is not given, nor the day of the month. Instead, a system of reckoning the date from a Church festival and from certain saints' days is used. Thus, the 22nd of May, 1312, is designated ‘ the Monday next after the feast of Holy Trinity in the fifth year of the reign of King Edward the son of King Edward,' that is, Edward II. Such dates have been carefully translated into our modern system, and the familiar form will be found following the heading of each transcript. Where a MS. is dateless, every effort has been made to give it its probable chronological position as nearly as possible. The style of the script enables us to place the important Ordinance of the Burgesses (10) in the third quarter of the 13th century. Internal evidence, such as compliance with the statute *Quia employes,* A.D. 1290, has been helpful. As examples in which the names of witnesses have solved the date problem, may be instanced No. 14 which had in error been placed fifty years earlier,[2] and No. 88 which has for many years been supposed to belong to the reign of Edward I [3] and in this volume is placed thirty years later.

## WITNESSES

The names of witnesses, who attest most of the deeds, play an important part for the researcher. Not only do they at times, as has been shown, help to fix the period of an undated document, but they may also aid in drawing up the genealogy of the family to which the person belongs. Officials, too, appear among them and their titles aid us in our study of borough administration or of the affairs of the Church. It will be noticed that these names are not signatures of their owners, but are written by the same scribe who has written the body of the document. In what sense then, we may ask, were they witnesses ? Were they present when the seals of the parties to the deed were affixed to it ? This would seem to be the most obvious explanation, and yet there is a deed (43) which is dated at Kingsland in Herefordshire, one of the manors of Lady Mortimer, and which is none the less attested by five Bridgwater burgesses as well as by the lady's stewards and others. For the most part the names of witnesses are those of prominent burgesses and from time to time those of the reeves, the. bailiffs, the master of the Hospital, the vicar of the parish and of other officials appear among them. It has been suggested that the attestation was made in the borough court. It is noteworthy that 25 per cent of the deeds are dated on Monday, the day on which the court was generally held, but nearly as large a proportion are dated on Sunday: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday occur frequently, while only some 8 per cent are dated on Tuesday and Saturday. It will be noticed that not infrequently holders of adjacent property appear in the list. This suggests either that the deed was witnessed on the burgage or tenement itself where seisin was at the same time given, or simply that it was regarded as important to have the names of the immediate neighbours among the witnesses. In one instance the deed is witnessed in the churchyard (8). Certainly we may surmise that the assembly of the chief burgesses, whether at mass on the Sunday or at the borough court on the Monday, would afford a good opportunity of gaining their attestation.

## SUBJECT MATTER OF THE DOCUMENTS

There are rather more than 300 documents in this volume and the vast majority of these are concerned with the transfer of property—charters or grants of lands, houses and rents, quitclaims or releases, leases/ defeasances, inspections of charters and grants of power of attorney to deliver seisin. There is important material for the historian of the English Borough, when that great story comes to be

written, in the royal charter whereby the borough was created (1) with its confirmation by later kings (84, 265) and in the Ordinance of the Burgesses (10). Important, too, are the statements of accounts of the borough receiver (297), the receivers of the bell-founding fund (88), the receiver of the spire-building fund (238), the wardens of the Holy Cross (282, &c.) and the wardens of the Chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary (244, &c.). There are bonds and quittances. There are wills, two of which are followed by interesting inventories of goods (81,123) and there is an example of an episcopal discharge of executors (258). Beside two small court rolls of the neighbouring manors of Huish-by-Highbridge (34) and Dunwear (213), there are three examples of court rolls of Bridgwater Castle with the manor of Haygrove, the originals of which exist in the Record Office but of which photostats have been placed among the borough archives (266, &c.).

Mr. Riley advanced the theory that these conveyances, leases, quitclaims, and wills were lodged with the borough officials for safe keeping. This may have been so, at least with some of them. But it may be suggested that the mass of them were preserved because they were the title-deeds of property which, after being given or bequeathed to the chantries or religious houses, was later sequestrated to the Crown and eventually granted by the Crown to the Borough. It is by such a sequence of title-deeds that we can trace the Corporation's property at Stour Eastover in Dorset as far back as the 13th century, though it did not come into their possession till the days of Mary Tudor.

## THE MESNE LORDS OF THE BOROUGH

It is quite likely that the men of Bridgwater saw but little of the lord who stood between them and the Crown, especially after the 13th century. And yet they must often have been reminded of his existence by the part he played in the administration and most assuredly by the circumstances of their fiscal relations.

The great familiar figure standing on the threshold of the borough history is that of William Briwer. He and his descendants successively occupied the position of lord of the town, castle and manor, not only for the period of time we have now under consideration, but for many years after. He was a worthy founder of the governing family. One of those strong medieval statesmen who supported the English Crown against the constant encroachments of feudalism, he served four kings in succession and never swerved in his fidelity to any one of them. The stamp of Henry Plantagenet's firmness and strength was set upon him, and neither the unsatisfactory absenteeism of Richard nor the moral unworthiness of John could turn him aside from his allegiance to the ideal of a strong central power, such as the Conqueror had envisaged. Henry had raised him to high office and under his two sons and successors Briwer held all but the highest. In justice and administration, in ambassadorial missions, in close personal contact with his sovereign, he spent an active life. A career such as this was sure to bring him honours and riches, and these he had in abundance. His wealth enabled him to build a mighty castle and to found religious houses, and it was before the high altar of his abbey of Dunkeswell that his body was finally laid to rest.[4]

We know little of his personal characteristics, but a gleam of light is reflected from the record of a lawsuit heard before the great Henry Bract on five and twenty years after Briwer's death, when the jurors spoke most positively of him as a man who ' did his will with many folk ' and in their opinion not always justly.[5] That speaks at least of determination. He was a man who did things and who was able to get things done.

He was succeeded on his death in 1226 by his son, William. But the heir did not long survive his father and died five years later. Tradition says that it was during the short term of his lordship that Grey Friars first settled in Bridgwater.[6] He left no child to follow him. His only brother was already dead. It was therefore to his eldest sister's line that the succession fell.

Where great wealth was, great marriages could be effected. If a genealogical table of the Briwer family be drawn up, we find in it representatives of the Marshals, the Bigods, the Bohuns, the Cantilupes, the Mortimers, the Clares, and other great governing houses. It was to a scion of the house of Braose that Graecia, 'by some called Griseld' was given in marriage.[7] William Braose, the father, fell under King John's heavy displeasure, and one of the blackest crimes urged against Lackland's memory was the destruction in prison by starving to death of the wife and eldest son.[8] The younger son, Reginald, who married Griseld Briwer, was restored to favour and to some of the ancestral lands.[9]

But Griseld herself does not seem ever to have enjoyed the lordship of Bridgwater, and William Braose, her son, had already met a violent death. Again there is no male heir. A royal mandate, dated 16 June, 1233,[10] ordered that a reasonable dowry for Joan, the widow of William Briwer, the younger, should be provid-

ed out of her late husband's lands now in the king's hands, but not from the manor of Bridgwater. This was included in the portion assigned to her nephew's daughters, now royal wards.

Four daughters had been born to William Braose and his wife Eve, daughter of the great William Marshal, but here we are concerned with two only of them, Maud and Eve. How long they remained in the king's hand we do not know, but, some four or five years later, we find the wardship of Eve passed over to William de Cantilupe II[11] and before her guardian's death in 1251 we know that she had been married to his son William de Cantilupe III, to whom she bore three children. Maud, too, was married by the year 1249, and for her a husband had been found in the house of Mortimer.

In the division of the properties of their father, the lordship of Bridgwater was too large a portion to become the possession of one daughter only. To Maud was given the castle, while the town and manor would appear to have been divided between the sisters.

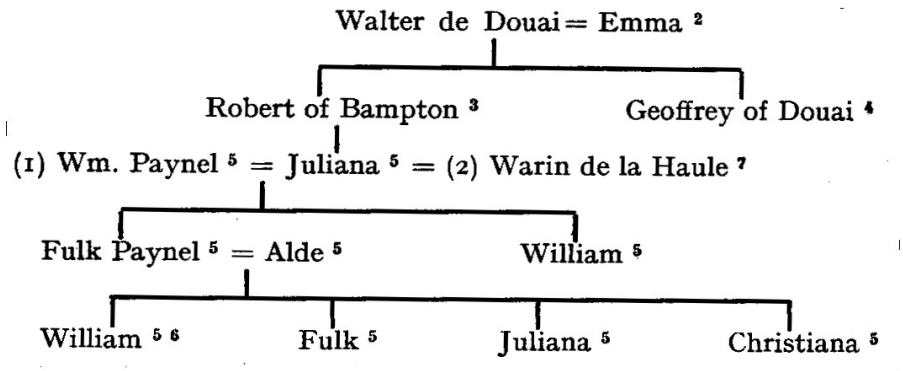
William de Cantilupe died in 1254, but Roger Mortimer took a prominent part in national affairs, fighting in Gascony and Wales, and on the king's side against the Barons. We see him from time to time in Somerset, and at one time he appears at the head of the burgesses in claiming a right of passage along certain of the Parrett's banks.[12] In his absence his wife must have become accustomed to rule the castle, and after his death, in 1282, she evidently exercised control. We gain two glimpses of her—and if the lady on her seal is in any sense a portrait of her, she was a stately figure—first, in 1298, when she conveyed a burgage near the castle to one of the leading burgesses (43); and again, in the following year, when she gave her assent to an alteration in the building of the west gate which involved the question of military defence (47).

Maud bequeathed her share in the lordship of Bridgwater to her second son, but he died without offspring, and it passed to his elder brother, Edmund. As Edmund died in 1303, we can fix the time of his mother's death within a year or two.

Meanwhile, Eve had followed her husband to the grave and had left her share in the lordship to her daughter, Millicent, whose second husband Eudes la Zouche, appears in 1275 as one of the defendants to a plea of disseisin in the borough.[13] Neither Millicent nor her husband survived to the end of the reign of Edward I. For, some time after 1303, the king addressed an order to the bailiffs of Margaret, widow of Edmund Mortimer, and of William la Zouche of Bridgwater, not to disturb the Abbot of Athelney in certain of his chartered rights[14].

During the rest of the period under review, the Mortimers, Roger and Edmund, and again Roger and Edmund, played their part in the story of England, but their names do not appear in our archives. We have glimpses of the house of la Zouche (82, 117, 137, 155, 297), but during the reigns of Edward II and Edward III, though the lordship of both branches of William Briwer must have been functioning we hear nothing of its operations, save in the court rolls of the Castle (266, &c.).

GENEALOGICAL TABLE SHOWING THE FAMILIES OF THE LORDS OF THE MANOR IN THE 11TH AND 12TH CENTURIES




Amid recorded inaccuracies I have been at some pains to trace the families not only of the lords of the borough from William Briwer, but also of the lords of the manor between Walter de Douai, who gave his name to the place, and Fulk Paynel, who sold it to William Briwer. The result of my endeavour to determine the descent of Walter's family was confirmed by the late Dr. J. H. Round, who had reached the same conclusions, but unfortunately he had died before I had finished my investigation of William's family. Both are given here.

2 Charter of Wm. Bp. of Exeter (1107-1136), Bath Priory Chartularies, No. 36.

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3 Charter of Henry I, 1123 ; Round, *Feudal England*, pp. 483, 486.

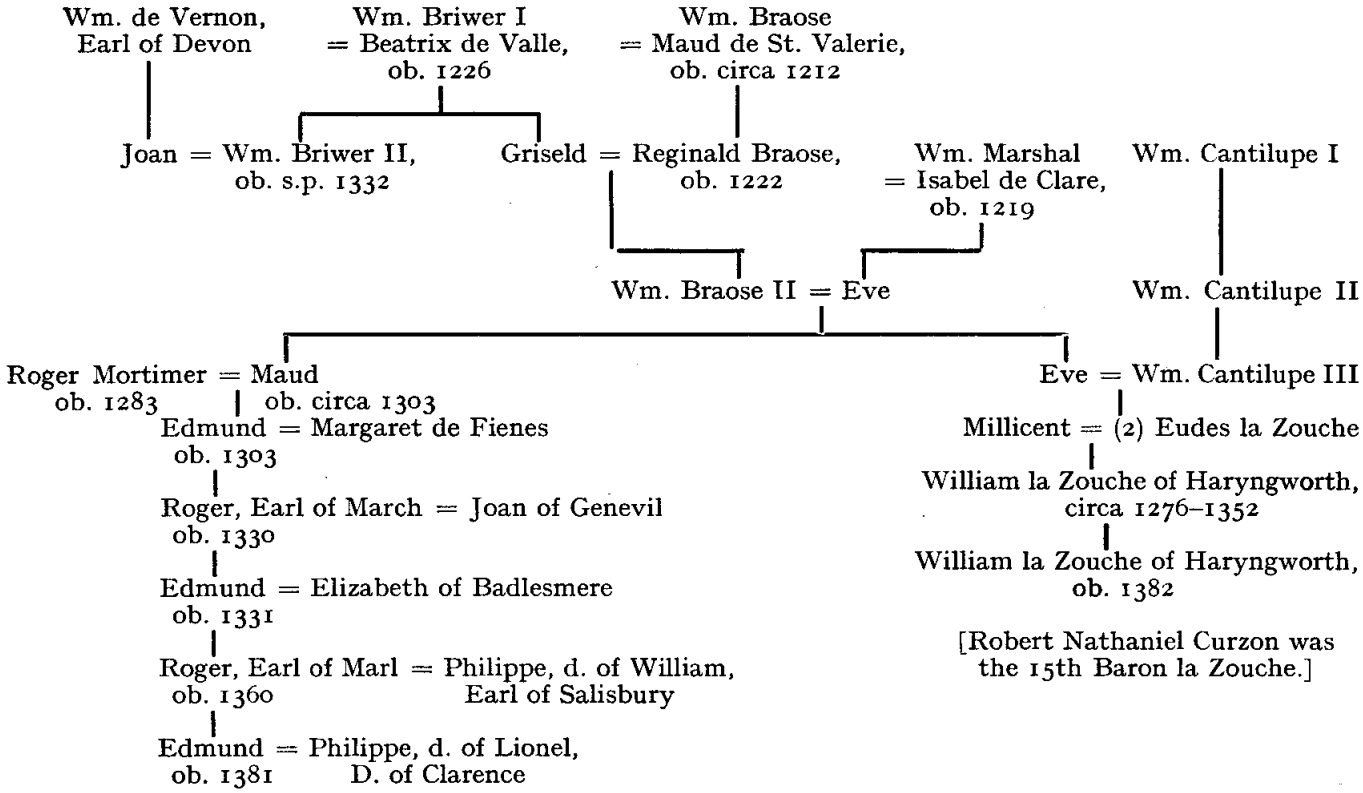
4 Charter of Bampton, Bath Priory Chartularies, No. 35.

5 Charter of Fulk Paynel concerning Bridgwater Church ; Rob. Glover, *Somerset Heraldi Miscel.*, lib. 5, f. 40a.

6 Charter of Wm. Paynel, son of Fulk ; Dugdale, Mon. Ang:, Add. vol. ii, p. 912.

7 Given me by Dr. Round.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE SHOWING THE FAMILIES OF THE LORDS OF THE BOROUGH, CASTLE AND MANOR




[The house of Mortimer, Earls of March, reached the throne in the person of Edward IV.]

Authorities : Dugdale's *Baronage* ; Collinson's *History of Somersetshire*.

From another source, however, we learn that even early in the century [15] trouble arose between William la Zouche and the men of Bridgwater. In response to a complaint of the lord of the town a commission of oyer and terminer was appointed to enquire into it. Forty-seven names of defendants are given — of whom eleven at one time or another represented the borough in parliament — who were accused of having, with a number of Welshmen and others, assaulted his bailiffs and prevented him from holding his court there, and so forth. We see already a forecast of the insurrection of 1381.

It is interesting, too, to note the gradual rise of the family of Mortimer. The Earldom of March, which the infamy of the second Roger had forfeited, was restored to his grandson, the third Roger. Edmund, the next Earl of March, brought the family nearer to the throne by his marriage with Philippe, the granddaughter of the King, and only two precarious lives, those of the Black Prince and his son Richard, stood between young Roger Mortimer and the crown. Eventually he was declared heir-apparent, but he did not survive Richard, and it was through his daughter, Anne, whose grandson became Edward IV, that the throne was reached.

## THE BOROUGH

It is not easy to define a borough of the 13th century. We cannot say 'Such and such a town was a borough, and that therefore, Bridgwater from the date of its charter had like attributes' We should be wrong in supposing that one pattern was the pattern of all. It has been said that if we could question the sheriff who was ordered in the later half of the century to send two burgesses from each borough to the king's parliament, and ask him to define a borough, he would probably have difficulty in answering us. He might —' This place is a borough, for it has

always been treated as such ; that place is not a borough, for I cannot remember its having ever sent twelve representatives to meet the justices in their eyres.' But as to what actually constituted a borough he would be at a loss.[16]

Now when the sheriff of Somerset was making his list of boroughs he entered Bridgwater as one of them, for if he had no other proof of liability, he knew that the place appeared before the justices in eyre as a borough and that it was wont to ' come by twelve.' [17]

If, then, we want to know what liberties and privileges belonged to this borough and were enjoyed by its burgesses, we must do some research. We have two valuable sources in the original charter (1) and the ordinance of the burgesses (10), in both of which particular liberties are recorded. It is in the former that the all-important clause occurs granting to William Briwer that the place shall be a *free borough.*

Much depends on the interpretation to be given to that term. It was new to the language of charters. It had been used in the charter granted to Dunwich, and now appeared in that of Bridgwater, and soon the Bridgwater model — 'all liberties and free customs belonging to a free borough'—was to become the formula in general use. What, then, was the meaning of the words ? What were the privileges belonging to a free borough ?

For long, scholars were at a loss to find an acceptable solution of the problem, and it is only recently that Dr. James Tait has arrived at one which is generally approved.[18]

It would seem that the Chancery, instead of detailing the privileges which the king was willing to confer on the new borough, hit upon the formula ' free borough ' to comprise those already belonging to some other borough which the mesne lord might choose as a model; And the question for us to answer is What attributes do we find belonging to the borough of Bridgwater in the years under review ?

*Administration of Justice*. If crime occurred within the borough, the thief or murderer must appear before the king's justices in eyre, and here the burgesses exercised the privilege already referred to, of coming by twelve to the assize to present their own cases just as though they were themselves a . hundred, instead of being a mere part of the hundred of North Petherton.

For minor offences the manorial court of the mesne lord was ready to be transformed into the borough court. Assault, debt, infringements of the by-laws, nuisance, were objects of its jurisdiction. The burgesses were jealous of any avoidance by their fellows of its facilities, and ordered that anyone who impleaded his peer in any court outside the borough without first appealing to a view of the burgesses should be amerced by the community. We have no court rolls earlier than the second half of the 14th century and none of them appear in this volume except three which belong to the court of the castle.

Our earliest borough court rolls show at the foot of the account of the proceedings the sum total of amercements paid, not only into the borough court, but into two other courts, the court of Piepowder and the Durneday court.

'Piepowder' (*pied poudre)*, the court of the traveller of the dusty foot, is to be found elsewhere. That of Bridgwater was still extant as late as the 19th century, and while there is no such extensive account of it as that which survives of the similar court at Winchester, we are not without record of it. It provided ready justice for merchants and pedlars from without the borough, attending its markets and fairs.

Durneday Court would appear, on the other hand, to be unique at least in its name, if not in its jurisdiction. It is from later documents than those in this volume that we are able to reconstruct it. For the present it must suffice to say that it appears to have required yearly the presence of all holders of burgages whether living in the borough or not, who were fined if. absent. The name is derived from 'durn' a door, and it would seem that if the burgage rent of one shilling yearly was not paid to the reeves, representing the lords of the town, the delinquent was liable to find his door sealed by those officials, nor might he break the seal without risking a summons to appear before the borough court. The 'durn-day' was possibly the day on which the rent was payable.

To whom did the profits of these three courts go ? They appear together at the foot of the roll, which suggests that all three sums had one destination. Dr. Tait tells us that the extent to which the original manorial court became a really independent court depended on the will of the lord.[19] It looks as though the lords of Bridgwater retained at least an interest in the issues of the borough court, for in 1380 William la Zouche complained that his steward was prevented from holding his court of view of frank-pledge — held at Michaelmas and at Hocktide — and from levying the profits.[20]

*Tenure.* Perhaps the most elementary privilege of a free borough was the change from

manorial to burghal tenure. The villein was no longer bound in any sense to the soil, no longer compelled to give days of service on the lord's strips of arable, no longer required to pay merchet on the marriage of his daughter or heriet on succession to his father. There was a commutation of services, and he compounded by henceforth paying a burgage rent — in Bridgwater of one shilling yearly.[21] If the holding was a fraction of a burgage, the rent was fractional in proportion.

Moreover, the burgess had the power of alienating his tenement. He could will it to some one other than the natural heir just as he could bequeath a chattel. But this power seems to have been ascribed to custom rather than to express grant.[22] In Bridgwater there seems to have been some doubt whether the custom of the borough allowed such alienation. Henry de Montefort and Solomon de Roff were sitting in judgment in the borough in July 1275, when a jury said that the custom of the town was such that no one was able to bequeath his inheritance in any way.[23] In the following May, the same justices in their eyre at Frome heard another Bridgwater case. The vicar, William, had died, and before his death had bequeathed properties to various persons. His niece questioned the right of her uncle to dispose of his messuages in this way, but the legatees argued that these tenements, which were the acquisition of William, had been bequeathed according to the custom of the borough and that in that borough a tenement of this kind, being an acquisition, can be bequeathed and that no such writ' — the writ of mortdancestor now brought — 'runs in that town concerning a tenement of this kind.' [24] A third case was heard in 1280. Again it was argued 'that tenements in the borough of Bridgwater can be bequeathed by will and that the writ of mortdancestor does not run concerning tenements in the borough of Briggewater.' The plaintiff could not deny this, and took nothing by his writ, but was in mercy for a false claim.[25]

It would seem from these examples that at this time, as in' many other boroughs, a distinction was made between inherited and acquired property.

*Mercantile Privileges.* It cannot fail to strike the reader that the only liberties specified in King John's charter affect the mercantile side of the life of the borough. He grants a free market, a midsummer fair lasting eight days endowed with various tolls and with all other liberties pertaining to a market and fair, and freedom from toll throughout the land, the city of London alone excepted. But this is not exceptional in the construction of John's charters, and reason can be shown for the special treatment of mercantile privileges. ' The lucrative right of authorizing markets and fairs,' Dr. Tait tells us, 'was a jealously guarded prerogative of the crown and the possessors of palatine powers.'[26] The general formula of *liber burgus* does not seem to have covered it. Yet more so is this true of the privilege of exemption from tolls throughout the kingdom.

*The Farm of the Borough*. Later we shall find the burgesses paying a fixed lump sum to the lords of the town, two-thirds to the La Zouche family and one-third to the successors of the Mortimers. But during the period covered by this volume, we hear nothing of this payment. The burgage rent due to the lords was collected by the reeves (*prepositi)*, and to this may have been added the tolls, the profits of the three courts and such house-rents as came to the burgesses as a whole — we can hardly say ' to the borough ' as yet. There was no doubt a surplus beyond the farm due to the lords, and this would go rather to the common chest than into the pockets of the reeves.

*Property of the Borough.* Maitland tells us that the walls, ditches, streets, and open spaces of the borough were not as yet conceived to be ' holden by ' the community.[27] In Bridgwater they were presumably still the property of the lords. In 1245 a royal letter close ordered William de Cantilupe to find a site for the church and buildings of the Grey Friars,[28] and, in the year following, the king ratified the arrangement made by the bailiffs of the town.[29] The acting lord seems to have passed on the command to the borough officials, sanctioning probably the assignment of a piece of land not yet built on.

Just at the end of our period, we learn from the earliest extant borough account that the ' house on the bridge' belonged to the community and was leased to a tenant at a yearly rent (297). As the burgesses were responsible for the maintenance of the bridge (10) it is natural that this house should also be in their hands.

*Borough Officials—Power of election.* The most important manorial office — the reeveship — survived in that of the provosts or reeves, with this decided difference, that they were elected by the burgesses instead of being appointed by the lord. It was their duty to collect the burgage rent (244) and their names appear from time to time throughout this period as witnesses of transfers of property. Probably it was thought important in view of the possibility of unpleasant proceedings in the Durneday court, to be in a position to show these officials their own names

attesting the change of ownership. As has been said earlier in this introduction, they had their own seal of office. The earliest document to which we find it set is the grant of leave in 1299 to a burgess to build over the West Gate (47). As the defence of the town is in question, Lady Maud Mortimer's assent is recorded and the first witness is her steward, followed by the vicar. The reeves and serjeants come next in order. It looks as though it had first been intended to use the seal of the community — *sigillum nostrum commune* — but that the reeves' seal, elsewhere referred to as *sigillum officii nostri*, was used instead.

The officials who step into the foremost position among the burgesses, the forerunners of the long line of mayors, are the stewards or seneschals of the Gild Merchant. Like the reeves they are chosen from among the burgesses of greatest influence and wealth, and the choice was made yearly (10). They have power to punish those who infringe the ordinance of the burgesses. Slander, carrying pleas to extra-burghal courts, refusal to obey a summons from their bailiff to appear before them, opposition to execution or distraint made by their order, and the unpardonable offence of regrating — all these are subjects of their jurisdiction. Moreover, the warden of the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the warden of the Holy Cross and the warden of the Bridge are all directed to present their accounts yearly to them. Apart from these functions which we learn from the important Ordinance of the Burgesses, we know scarcely anything of them in the period under review. Near the end of Edward Ill's reign, they are twice mentioned in the accounts of the common receiver (*receptor communitatis*) where 40*s*. are paid to a mason by warrant of the stewards of the Gild and of other chief and elder men (*aliorum maiorum et seniorum*) in the Gild hall, and again, in the same account and by a similar warrant — this time of the stewards only — for payment of 31*s*. to the warden of the goods of the church (297). In writs directed from the Chancery to the borough during this, period there is no mention of the stewards.

They are directed to the bailiffs, sometimes to the bailiffs and commonalty or 'good men of Bridgwater,' once or twice in error to the non-existent mayor with the bailiffs. The bailiffs were the executive arm of the borough administration. There were two year by year in the 14th century and probably also in the 13th. Their names appear from time to time as witnesses, often immediately following those of the reeves. We have seen that the stewards of the Gild Merchant had their bailiff, and Gross, who insisted on a careful separation of Gild and Borough, was at pains to point to a later document [940] in which two bailiffs of the Gild and one of the borough were witnesses to a deed.[30] Next to the reeves appear two beadles (95, 97) who may have filled the same office as the sergeants — *servientes ville* — who follow the reeves among the witnesses of an earlier deed (46). Reference has already, been made to the receiver of the commonalty — the Treasurer in fact (297)

*By-laws and self-government*. Even if we knew after what borough Bridgwater modelled her system, we should not find any powers of law-making. And yet they existed in some sense. It was always possible to declare established customs, and who was to prevent the proclamation of new customs ? We have seen the burgesses putting into writing by-laws of their own, other than the law of the land (10), and later we shall find them enforcing the local code.

*Self-taxing powers.* In the ordinary life of the borough there v was not much need for money to meet expenditure. The officials were elected to serve the community in various capacities "and were unpaid — rather they were called on to pay a fine to the community if they were unwilling to take office. If there was need to repair the bridge, application must be made to the crown to enable the burgesses to raise *pontage* among themselves; if the wall, *murage*; if the streets, pavage. When we come to enquire about the financing of the church, we shall find Bridgwater ahead of its time in levying a rate on the parishioners.

*The Gild Merchant.* The Gild, though we know that it existed and that it must have occupied a most important place in the life of the borough, appears little in the documents printed here. We shall find more evidence of its activities later. This is no place to discuss the function of the Gild Merchant in general. That has been done very fully in Gross's monumental work. Our endeavour here is rather to relate what we find being done by the Gild and its officials. We have seen that the stewards of the Gild are invested with judicial powers to punish by amercement offenders against the by-laws and that it is their duty to receive the yearly balance-sheets of the stewards or wardens of St. Mary's chantry, of the stewards or wardens of the Holy Cross and of the warden of the Bridge, who would receive tolls and see that repairs were carried out (10). We find them authorizing the receiver to make payments — one to a mason working on the

church, the other to a churchwarden (297). Here they are sanctioning disbursements not, as one would suppose, of money belonging to the Gild, but out of the common chest of the community. The money in the chest has been raised from what appears to be a tallage on the parish, outside as well as inside the actual borough, with borough court amercements, borough rent and balances both from church and borough. The account is a good example of the way in which our forefathers failed to separate what we should regard as watertight compartments in the burghal life — ecclesiastical, mercantile and administrative. And yet we see some survival of the medieval confusion in our day, for it is the mayor and corporation who manage our market, fair and port and who are the 'owners' of the parish church chancel, the clock and the altarpiece, while the mayor presides ex-officio in the weekly court.

We have suggested that in the 13th century the time has not yet come to recognize the body of self-governing burgesses as a ' corporation.' The law is still groping its way towards the conception of personality in a group of people united in common rights and in common duties, but it has not yet arrived.

When in 1280 the right of the burgesses to use the towing-path on the bank of the Parrett, where it passed through the land of John de Acton, lord of a moiety of Aller, was denied, they were obstructed in their free use of the river in trading with Langport. The case was brought before the justices in their eyre, and it is not the borough of Bridgwater that appears as the plaintiff, as it would to-day, but Roger Mortimer for himself and for all the burgesses. And Roger won his suit.[31]

At an earlier date, in 1253, William Malet of Enmore had a grievance against the borough. His plaint is that certain men have unjustly disseised him of a certain stream, one probably which contributed to the Town Brook or Durleigh Brook, and the defence is that William Briwer had possessed it, and after him William Cantilupe, the elder (that is, William Cantilupe, the second), 'in name of custody.' This time the verdict went against the men of Bridgwater, and the damages were assessed at 10s. Now in this case the name Bridgwater [32] does not occur, still less is the borough called on as defendant. Nineteen individuals are summoned and all appear except Henry le Petit, ' who is not known and was not attached, because not found.' Of these we definitely recognize eight as names of burgesses. It is suggestive that William, was unable to cite the borough as a person and that he could only gain his end by summoning a number of the units that went to make up the whole. But who paid the 10s. ? [33]

In these early years of borough development we seem to move, as it were, among shadows, yet a hope may be expressed that the future historian of the English Borough may find material in these surviving records of Bridgwater which may help him in forming such generalizations as may seem to him possible.

## REPRESENTATIVES IN PARLIAMENT

In 1295 the sheriff of the county summoned two burgesses from Bridgwater to parliament, The borough was not represented in 1297, but from 1298 onward the burgesses do not seem to have shrunk from what appeared to many boroughs a doubtful honour. ' It has been calculated that under the first two Edwards 166 boroughs were summoned once or more often ; that on an average under Edward I no more than 75, under Edward II no more than 60 boroughs were actually represented. At any rate the number rapidly decreased,' [34] Yet Bridgwater maintained its representation with great regularity and must have been willing to face the expense which the honour involved. Two shillings a day for each member during the session was required by the king's mandate.[35] The journey to Westminster, or whatever city might be the meeting-place of parliament, was not inviting in those days, and it is not to be supposed that the office was regarded as in any way a privilege. Yet prominent burgesses accepted its duties and perhaps as merchants were able to do business of their own in the course of the session which they felt might repay them for its irksomeness.

Recent research has made necessary revision of the list of representatives given in an appendix to Jarman's *History of Bridgwater* both as to dates and names.[36] It was hoped at first that to note such changes as were necessary would suffice, but when the task was begun it appeared simpler and more useful to print the list, as altered, in full — that is for the period covered by this volume.

1295. John of the Weye (or atte Weye), Walter Jacob.
1298. John of Sydenham, William Jacob.
1300. March. Richard of Roborough, Adam the Palmer.
1301. Jan. William the Large, Jordan the Parmenter.
1302. Walter Kyng, Richard Dygoun.
1305. Feb. John Savan, Richard of Roborough.
1305. Richard the Wylde, John of Sauham [37] (= Savan).
1307. Jan Richard the Wilde, Lawrence Grey.
Oct. John Savan, John of the Weye.
1309. Richard Woodcock, William the Gardiner.

1311. Aug. John of Cloteworthy, Stephen of Toukerton.
Nov. Richd. Woodcock, Walter the Chepman.
1312. Richd. Woodcock, Ralph atte Wood.
1313. March. Richd. of Stikelpath, Roger Broun.
July. Wm. Forthred, Ralph atte Wood.
Sept. Richd. of Stikelpath, Ralph atte Wood.
1314. Ralph Pope, Walter Fychet.
1315 Thos. Rogeroun, Walter of Wachet.
1319. John Bennet, Walter Purchas.
1321. Adam of Leghe, John of Dunster.
1322. May. John of Forde, Wm. Rogeron.
Nov. Adam of Leghe, David the Palmer.
1324- Jan. Walter of Enmore, John of Coumbe.
1325. John of Ilebruere, John Saladyn.
1326-7. Dec.-Jan. Thos. Boye, Roger Person.
1328. Feb. Hugh Celerer, Adam of Portland.
April. Adam of Portland, John the Warener.
1328-9. Oct.-Feb. John the Warener, Richd. the Dyer.
1330. March. David the Palmer, Thos. Boye.
Nov. [returns illegible].
1332. March. Walter of Enmore, John Eveson.
Sept. Richard Coleford, John Cronill.
1334. Feb. John Cronill, Adam of Legh.
Sept. Thos. Eremyte, Walt, of Eston.
1335. Richard of Coker, Adam of Legh.
1336. March. John of Somerton, John of Hungerford.
Sept. William Duncan, William Syward.
1337. Sept. Thos. Boye, Walt, of Eston.
1338. Feb. John Saladyn, Wm. Boye.
July. John Saladyn, John of Petherton.
1340. Jan. Henry the Bakelere, Simon the Nywecome.?
March. Robt. Wake, John Saladyn.
1341. John the Hare, John of Lenge.
1344. Richd. Boye, Gilbert the Large.
1346. Edward Babbe, John Boye.
1348. Jan. Robt. Wake, Wm. Topet.
March. Robt. Wake, Wm. Topet.
1351. Feb. Roger atte Crosse, Walt. Don.
1352. Thos. Large (?), Wm. of Welde.
1354. Robt. of Plympton, Thos. Large.
1355. Thos. Large, Wm. Crych.
1358. Feb. Adam Beste, Nich. Boye.
1360. May. John Bokland, John. Gelhampton.
1361. Jan. John Wyard, Richard Shapwick.
1362. Wm. Crych, Robert Plympton.
1363. Wm. Crych, John Smok.
1366. Robert Plympton, Will. Crych.
1368. Wm. Crych, Thos. Engelby.
1369. John Lof, Adam Leybourne.
1371. Feb. Adam Beste, Wm. Tannere.
June. Adam Beste.
1372. Adam'Beste, Hugh Mareys.
1373. Walt. Taillour, Adam Westleghe.
1377. Jan. John Palmere, Wm. Blacche.
Oct. Wm. Thomere, John Sydenham.

## TRADE AND COMMERCE

The word *bridgewater* has entered the English language and has found a place in the dictionary. It is there defined as designating 'a kind of broadcloth manufactured in Bridgewater, England.' The word *taunton* has a correspondingly similar definition. In them is enshrined the historical fact that before the coming of the industrial revolution the western counties were the home of the cloth industry. To this day the teazles used by the fuller in finishing the cloth are grown in Somerset, carefully harvested, and transported to Yorkshire, the modern home of the cloth weavers. Woad and other dye-stuffs will appear later on, but there is no mention of them in these earlier years. The wills of John de Mulle and Gilbert Russel (65, 80) and the inventory of goods following the latter (81) show how largely cloth entered into the wealth of these Bridgwater burgesses, and their bequests show how considerable their wealth had become.

Of the importation of wine during this period we have some mention. One of the Bridgwater family of Godwin (107) named John, a merchant, sent a ship of his to Bordeaux in order to bring back a cargo of wine. When it reached its destination, some merchants of Rouen, whether in the ordinary way of business or whether with a sinister design, chartered the vessel to carry wine and other goods to their own city. There John's ship was arrested by order of the Duke of Brittany, in consequence of some friction already existing between the two countries. Value of £100 sterling was involved, and the King of England interfered on John's behalf and begged the King of France to do him due and speedy justice. This was in 1317.[38] We get another glimpse of the wine trade when, in 1360, Adam Beste receives two tuns from the port of Dunwich in Suffolk (190).

Much shipping was carried on in the river port. Vessels of Bridgwater were constantly being requisitioned to carry troops and provisions for the king's wars. From time to time injunctions were received by the bailiffs that provisions must not be taken to the king's enemies, while on the other hand supplies were to be shipped to his loyal subjects or friends. Wheat, beans, peas, bacon-pigs and other agricultural produce were for ever passing through the busy port.

A story from the year 1364 illustrates the difficulties which the bailiffs might meet in their efforts to carry out the royal instructions. It appears that a certain John of Godesland was found to be thwarting the embargo which the king had placed on shipping corn to Ireland. On two separate occasions, he succeeded in running a contraband cargo of corn to the Irish enemy, taking his ship out of Bridgwater, without obtaining the king's special licence and despite the arrest of the bailiffs. At the third attempt he was less successful, and, although he threatened the officers, they seem to have succeeded this time in staying his voyage. Richard Dyer, one of the bailiffs, laid a certificate before the king on behalf of himself and his colleague, Roger Wolanton, complaining that John was uttering threats against their persons and goods on account of the arrest which had been put upon the ship and its cargo. Order was thereupon made to the sheriff to bring the offender to Westminster. The sheriff answered that he had found sureties for John's appearance in chancery and for his keeping the peace towards the bailiffs. He told also how in order to secure the corn and ship ' he with the bailiffs swam [*natavit*] with the flowing tide to Brodeshyn ' and boarded a ship of Ireland with corn and malt on board. But the Irish, to whom ship and cargo belonged, would have none of them, and, having hustled them out of the vessel, departed on the flood tide. Even if we substitute 'rowed' for 'swam' as a more probable translation of the Latin, it was a courageous feat of the sheriff and the town officers.[39]

But Richard and Roger, however zealous in the king's cause, were not yet out of their troubles. Eight years later, we find that the Exchequer had proceeded against them to recover the sum of £86 5s. 4d. being the value of a ship and cargo of corn which they had allowed to slip through their hands.[40] This naturally led to an appeal to the king, who by enquiry had found that they had duly arrested the ship of John of Godesland, but that he had by force of arms broken their, arrest. So we may hope that all ended well for our bailiffs.

From 1364 to 1371 this necessity of having the royal sanction to export cereals is demonstrated from time to time by the licences issued to merchants to carry wheat, barley, beans and peas out of Bridgwater port to Wales (Cardiff and Carmarthen and other ports), Ireland (Waterford, and Cork and other parts), Devon, Cornwall, Bristol and Bayonne. John Cole, John Michel of Sydenham, John Bythesee, Walter Dodde and Robert Plympton are names which will become familiar to the student of these archives. Sureties to secure the deliverance of the goods to the countries named are sometimes required to be given to the bailiffs.[41]

It would seem that wool was rarely handled in the port. In 1347, when the collectors of that commodity as a subsidy were ordered to cause all wool levied by them in the county to be taken to Wells, it is stated that this city had been the place hitherto appointed for its assembling except on one occasion. That was when the wool of the county had been assigned to the Italian firm of Bardi, who for its more speedy passage to Italy had it collected at Bridgwater in order to be shipped thence.[42]

## THE PARISH AND THE PARISH CHURCH

We have seen in that noteworthy account of 1373-5 (297) the complexity which prevailed in the burghal finances. Here specially we would draw attention to the fact that on the receipts side of the receiver's balance sheet is money derived from hamlets lying quite outside the jurisdiction of the borough — outside the borough, but inside the parish. They had evidently been called on to contribute further to the building fund of the church-tower, *bona campanilis*, and whereas in an earlier account (238) the building fund to which the hamlets had paid their quota was kept altogether by itself, it is now mixed up with the ordinary borough receipts and expenses.

The parish included Horsey, Bower or North Bower (now called East Bower), Dunwear, Hamp, Haygrove,. West Bower and Chilton-in-the-Marsh, which must not be confused with Chilton Trinity. All these hamlets were liable to a share in the church-rate which the late Bishop Hobhouse believed to be unique, inasmuch as a regular rate was levied on the parishioners instead of a fluctuating income sought from the popular church ale, the medieval forerunner of the modern church bazaar.

We must not expect to find any churchwardens' accounts in the 13th century. The lay church-warden was as yet unknown, and the vicar combined the wardenship with his spiritual duties. In 1280 Richard is described, not as vicar only, but also as proctor of the church,[43] and so his successors continued to be after him. Lay wardens appear only on special occasions. There are four to manage the fund for the casting of a great bell in 1318-19 (88), and in the church-tower account of 1366-7 (238) lay wardens are responsible for the town and for each hamlet. It may be advanced that in the last quarter of the 14th century the wardens of the

Holy Cross, a 13th-century office, had become the wardens of the church also. The two lay churchwardens were identical with the wardens of the Holy Cross.

We are not concerned here with the history of the patronage or advowson of the parish church before the beginning of the 13th century. But it may be said that when William Briwer had obtained his charter for the borough he took steps to recover the advowson from the monks of Bath Abbey to whom it had been given by an earlier lord. By the agreement made in the fourth year of John's reign, the Prior of Bath renounced all right to the patronage and was to receive 100*s*. yearly.[44] When William founded his Hospital, he endowed the master and brethren with the advowson, and the yearly payment to the monks of Bath was to continue.[45]

Thus the Hospital held the advowson and continued to do so as long as it existed. The master and brethren presented successive vicars who received the small tithes. In Bishop Ralph's time, the rents and issues were assessed at a yearly value of 20 marks, according to the taxation of the tenth.[46]

The earliest recorded vicar is James (3), and William the Chaplain seems to have followed him (12, 16, 17). We know definitely that William had died before 1276, for in that year the disposition of his property was in dispute. He must have been fairly wealthy, for, in addition to that which he had bestowed on the chantry of the Blessed Mary, he had devised the properties in question, which consisted of seven messuages and a half, all in Bridgwater. The beneficiaries were Hugh Godwyne, William Kene, William Large, Adam of Wotton, William of Glaston and his wife, the master of the Hospital and Geoffrey of Cumpton. The late vicar's niece, Agnes, wife of Thomas le Franceys, contested the will, arguing that the testator had no power to bequeath the properties and that she ought to inherit them as rightful heir. Against her claim it was urged that the custom of the borough allowed an owner to devise property which was an acquisition, and that in accordance with custom the occupiers had each entered on his legacy on the vicar's death.[47]

Richard, whom we find vicar in 1280, also had land of his own.[48] There are various references to Walter of Stocklinch from 1296 to 1317 (see Index). John of Parys received a licence from the bishop in 1318 to make the pilgrimage to Canterbury.[449] One is tempted to link this pilgrimage to a legacy made twelve months previously in Gilbert Russell's will (80), which was to be paid to the man who should make a vicarious pilgrimage on his behalf to the shrines of Bromholm, Walsingham and Canterbury. In October, 1340, Bishop Ralph conferred the vicarage on John of Torrebrian, a priest of the diocese of Exeter.[50] Richard of Exbridge, a poor clerk, who was presented to the living in November, 1348, was succeeded four months later by John Butleigh, and we may suppose that he had fallen a victim to the terrible plague which swept through Somerset that winter.[51] In the summer of 1350, his successor was summoned by a royal writ to appear at Westminster with Agnes, daughter of John Godwyne, as co-executor of the will of John of Herleston, a merchant of Bridgwater.[52] John Butleigh's name occurs as late as 1363 (207). Ten years later John Comyn is vicar (286) and we assume that he was still in possession at the close of our period.

In the course of time there has been so much alteration in the structure of St. Mary's that it is difficult to point to this or that part as belonging to the centuries under consideration. William Briwer is credited with much activity in re-building at the beginning of the 13th century. We shall not be wrong, however, in assigning the tower to an early date and in looking on it as the earliest portion of the fabric as it stands to-day. We are fortunate in possessing the account, both financial and material, of the casting of a great bell at the beginning of the 14th century (88), and equally so in having that of the building of the spire in the third quarter of the same century (238). Much money was collected not only in the several wards of the borough, but in all the surrounding parochial hamlets. Whoever may have been the master mason charged with the ordinary building and repairs carried out at the same time, for the spire a specialist was needed and Nicholas Waleys was sent for from Bristol. His work began on 28 June, 1367, when the first timber for scaffolding was hoisted to the tower top. The importance of this event is marked by the entry of an exact date —- unique in our early church accounts. The timber was felled in the royal forest of Petherton, which skirted the parish boundaries on the south. The stone used was the fawn-coloured Ham Hill stone, brought down the river in barges and forming a pleasing contrast with the red sandstone of the tower, quarried in the neighbouring parish of Wembdon.

Early English work may be seen all along the north aisle and the north transept, and we can deduce from its presence there that the width of nave and aisles was the same then as it is to-day ; it is noteworthy that it is much greater than

was usually to be found in the parish churches of those days.

The large iron hook at the apex of the chancel where the nave ends, from which depended the High Cross or Great Cross or Rood, is still to be seen. On All-Hallows Eve the All Souls candles were placed on a long beam in front of it, and the bedeman made his round of the town calling on all men to pray for the souls of the departed. We have seen that the steward of the Great Cross made account yearly to the stewards of the Gild Merchant (10). Later he was succeeded by two proctors or wardens (88, 152 *et passim*).

Of altars we find mention of that of St. James (24) and of one of the Blessed Mary alongside that of All Saints (65). To these may be added, if the design was ever carried out, that which the Pope permitted Iseult Parewastel to erect (92 note).

## CHANTRIES

The religious gild was an ordinary institution in the medieval town, and although the term is never applied to the chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is evident that the chantry fulfilled in part the function of a gild. Before its altar in the chancel of the parish church (151) mass was sung for the souls of the departed brethren. The burgesses as a' whole—*universi burgenses*—were its members and the trustees of its property. When anyone gave a tenement to the chantry the enfeoffment clause directed that it was to be held ' of God, the Blessed Mary and the burgesses ' This was the formula used to define the ownership in the 13th century (12, 16 *et passim*) and is used even as late as 1369 (246) though in no other year of the 14th century. The chantry thus became a considerable landlord and held its own court (244)., We are not fortunate enough to possess any of its court rolls, though we have one of the chantry of Holy Trinity of the late 15th century which preserves for us the formalities of a chantry court. We have seen that anyone elected to the office of steward of the Blessed Mary was accountable to the stewards of the Gild Merchant, (10). This is the only occasion on which the term steward is used in connection with the chantry. Proctors, the two officials are called, and collectors, and finally wardens. But in the early leases it is 'all the burgesses' who lease the properties. We may therefore picture the chantry as a gild belonging to the burgesses, with the stewards of the Gild Merchant in control, and with two officials called proctors, collectors or wardens carrying out the necessary administration, collecting the rents, receiving gifts, paying the salary of the chaplain, buying wax and oil and other necessaries. The gift might be a grant outright of land or tenement, a rent charge on land or tenement for a term of years or for ever,wax, tapers, or some article of household furniture or of wearing apparel to be turned into cash or to be loaned at a rent.

We are fortunate in possessing accounts of this chantry for the five consecutive years 1368 to 1372. From these we are able not only to learn something of the regular finances of the chantry but also to gather some of its history. The first four work out fairly correctly, but the fifth is wanting in clarity. First is entered the balance received from the wardens of the previous year ; next, the receipts from rents and, separately, of other sources of income. Then the expenses are set forth and the defects of the rental. The amounts are summed up and the balance to be handed over to the incoming wardens comes last of all.

On the dorse of the balance-sheet there is an account of the wax and oil acquired during the year by gift or purchase, of the consumption in tapers and in maintaining the lamp before the altar, and finally of the stock in hand, if any.

At the close of the account for the year 1371 (268) will be found a short list of legacies received during the year, which is of interest. There also will be found recorded the curse of the late chaplain should anyone dare to sell the articles of bed furniture which he has left to the chantry. Presumably they were to be turned into vestments.

The first priest whose name has come down to us as chaplain of this chantry is Thomas, who is mentioned in John Mill's will in 1310 (65). We cannot be sure of David Keling, to whom Thomas Goldsmith gave a half-burgage next door to the dwelling of the chaplain of the Blessed Mary (156), but it looks as though Robert Cauntelo held the office (167), though we are not actually told so. This was in 1353, after the Black Death had ravaged the town. Walter Fort, whose curse is recorded above, was succeeded by William Mareys whose name occurs in the accounts of 1371 and 1372. But in 1373 Thomas Godfelawe received the yearly stipend of £4 6*s* 8*d*., and while his name does not occur again, William Mareys, the chaplain, was still alive in 1387. Possibly Thomas was a *locum tenens* for one year. In 1393 the chantry was re-established.

We are nearing the time of great activity in the widening of the church, so that it became possible to take under the extended roof new chapels of new chantries dedicated to the Holy

Trinity, Saint George and others. But this development belongs to the next volume of these archives.

THE HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Of the two religious houses in Bridgwater, the Hospital is the better documented in its early history. We have King John's confirmation of William Briwer's endowment of the Hospital,[53] and yet more valuable, we have Bishop Jocelin's Rule for the Hospital which prescribes the duties and privileges of the brethren.[54]

The house was founded by William Briwer some time while King John was yet alive, though we do not know the precise year. Its original object was the care of ' Christ's poor ' and in the 14th century it is still described as ' the hospital of the poor and infirm' [55] though we shall find that its scope of usefulness had ere then been extended to keep pace with its endowments. The heirs of the founder continued to exercise the patronage of the house. On the appointment of a new master in 1313, the bishop wrote to Lady Margaret Mortimer, as patron, begging her to release the temporalities to him,[56] and later we find the master and brethren deeming it necessary to remind the king that the Hospital was of the patronage of the heirs of William Briwer.[57] Twenty years earlier, the king had ordered the master to admit to the Hospital one, William de la Sale, 'who has long served the king and his father, and to grant him maintenance in food and clothing' The king claims that his order should be carried out, ' as the hospitals in the realm were founded by the king's progenitors specially for the admission of poor and weak people and especially those in the king's service who had become unable to work.'[58]

The original endowment by William Briwer seems to have been 100 acres of land in the vill of Bridgwater together with the advowson of the parish church, saving always 100s. to be paid yearly to the monks of Bath.[59] To these gifts the founder added the advowsons of the churches of Northover, lying close to Ilchester, and of his own Isle Brewers.[60]

During the century, three more advowsons with land were added to the properties of the Hospital. In three successive years, 1383 to 1385, they received the church of Lanteglos-by-Fowey with the chapel of St. Saviour there, by the gift of Robert of Boyton; [61] the church of Wembdon by the gift of William Testard; [62] and the church of Morwenstow by the gift of William of Monkton.[63] Each donor added land to the advowson. An inspeximus of 1315 confirmed these three appropriations.[64]

Among various properties acquired during the next century in Somerset was the advowson of the church of Chilton Trinity, with the chapels of Idstock and Huntstile, the gift of Richard of Wygge-bere.[65] Some account of Idstock which lies between Cannington and Stogursey will be found in Dr. Powell's *Ancient Borough of Bridgwater*; [66] Huntstile is near North Petherton.

If we now turn to the ' ordination or foundation ' laid down by Bishop Jocelin for the conduct of the Hospital we shall not find that the brethren were to follow the rule of any existing order. Nor in any document which is closely associated with the life of the house do we find them limited in any way. They are simply the master (sometimes prior) and brethren of the Hospital of St. John the Baptist of Bridgwater, and we shall probably be following a safe course in so describing them. The suggestion that they were of the order of St. John of Jerusalem or of that of the Hospitallers may be dismissed. But they have often been styled canons of St. Augustine, and there is documentary ground for this, if we go further afield. In the cartulary of St. John's Hospital, Exeter, for example, there is a statement (fol. 78*d*). that ' the Brethren of S. John's Hospital are of the Rule of S. Augustine, and have leave given them to visit the Hospital of S. John of Bridgewater, which is of the same rule.'[67] We shall be less likely to err if we adhere to the language of the original rule of Bishop Jocelin— *Ut dicta domus et fratres easdem habeant libertates consuetudines quas aliqua domus aut fratres hospitalis vel consimilis religionis habent.*

Beside nominating vicars to the church of Bridgwater, and later to those of Wembdon and Chilton Trinity, the Hospital was required to serve the chapel in the Castle, one of the brethren celebrating mass there daily, while the lord was to find books, vestments, vessels, light and all things necessary for it. But their chief work was to serve ' Christ's poor,' and they were to devote themselves most specially to the care of the sick. Certain exceptions were made. Leprosy, lunacy, contagious diseases, maternity, were to be outside their province. Two or three women, ' not noble, but suitable, of good conversation and reputation, willing and able to serve the infirm poor ' might be admitted to help in the work of the infirmary. There was not to be any entertainment of rich or powerful folk — not even of the patrons for the time being. It was to be only for ' Christ's poor.' The brethren were to elect one of their number to be master or

warden — *magistrum seu custodem*—and were to wear a habit and clerical garments such as were suited to the brethren of a hospital or similar order or religion, but with the addition of a black or blackish cross — *cruce tamen nigri aut nidii colons*—on their mantles and outer garments.

Before the close of the 13th century, the scope of the work of the Hospital was considerably extended. Hitherto the care of the sick and the supply of chaplains had sufficiently occupied the brethren. But with their income enlarged by the appropriation of three more churches it was necessary to find a further outlet for their activities. In Bishop Drokensford's Register, fol. 264*a,* there is a deed of Geoffrey of Mark, Master of the Hospital, and his brethren, dated 1298, which sets forth in detail the additions to the Rule of Bishop Jocelyn which are to be observed in future. In the first place the number of brethren, by the addition of six chaplains, was to be raised to thirteen, with the master. These were to wear the same religious habit and perform the divine offices in the chapel. Secondly, thirteen poor scholars were to be introduced who were to live the religious life within the precincts of the Hospital. They were to be apt and able, capable of instruction. They were to receive daily food and drink at the poor scholars' board. If they proved to be apt scholars in letters — *grammatica* — they were to receive from the master and brethren on Michaelmas day half a mark (6s. 8d.) for books and clothing. When they were sufficiently instructed, or if they proved to be inefficient, their places were to be taken by others, so that there should always be thirteen of them, who were to be present, surpliced, at the morning canonical hours and at mass, but not in such wise as to prevent their daily attendance at the town school. Thirdly, the master — *rector* — of the town school was to send seven mendicant scholars daily to receive a loaf of bread, a dish of gruel and a pittance from the kitchen, with a gallon of second ale, and what might be over of the meal they were allowed to carry away with them.

Then follows a list of benefactors for whose souls the brethren are to pray: the late king, Henry III and his consort, Eleanor ; King Edward and his consort, Eleanor; Robert Burnel, late Bishop of Bath and Wells, a special benefactor of the hospital, Philip, his father, and Parnel, his mother; the present bishop, William of March; Peter Quivil, Bishop of Exeter; William Mortimer and Hawis, his wife ; Milicent de Mohaud; Gilbert of Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, Lady Joan of Acre, his wife [the king's daughter] ; Edward, Earl of Cornwall and Margery, his wife ; William of Moneketon, who bestowed the advowson of Morwenstow on the Hospital; his father, Adam, and his mother, Gillian ; Henry of Thidolueshide ; Gilbert of Woolavington ; Robert, his father, and Gillian, his mother ; the late Dean of Wells ; Joan of Chambernon; Ralph of Willeton; W. of Hamelton; Adam, his father, and Alice, his mother ; Master H. Husee ; Dom. H. Everard; Master W. of Bath; Dom. Matthew and Master Anthony of Bredene ; William of Warminster; Hugh of Eton; Dom. G. of Portland, chaplain and brother; G. of Portland, late Master of the Hospital; Richard, his father, and Maud, his mother.[68]

This 'G. of Portland' may be identical with Gilbert who was master in 1277-8 (S.R.S., xli, pp. 116, 141-3). Geoffrey of Mark, as we have seen, held the position in 1298. He will be found witnessing a grant to the Holy Cross in 1296 (40). Brother Henry who witnesses an inspeximus in 1317 (75) is Henry of Stanford whom the bishop had instituted two years earlier (S.R.S., vol. i, p. 151). John of Walsham, appointed in 1334 (S.R.S., vol. ix, p. 167), was succeeded by Thomas of Cadecote, or Catcott, who was master in 1349 (S.R.S., vo1 x p. 646) and whose long occupation of the mastership lasted beyond the period of this volume.

Of the fabric of the Hospital little can be said. We know its site roughly and that it lay partly within and partly without the East Gate on the south side is tolerably certain. William of Worcester gives the length of the church as 64 of his 'steppes' of which we shall speak in the next section. As he estimated the length of the old stone bridge at 70 of these, some idea of the length of the church may be gained.

### The Grey Friars

The Little Brothers — *fratres minores* — of S. Francis of Assisi, or Grey Friars, first landed in England in 1224, and if we may trust the tradition which Leland found here on his visit to the borough more than 300 years later, it was not long before some members of the order found their way to Bridgwater. He tells us that William Briwer, the younger, 'buildid this house.' [69] If that was indeed so, the Friars must have come before his death in 1232, and found a home in the town. We have no earlier testimony to confirm the story. Some colour possibly is lent to it by the record of Thomas of Eccleston that the site of the convent was changed — mutatus est *locus de Brigewater* [70] — in the days of Brother William, that is to say, some time from 1240 to 1254. On the other hand William of Worcester,

who saw the list of the convent's benefactors and copied some of the names, fails to mention William Briwer among them.

We know more positively that they were here in 1245, for on the 30th of October of that year a royal mandate was issued to William de Cantilupe, who was acting as lord of the town, ordering him to receive with hospitality the friars minor 'whom the king is sending to Bridgwater' (*quos rex mittit usque Brigewalter*) and to furnish: them with a site in the town suitable for the erection of a church and: whatever other buildings were deemed necessary.[71] The order was quickly, and we may hope readily, obeyed, for in January a royal letter to the bailiffs ratifies the assignment of a site made to the Brethren of S. Francis.[72] Whether the church was completed before William died in 1251 we do not know, but we can now understand how it was that William of Worcester found his name in the *martyrologium* of the convent when he visited it some time in the middle of the 15th century. There he saw inscribed in the list of benefactors the name of ' *dom*. W. de Cantelupe, founder of this church of the order of S. Francis ' (*fundator hujus ecclesie ordinis Sancti Francisci*) with the date of his anniversary.[73] A second founder of the church whose name is recorded in the same list is that of Roger Mortimer, presumably that Roger who was the husband of Maud de Braose and contemporary with William de Cantilupe the third.[74] We may conjecture that the building was begun during the guardianship of William de Cantilupe the second, and completed after Maud had entered on her heritage. Timber and fuel were requisitioned for the convent in 1250,[75] and timber was still being supplied from the royal forests in the last quarter of the century. Oaks felled in the neighbouring forest of North Petherton were given to the friars in 1278,[76] and six years later a royal order was sent to the keeper of the king's forest to send oaks fit for timber to the Bridgwater House.[77]

Though this 13th-century church has entirely disappeared, its site is known and it would be in the interests of our historical knowledge if it could be thoroughly explored before the ground is used, as is contemplated, for building purposes. Within recent years an allotment holder's spade struck a large stone, which, on being excavated, proved to be the base of one of the church pillars.

William of Worcester was accustomed to measure the areas of the churches, bridges and other buildings which he visited in his tour of the provinces by the rough method of pacing them. His standard ' steppe ' would appear to be longer than a foot but less than a foot and a half. He measured the length of the old stone bridge and that of the church of the Hospital. Of the church of the Friars he gives the length as 120 'steppys,' the width as 30, and The width of the nave as 14.[78]

Thus, by the end of the 13th century, we may picture the Bridgwater friars with their guardian, completely domiciled in their house in Friarn Street, with a useful garden at hand (235) and meadows, as the tithe map shows us, in the low-lying fields beyond the Durleigh brook, while their beautifully ornamented church stood somewhat to the westward of their dwelling. One distinguished member of the order had already been laid to rest either within it or in its precincts, Brother Robert Cross (*de Cruce*), who was the eleventh provincial minister, 1279(?) - 85.[79]

In these pleasant places they continued to flourish. Their ministrations were acceptable not only to the people of the borough but throughout the diocese. The registers of the bishops record from time to time the issue of licences to them both to preach and to hear confessions.[80] Though we do not know what was the proportion of priests and laymen in the convent, there were always some priests and on one occasion Bishop Drokensford licensed as many as six at one time. [81] From Bishop Ralph's register we learn the names of three friars. Maurice de la More, in 1333 [82] ; Wm. de Anne, who was guardian of the convent, later in the same year[83] ; and Richard Aunger, in 1354.[84]

It was in 1335 that the Bishop of Worcester, as conservator of the privileges of the order, took up a complaint of the Friars Minor of Bridgwater, that their privileges had been infringed and that they had suffered divers injuries.[85] This action may be regarded as suggestive that the house was not free from those quarrels with the secular clergy which frequently disturbed the harmony of the medieval church.

Wills published in this volume show the esteem in which the testators held the Grey Friars and their prayers (80, 150, .188, 192). In the year after the Black Death had made its terrible descent on Somerset, a donor, whose name has not come down to us, gave or left to them six acres of land for the enlargement of their dwelling-place.[86]

Before the end of Edward III's reign, we have a glimpse of their responsibilities in a court roll of Bridgwater Castle and manor of Haygrove in

the year 1371 (266). The warden (*custos*) of the Friars Minor is called upon to answer to the court for having neglected to keep Hamp Brook clean,: which suggests to us that some of their meadows bordered Hamp Brook as well as Durleigh Brook.

None of those letters of confraternity which happily survive among these archives is dated earlier than the 15th century, and so they will not be found here, nor do those names belonging to Franciscans of this house who became famous appear so early, but students may be interested to note the presence in Friarn Street of a family named Somer from whom it is pleasing to assume that Friar John of that name derived his origin.

## TOPOGRAPHY

'The towne of Bridgwater,' says Leland, writing in the 16th century,[87] 'is not wallid, nor hath not beene by any lykelyhod that I saw. Yet there be 4 gates yn the towne namid as they be sette by est, west, north, and south. The waulles of the stone houses of the toune be yn steade of the towne waulles'

This was true of most of the perimeter of the town, but in one section which seems to have escaped the antiquary's notice, some walling had been erected a portion of which has survived to our own days. This was in the north-west quarter (53) and may have been completed from the West to the North Gate.

It is not difficult to follow the outline of the medieval town. A deep and wide ditch — the Town (38) or Common Ditch (194) — was cut from the river westerly, past the North and West Gates, until by way of our Moat Lane the Town or Durleigh Brook was reached. Thence the Brook formed the defence on the south side until it joined the river. Eastover was defended by a similar ditch which was cut from opposite the mouth of the Brook to the East Gate, and thence again to the river at a spot opposite the ditch on the north side of the Castle.[88] As Leland tells us, the walls of the houses were the remaining defence. Once in her history has Bridgwater been besieged, and then it was on the north side of Eastover that a breach was made by the troops of Fairfax and Cromwell.[89]

The main thoroughfare ran through the town from east to west, and these two gates, with that from which the wayfarer set out for Taunton, were those which saw most traffic. The North Gate must have had a much quieter existence and perhaps it is for that very reason that it alone has been handed down to us in picture and is the subject of one of those delightful sketches from the pencil of John Chubb, mayor of the borough in 1788, which are familiar objects in lithographed copies in many Bridgwater homes.[90]

The West Gate, which was built of the red sandstone of Wembdon, carried a superstructure such as may be seen for example on the West Gate of Winchester — at least this was so, if Richard Maidus acted on the permission granted to him in May, 1299 (47). With this licence it is interesting to compare the lease which Geoffrey Chaucer had from the City of London, as tenant of the dwelling-house above the Aldgate, where he lived for twelve years.

The castle which William Briwer built by leave of King John [91] was of course the predominating feature of the town and occupied a large portion of its area.[92] It is reputed to have been at one time one of the strongest and most extensive in the kingdom,[93] yet throughout the middle ages it seems never to have been called on to play any part in the warfare that surrounded it. It was during Briwer's own life that it saw its greatest days, when time after time it was the guest-house of a king who came a-hunting in his royal park of Petherton.[94] After that the events associated with it are of a petty character. The escape from its custody of a thief who professed himself a churchman,[95] or the transference by the Master of the Hospital tb the Constable of the Castle of the late lord's quarrels, or arrows, for the better munition of the fortress are not great events.[96]

The massiveness of the castle walls is evident in such remains as are to be found near to the quay to this day. There, too, is the triple-arched gate which gave access from the river. The main entrance was the gate defended by a drawbridge (226) which faced the Cornhill. On the north, west, and south sides, the castle was defended, not only by its enormous walls, but by a deep moat (48) fed by the tidal river. The constable's house stood on the high ground now occupied by King Square, and probably annexed to it stood the chapel dedicated to St. Mark [1424] which; as has been said, was served by brethren of the Hospital.

But important as the castle is in the strategical defence of the west, it is to the bridge that we must turn as the *fons et origo* of the western town. It is to the bridge that the place owes its name with the added element of Walter de Douai's name which was pronounced and spelt Wauter or Water.[97]

The wooden bridge shown on the seal of the community is of course conventional; but the

earliest bridge must have been of that material, and according to Leland's tradition the ' right auncient stronge and high bridge of stone of 3 arches' had been ' begon of William Bruer.' [98]There we must leave it, for Trivet's building comes later than, though soon after, our period. From a later record we learn that there was a chapel on it, served by the Friars, such as stood frequently on medieval bridges, and we read also of a house (297).

Of the church of St. Mary we have already written.[99] It was surrounded by a churchyard (8) with an east stile (170) and a south stile, while on the north and west sides the houses, as they do to-day, came close up to the church precincts.

It is easy to trace, not only the outline of the medieval town, but the directions of the main streets also, for they ran on the whole just as we see them. The Great Street—*magnus vicus* (16), *magnus vicus regalis* (21), *melior vicus*. (37), *maior vicus* (24), — afterwards *altus vicus* (116) is our High Street. But the name in those days included the street from the top of the present High Street to the West Gate (38) and from the Cornhill to the Bridge (176). The north and south sides of High Street were distinguished from each other sometimes as North Street (12) and South Street (54). The street which we now call North Street was generally known as the way to Kidsbury (52) or to Wembdon (283), though it is called North Street in 1355 (175). The street 'twixt Church and Bridge' (176) is first called Fore Street in 1367 (237) . In the middle of High Street as we know it stood a block of buildings in the middle of which was the 'Cornchepyng' (133) if we may be allowed that it probably stood on the same site as the Corn Exchange of the 18th century which was taken down in 1825. The 'Cokenrewe' (133) was not far from the 'Corn-chepyng,' though we cannot locate it exactly. The Tolsey or tollhouse, already called 'old' in the middle of the 14th century (163), was in the Cokenrewe, and if it stood next the Gildhall, we may be right in thinking that this group was in the neighbourhood of the Town Hall of to-day. St. Mary Street (45) ran from South Gate to High Street as it still does. Dampiet Street or Damyetstrete, variously spelt Dameyet, Damyate, Damyet, Damyhete, Dameȝete, Damygete, occurs first in 1344 (139). The letter 'p' has crept in after the 'm' as it has in many place-names, such as the local hamlet Hamp, but the name appears to be derived from dam and gete — 'the way by the dam,' probably that on the Town Brook, built to make a fall for the wheel of Little Mill (194) where the corn was ground for the town. Froggelane (8) must be placed near the river, where Blake Gardens now are, and Froglanes Bridge (139) probably carried the lane across the Brook. The river itself is mentioned first in 1324 when it is described as the ' water of Perred ' (97). Lime Bridge or South Bridge as it is also called (297) presents a puzzle. It can scarcely have crossed the river, and we may assume that it carried the towing-path on the east bank over the moat. It is a frequent object of repair.

Friarn Street (44), the street, in which stood the house of the Grey Friars, extended eventually from Dampiet Street to West Gate. But we also find ' twixt South Gate and the Friars Minor ' (142) and ' twixt West Gate and the Friars' Church ' (193). The name Silver Street does not occur. It was known in medieval times as ' twixt the parish church and the Friars Minor' (114). Horse-pond is a very old institution, appearing (14) under the more ancient name of 'wayhur'or 'way ere' which means a horse-pond and not a weir. In 1303 we read of a burgage situated in South Street 'next the small street which leads to the Waere' (54). On the Cornhill (192) stood the High Cross (229). The *domus stallorum*, or house of stalls ' (235), may have been at one end of the island in High Street.

Eastover is first so called in 1357 (184), but is earlier described as 'beyond the Bridge' (23), 'twixt Hospital and Bridge' (80), and 'east of the Bridge ' (107) .'By the Were' is classed among the hamlets in 1366 (238) but later we shall find it among the wards of the town. It lay apparently in the neighbourhood of the modern Dry Dock.

Orloue Street (92), with its variants Oreloue, Ordlof, Ordloue, Orloues, Horlokes and Horlokkes, should be spelt with an 'f' or with 've ' instead of 'ue.' To-day it has become 'Orl-ieu,' probably because Mr. Riley thought it must be the ' Gold place' or the 'Gold smithery.' [100] It is far more likely that it is derived from the family of Ordlof (8) or Orloc, whose name occurs very early. The street ran parallel to High Street from the Castle Ditch to Pig Cross and is now called Clare Street.

Pynel Street (164) which was a very small street at the west end of Orloue Street dates from 1362 when John Pynel leased property in it and the scribe of the deed calls it Pynelysstrete. , Cronilesstreet (245) or Cronylleslane (155) is another place-name of the same order as Orloue Street and Pynel Street, for it evidently takes its name from the family of Cronile (95). On the dorse of No. 157 we find a note informing us that Cronile's Lane is the same as Pynel's lane.

Outside the West Gate there were ways in three directions — towards Kidsbury, towards the Park and towards West Wayhur or West Horsepond, which, like its equivalent by Friarn Street, was probably close to the Town Brook. The Park would be a district preserved by the lords for game, and Kidsbury was probably merely a farmstead of which a ruined wall alone survives. 'Cattenechurcheye (175) also lay outside West Gate, while 'Rome' was a tenement 'in a street called Pynelysstret near the north gate' (164) which suggests again that Pynel Street ran in that direction.

## Personal Names

In the 13th century the custom of using a surname was being slowly established. The law knew a man only by his baptismal name and the Church to this day recognizes no other. But the inconvenience of many men bearing the same name was being met by the use of patronymics. These are seen in a crude form in an early document (5) where four witnesses are described each as the son of his father, the father's name being a baptismal name. This led to the form in which ' Fitz ' is placed before the father's baptismal name — Fitz-James (157) will serve as an example. The commoner method however is the addition of ' son ' or simply ' s ' to the baptismal name, and these will be found in abundance in our index.

Place of origin, occupation, personal qualities, nationality — these also are used to differentiate one from another. John of Petherton is distinguished from John of Chedzoy; Robert the Tucker from Robert the Dyer; Roger the Blacche from Roger the Broun. Eventually these additional names tended to become family names, but not necessarily. Even to-day the law does not compel a man to adopt his father's surname.

But unfortunately this attempt to distinguish by means of a man's trade or birth-place or peculiarity was made with such laxity that the same man might bear three or more surnames, and the local historian is met with this difficulty of recognizing the same man under different names. Take for example the man William who had a house by the West Gate and who is called ' the Smith ' from his calling, and also ' Priestsson ' as a patronymic (29). Later we meet him as William the Smith in the Walles (38) and again as simply William in la Walle (73).

It would be interesting to classify the nationalities of the inhabitants of medieval Bridgwater. We should find considerable elements of Welsh and Irish, especially when we come to the long church rate lists of the 15th century. In this volume le Bret and le Breton, Engleys, Irish (le Yreis, *Hyberniensis*), Welshman (Walisshman) and Waleys declare themselves immediately. We have already mentioned a man named le Franceys [101] and towards the end of our period there were Flemings named le Lange and Hubei.[102]

The name of Philip Crese erl (77) or Creseerl (74) which appears first as Crese only (35) is curious.

The baptismal names have their own interest. The most noteworthy fact about them is the entire absence of the name Mary. It was deemed too sacred to be given to the medieval girl.

In conclusion may I end this Introduction on a personal note.

I should like to say emphatically that it does not pretend to be a history of Bridgwater nor to be in any sense exhaustive. It is rather a series of notes which I hope may be of help to the future historian of the town. It has been written partly to offer help to such readers as would shrink from the languages of the text and partly to serve those students who will themselves read and weigh the contents of these archives which have fortunately survived the centuries.

I should like also to record my sense of gratitude to the successive Mayors, Town Clerks and members of the Corporation who during the last twenty years have eased my labours by affording me facile access to the originals; to Dr. James Tait, who during many years has helped me by his encouragement and by placing his wide knowledge of medieval town government at my disposal; to the late Dean Armitage Robinson for much kindly help ; to Dr. A. G. Little for reading the section on the Grey Friars and furnishing me with a reference of which I was ignorant; to the late Dr. J. H. Round for his help and encouragement; to Professor A. Hamilton Thompson for elucidating some difficult passages; to Sir Henry Maxwell Lyte for various helpful suggestions; to the Rev. Prebendary T. F. Palmer for much time and trouble in seeing the MS. through the printers' hands; and to many others. Nor would I forget an octogenarian brother who spent long hours in research in the Rylands Library at Manchester in my behalf, but who did not live to see the consummation of his unstinted labours.

T. B. D.

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ENDNOTES

P.2

1) See *Dictionary of National Biography*

P.4

2) Powell, *Ancient Borough of Bridgwater,* pp. 118—19.

3) Raven, *Bells of England*, p. 63, quoting *Notes and Queries*, 5th Series,

P.5

4) For this very brief summary of Briwer's career I have followed the chronicles of Walter of Coventry and Roger of Howden as my authorities.

5) *Somersetshire Pleas*, Som. Record Soc., xi, p. 412.

6) Leland's I*tinerary*, fo. 58.

7) For this and other items of genealogical interest here recorded, see Dugdale's *Baronage,* passim.

8) Kate Norgate, *John Lackland*, p. 288.

9) Writing of Bridgwater, Collinson in his *Hist, of Som*., iii, 80, gives William instead of Reginald as the husband of Griseld, but in vol. i, p. 54, the name is correct.

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10) Close Rolls, 17 Hen. ill, p. 230.

11) Dugdale, *Baronage,* pp. 731 et seq..

12) *Somersetshire Pleas*, S.R.S., xliv, p. 119, 6 July, 1280.

13) ibid., xli, pp. 17, 18.

14) *Register of the Abbey of Athelney*, S.R.S., xiv, p. 171.

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15) Cal. Pat. Rolls 1304, 20 Sept., pp. 285-6.

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16) Pollock and Maitland, *Hist. of English Law*, vol. i, p. 635.

17) *Somersetshire Pleas*, S.R.S., vol. xi, pp. 41, 292.

18) Tait, *Liber Burgus in Essays in Medieval History presented to Thomas Frederick Tout*.

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19) Tait, ibid., p. 89.

20) Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1377-81, p. 570

21) Burgage rent survives to this day in five tenements in the borough, at the rate of one shilling a burgage.

22) Pollock and Maitland, ibid., vol. i, p. 645. Dr. Tait has pointed out that devise of land was to some extent general originally and only became a borough peculiarity when the common law stopped it elsewhere.

23) *Somersetshire Pleas*, S.R.S., vol. xli, p. 18.

24) ibid., vol. xli, p. 38.

25) *Somersetshire Pleas*, S.R.S., vol. xliv, p. 51.

26) Tait, ibid., p. 90.

27) Pollock and Maitland, ibid., p. 653.

28) Cal. Close Rolls, 30 Henry III, p. 367.

29) Cal. Pat. Rolls, 30 Henry III, p. 470

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30) Gross, *Gild Merchant*, vol. i, p. 63 ; vol. ii, p. 23.

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31) *Somersetshire Pleas*, S.R.S., vol. xliv, p. 119.

32) Except in the name, Richard le Kyng de Briges.

33) *Somersetshire Pleas*, S.R.S., vol. xi, p. 412.

34) Pollock and Maitland, *Hist, of English Law*, vol. i, p. 641.

35) Cal. Close Rolls 1369, June 11, p. 101 *et passim*.

36) Interim Report of the Committee on House of Commons Personnel and Politics 1264-1832, p. 49. Jarman's list is presumably copied from *Return of Members of Parliament, 1213-1702*. 1878.

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37) Jarman gives ' Sautram, ' but ' Sauham ' is a better reading.

38) Cal. Close Rolls, 1313-18, p. 565.

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39) Cal. Fine Rolls, 1364, June 23, vol. vii, p. 291 ; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1364,, Oct. 28, p. 72.

40) Cal. Close Rolls, 1372, April 8, p. 369

41) Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1364, Nov. 11, p. 35 et passim.

42) Cal. Close Rolls, 1347, Sept. 25, p. 323.

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43) S.R.S., xliv, p. 336.

44) *Feet of Fines*, S.R.S., vol. vi, p. 19.

45) *Rotuli Chartarum,* p. 204.

46) S.R.S., vol. ix, p. 372

47) *Somersetshire Pleas*, S.R.S., vol. xli, p. 38.

48) S.R..S., vol. xliv, p. 336.

49) ibid., vol. i, p. 17.

50) ibid., ix, p. 372.

51) ibid., vol. x, p. 582.

52) ibid., p. 625.

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53) *Rotuli Chartarum*, p. 204.

54) Walter Hemingford, *Historia de rebus gestis*, Edward I, Edward II and Edward III, pp. 597-603.

55) Cal. Close Rolls, 1341, p. n, 12 Feb.

56) S.R.S., vol. i, p. 151.

57) Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1344/23 June, p. 310.

58) Cal. Close Rolls, 1325, 26 May, p. 366.

59) Rotuli Chartarum, p. 204.

60) Reg. Drokensford, fo. 264a.

61) Pat. Rolls, 1283, p. 69

62) ibid., 1284, p. 132.

63) ibid., 1285, p. 176;

64) ibid., 1315, P- 258.

65) Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1327, p. 33.

66) pp. 148-51

67) Footnote p. 361, *Dev. & Corn. N. & Q.* 253, on Woollen Trade at Exeter (xvi, p. 313, par.'223) by Ethel Lega-Weekes.

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68) I have given this list of benefactors here, because it has not yet been printed so far as I am aware.

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69) Leland's Itinerary, fo. 58.

70) Brewer, *Monumenta Franciscana*, Thos. de Eccleston de adventu minorum in Angliam, p. 35

71) Cal. Close Rolls, 1245, 30 Oct., p. 367.

72) Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1246, 21 Jan., p. 470.

73) *Itinerarium Willelmi de Worcester*, pp. 136-

74) Ibid.

75) Cal. Close Rolls, 1250, p. 312.:

76) ibid., 1278, p. 451.

77) ibid., 1284, p. 309

78) *Itin. Will, de Worcester*, ibid.

79) *Eccleston*, ed. Little, p. 147 ; Kingsford, *Grey Friars of London*, p. 192.

80) S.R.S., vols. i, ix and x, passim.

81) ibid., vol. i, p. 11.

82) ibid., vol. ix, p. 139.

83) ibid., p. 155.

84) ibid., vol. x, p. 737.

85) *Worc. Epis. Reg. Simon de Monte Acuto* (1333-7), bk; ii, fo. 10.

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86) Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1349, 21 Aug., p. 361.

87) Leland, *Itinerary*, fo. 57

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88) It may be noted here that in 1286 the Hospital had received a licence to cut a channel through one of the bends of the river for sanitation purposes. — Cal. Pat. 1281-92, p. 244.

89) C. Trenchard, *The Siege of Bridgwater*, p. 24.

90) There is no doubt in my mind that these sketches are John Chubb's work. There are ten of them in the book of lithographs which was published in the 19th century. In a copy given to F. J. Thompson by C. K. Kemys Tynte, at whose expense I believe the book was produced, John Chubb is mentioned as the artist. This is confirmed by a comparison of some sketches which have been presented to the local museum by Mr. John Chubb of Hampshire, and which are undoubtedly his grandfather's work, and though they do not show the technique of the trained artist, I account for the difference by suggesting that the lithographer supplied that additional skill which the amateur lacked.

**Editorial note.** The lithographs were in fact prepared just before the middle of the C19 by his grandson, John Chubb, the younger (1813-1859), attorney and solicitor, of Cirencester. He married Caroline Tudway, in 1838 and died 1859. He was a talented amateur artist. (Wikipedia, John Chubb, artist).

91) *Rotuli Chartarum*, p. 70.

92) It may be well here to point to an error in the *Victoria County Hist, of Somerset*, where it is stated that an earlier castle was built by Baldwin of Exeter. G. T. Clark in *Med. Mil. Archit.*, i, 73, is given as the authority. I have referred to this and find that the writer had evidently fallen into the mistake through a too hasty reading of Clark. Unfortunately it is repeated in the article on the Hospital of S. John the Baptist.

93) Timms and Gunn, *Abbeys, Castles and Ancient Halls*, i, p. 558.

94) King John's *Itinerary*.

95) S.R.S., vol. xi, p. 41.

96) Close Rolls 1233, p. 256.

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97) Another proposed derivation is the word Borough or Burgh, but among hundreds of early spellings I do not remember to have found Burgh more than once; nor is there any evidence that the place was ever a borough before 1200. A plea has also been made for the Irish saint Bridget and support has been sought in Dr. Powell's charming but imaginative chapter on ' The Lost Church of St. Bridget.' Yet the historian must keep to facts and the early spellings lead him to Bridge.

98) Leland's *Itinerary*, fo. 58.

99) p. xxxix.

100) *First Report of the Royal Commission on Hist. MSS.*, p. 99.

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101) p. Xxxviii. **Editorial note** p 17 of this edition

102) Cal. Close Rolls 1371, p. 345.