

## NOTES

### THOMAS LYTE AND THE LYTE JEWEL

A portrait of Thomas Lyte of Lytescary (c. 1568-1638) was acquired in February, 1960 by the Somerset County Museum. It is painted on an oak panel measuring  $22\frac{1}{2}$  by  $17\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and bears the date 14 April 1611; artist unknown. Lyte is shown wearing the famous pendant, known as the Lyte Jewel, suspended from a wide brown ribbon passing round the neck beneath the collar. (Pl. VI).

There is no parallel among Somerset families to the Lytes of Lytescary. From the thirteenth century onwards they present remarkable material for a study in inherited ability. Never rising in the middle ages above the degree of country squire after the time of William le Lyt, Serjeant-at-law, who died c. 1316, they yet displayed in some generations a special genius, or the rare delight in antiquity for its own sake, which to the national benefit was a dominant characteristic of the late Sir Henry Maxwell-Lyte, Deputy Keeper of the Records.

All that is known of the story of the Lyte Jewel is fully recorded by Sir Henry in these *Proceedings* (XXXVIII, 59-65; LXXVII, 124), and it suffices here to recall that Anthony Wood says of Thomas Lyte that he was a man "inclined to genealogies and histories", and that he "did draw up, with very great curiosity, the genealogy of of James I. from Brute, written by him on vellom with his own hand fairer than any print: it was also illuminated with admirable flourishes and painting, and had the pictures of the kings and queens mentioned therein most neatly performed by the hands of an exact limner. This genealogy the author did dedicate to his Majesty, who, after a long and serious perusal of it, gave the said author his picture in gold, set with diamonds, with gracious thanks". Camden "had the perusal of it and underneath wrote with his own hand about six verses in commendation of it and the author: about which time, it being hanged up in public in one of the rooms at Whitehall, became by the carelessness of pages and idle people a little soiled; wherefore, upon the author's desire made to his Majesty, it was engraved on copper and printed". We learn from a note in the family papers that "The King's Genealogie being fairlye written in parchment, and set fourth in ritch coulers in a verie large Table, was presented to King James at his royall Pallace of Whitehall the

PLATE VI

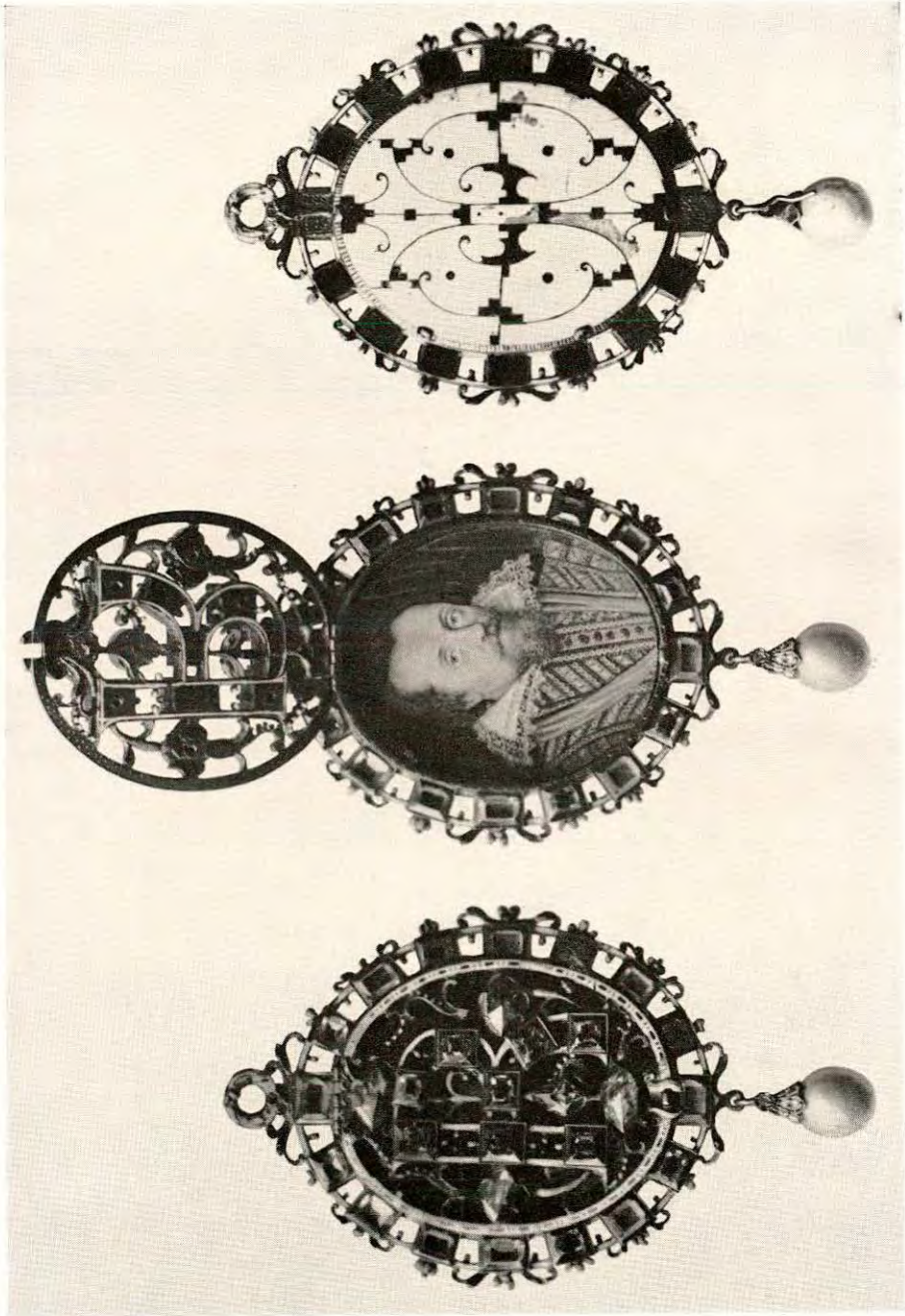


*By courtesy of Somerset County Museum*

THOMAS LYTE OF LYTESCARY WEARING THE LYTE JEWEL

“Aetatis Suae 43 14<sup>o</sup> die Aprilis 1611”





12 of Julye anno regni 9<sup>o</sup>, 1610, in the presence of Henry, Prince of Wales", the Archbishop of Canterbury and several of the chief officers of state. No trace either of the original manuscript or of the prints taken from it has been found, though a portion of the compiler's draft has been recovered within recent years (*Proc. LXXVII*, 123-4).

In 1747, the Jewel was in the possession of Thomas Lyte, great-grandson and namesake of the original recipient. He left it to his daughter Silvestra Blackwell, and it seems to have been sold after the death of her descendant, Thomas Gybbon Monypenny, who died in 1854. Eventually it formed an item in the Waddesdon Bequest to the British Museum, and is described in the Catalogue of the Bequest published in 1902, and with slight variations in the edition of 1927: "An oval pendant of gold, richly enamelled and set with twenty-five square table diamonds and four rose diamonds. It contains a miniature portrait of James I. of England as a young man, in a rich dress with wide collar, and bare head, with crimson curtain behind", probably painted by Nicholas Hilliard. "The cover is in openwork, filled with the letter R", or more probably I.R., "with diamonds on the outside, and brilliant enamel within. The frame consists principally of square diamonds connected by a slender enamel band. The back is a white enamel plate with a design in fine gold lines and ruby enamel, the edge being enamelled alternately ruby colour and sapphire blue". The length is  $3\frac{1}{8}$  inches. A single pearl drop at the bottom replaces the original drop, which was trilobed. (Pl. VII).

The Jewel was discussed in detail by Dr. Joan Evans in *English Jewellery* (1921), and she there described the technique of diamond faceting employed. She further discussed the Jewel in *A History of Jewellery* (1953). It appears that there are no features in the design or workmanship inconsistent with the date 1611, but it must always be considered extraordinary that the thrifty James I should have given so superb a gift to a country squire, even if carried away momentarily by a kind of genealogical intoxication on first beholding the extensive and exquisite pedigree which had been presented to him.

A.W.V-N.

The writer wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. G. H. Tait, Assistant Keeper, Department of British and Medieval Antiquities, British Museum, in the preparation of these notes.



## THE ORDNANCE SURVEY AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN SOMERSET

One of the most disturbing features to those who are interested in the past is the rate at which the present changes in the use of land are tending to destroy ancient monuments and sites of all kinds. This does not go on without challenge, but the enemy comes on apace, and it is inevitable that the extension of building sites, deep ploughing of arable, the bulldozing of obstacles, and the improvement of marginal land will take a serious toll of these things.

However much we regret this and wish to prevent it, *there is no doubt that the real disaster is the destruction of a site or feature before any record has been made of it.* A proper understanding of the archaeology of an area demands that everything possible should be known of its content even though some of this is passing away.

It is here that members of the Society can help.

The Ordnance Survey has been concerned with the mapping of antiquities of all kinds since the time of its foundation in 1791. During the 19th century it did not maintain any staff specially qualified to study antiquities in the field and to give them accurate descriptions. Sometimes an officer was specially interested, but in general the Survey relied on the help of the informed public, and in particular, of the local antiquary and antiquarian society. Much help was forthcoming with the result that an enormous number of ancient sites and features were placed on the large scale plans all over Great Britain, thus producing a series of maps that, in this sense, is unique in the world.

But the advance in our knowledge of archaeology has been spectacular since 1900, and particularly so since 1920. It is therefore not surprising that informed opinion was already complaining about the relative failure of the Ordnance Survey to keep up to date in its revision of antiquities before 1920. The result of this was the appointment of an archaeological adviser to the Director-General, and the first holder of this post from 1920 to 1945 was the late Dr. O. G. S. Crawford who made many great contributions to the development of modern field archaeology.

During the period between the two wars economy in public expenditure reduced the activity of the Ordnance Survey and so restricted the amount of attention which could be paid to the revision

of antiquities, but since 1945 the Survey has been placed on a stronger footing, and it is now engaged in the first systematic revision of the whole country on a scale of 25 inches to the mile which has taken place since the original survey was completed in 1895.

The staff of the Archaeology Division has been considerably increased to keep pace with the large amount of work now in hand which is expected to be completed by 1980.

It is now clear that, as far as a great many minor objects of antiquity like barrows, moated sites, earthworks, and sites of the finding of ancient material of various kinds are concerned, this is the last chance to make a full record. If, therefore, any members know of such features or of such finds which are not already shown on the large scale plans they will be doing a good service in sending information directly to:

The Archaeology Division, Ordnance Survey,  
Leatherhead Road,  
Chessington, Surrey.

Alternatively they can send it to the Secretary of the Society or to any of the following ladies and gentlemen who are honorary correspondents of the Division in Somerset:

Bristol Museum.

Mrs. K. M. Crook, The Laurels, Timsbury.

K. S. Gardner Esq., 10A, Royal Park, Clifton, Bristol 8.

Mrs. M. Harfield, Coombe Head, Penselwood, Wincanton.

T. J. Miles Esq., 39, Worston Road, Burnham-on-Sea.

Professor E. K. Tratman, O.B.E., F.S.A., Penrose Cottage,  
Burrington.

A. J. Wedlake Esq., Nine Elms, Watchet.

W. J. Wedlake Esq., Meadgate, Camerton, Bath.

It should be made clear that the *exact location* of the matters in question is information of great importance, and this should be given by National Grid reference when possible.

All information will be placed in the records of the Ordnance Survey, and will be used by the field staff of the Archaeology Division when they come into the area concerned.



The information need not be "archaeological" in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term, but may relate to historical events, local traditions, folk lore, etc.

The smallness of a find does not mean that it is necessarily unimportant. The finding of a single Roman coin may be a vital pointer to a new Roman site, and instances of this kind could be multiplied.

The next ten years will be critical for our knowledge of the ancient features of our countryside, and your co-operation is cordially invited.

C. W. PHILLIPS.

### VERNACULAR BUILDINGS

A field of archaeological activity which is virtually untouched in the county of Somerset is the recording of buildings of architectural and historical interest that are threatened with destruction either by deliberate demolition or by neglect and decay. All major buildings, and a number of those lesser ones whose external appearance indicates architectural importance, have been listed by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and copies of these lists are held by the County Council and by the appropriate Borough, Urban and Rural District Councils, and also by the Society. In the case of the more important buildings, graded I or II in these lists, departmental routine provides for the notification of the threat to the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and the National Buildings Record, to give an opportunity of recording. There is, however, a large majority of lesser buildings, graded III, and some which have escaped notice, especially where the exteriors are deceptively commonplace. With these, the Ministry is not concerned, and with the raising of standards of housing and with the development of roads and towns they are disappearing steadily. The buildings most in danger of destruction (and often least easy to recognize from the exterior) are those in towns.

There is thus much scope for anyone who is interested in the recording of such buildings, by photographs, drawings and written descriptions. Emphasis is being laid on emergency work, but to some degree every historic building is in danger, through the risks of fire and the decay of materials: particular mention may be made of the great barns of Somerset, whose timber roof structures cannot

last for ever. Advice on recording is contained in two Research Reports issued by the Council for British Archaeology, 10 Bolton Gardens, London S.W.5, No. 2, *The Recording of Architecture and its Publication*, and No. 3, *The Investigation of Smaller Domestic Buildings*. The Society is ready to consider publication, as it has done in the past, of comprehensive reports: and the National Buildings Record, 31 Chester Terrace, London N.W.1. receives material ranging from full reports to a few photographs and/or drawings. The N.B.R. is usually ready to pay for records, both for copies of measured plans and for photographs. In the latter case, it may borrow negatives in order to make file copies, presenting the photographer with a half-plate copy, or purchase prints or develop films, either paying the photographer a shilling for every negative used or giving him a half-plate print. The Society will be glad to canalise arrangements with the National Buildings Record, if desired.

The investigator for the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, dealing with the more important threatened buildings, is:

R. W. McDowall Esq., F.S.A.

R.C.H.M. (England),

Station Road,

Cambridge.

It is of great assistance to him to know when a Grade I or II building, due for demolition, is actually going to be vacated, since his recording can most readily be done in an empty house. But he is also glad to know of an active threat of demolition at an early stage, as an insurance against any possible slip in departmental routine. And where a Grade III or unlisted building appears important, and the time factor permits, it may be useful to inform him.

Apart from the research reports referred to, there is a good deal of literature on the subject of what has recently come to be known as vernacular architecture. Most of this is scattered in periodicals, but the Society will be glad to help anyone who takes up this phase of archaeology with references. An example of a study of a building under destruction may be seen in Vol. 97 of *Proceedings*, *Beecham's Cottage, Pitney*, by L. F. J. Walrond: and in the Society's Library, there are available, among other works:



*Monmouthshire Houses* (vv. I-III), by Sir Cyril Fox and Lord Raglan.

Medieval Priests' Houses, by W. A. Pantin (*Medieval Archaeology* vol. 1, 1957).

R. DE Z. HALL.

#### KEYNSHAM ABBEY, SOMERSET

Human bones were discovered during the laying down of new tennis courts and bowling greens in the Games Area at Keynsham (Nat. Grid ST/656696) for the Keynsham Urban District Council. The discovery was brought to the notice of Mr. F. C. Jones, who notified the County Museum at Taunton. They informed the Ancient Monuments Division of the Ministry of Works, who asked the writer to visit the site. Three visits were made during March, 1956. The work in progress was found to be in an advanced state of construction and it was apparent that only a superficial examination could be made. The very disturbed surface of the site and the dumping of large quantities of ashes had confused the little evidence to be seen. From the newly exposed sections on the north and east sides it was evident that the material removed was mainly rubble dumped a considerable time ago. This contained no dating evidence, but was overlaid by 7 inches of topsoil, from which Victorian and later china was obtained.

Wall footings were found at two points (A) and (B) in the Tennis Court area and at (E) and (F) just south of the Bowling Green.

(A) was part of a large wall or block of masonry of large, squared blocks of stone with dirty brown-grey lime mortar. It had been sadly damaged by the bulldozer, so that it was not possible to ascertain either its orientation or its shape.

(B) was a section of an east-west wall of stone lumps, in two courses with cream-brown mortar. This was exposed in a trench side.

(E) showed in the south side of a drainage trench and consisted of several slabs of stone laid horizontally without mortar.

(F) was two stone slabs and one lump laid together without mortar. It was found in the same trench as (E).

The location of the site of the human bones was indicated by numerous fragments of bone and skull left on the surface of two

filled-in drainage trenches to the east of the Bowling Green. When questioned, the workmen stated that they had found many bones and skulls and had reburied them, when the trenches were back-filled. They also said that the burials appeared to be single ones and that they were fairly close together as though laid in rows. The evidence points to a small cemetery of probably Medieval date connected with Keynsham Abbey.

Dating evidence was very slight and consisted only of the handle of a glazed jug and a small piece of a glazed roof-tile. They were found close to (A) on the surface of a spoil heap and are therefore unstratified. The jug-handle has a single row of dot and circle stamps down it (see map and list of sites by E. M. Jope, *Proc. S.A.S.* 96 pp. 140/1).

#### CONCLUSIONS

The rubble revealed in the making of the tennis courts and bowling greens may well be part of the spread from the destruction of the Abbey; it seems reasonable to suppose that the wall footings belonged to the outlying buildings connected with the establishment. Unfortunately, as is often the case, the Ministry were notified too late for a clear picture to be seen. Had it been possible for the site to have been visited during the early stages of the work, much more information would have been obtained.

A plan of the site showing where the finds were located has been deposited in the Society's library. An account of Keynsham Abbey by Rev. T. Scott-Holmes will be found in *V.C.H. Som.* II pp. 129-32.

ERNEST GREENFIELD

#### NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS

The following short reports of archaeological and historical work in Somerset have appeared in *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset*, Vol. XXVII, Parts CCLXX and CCLXXI.

1. Romano-British Finds at Nash Lane, Yeovil.
2. Neolithic Axe from Shapwick Heath.
3. Banwell Camp . . . Excavation by the Banwell Society of Archaeology.
4. The Excavations at Glastonbury Abbey, 1959.
5. The Lox Yeo Romano-British Site, Wint Hill, Banwell.
6. Window Tax Exemptions.



7. Customary Land Measures — Yeovil.
8. John Loudon McAdam and his Descendants in Somerset.

The attention of members is also drawn to the following articles appearing in other journals recently received:

*Medieval Archaeology* Vol. 2.

p. 104. "Three Post-Roman Finds from the Temple Well at Pagan's Hill, Somerset", by P. A. Rahtz, D. B. Horden, G. C. Dunning and C. A. Raleigh Radford.

*Archaeological Journal* Vol 115 (1958).

p. 1. "Wansdyke Reconsidered", by Aileen and Cyril Fox.

p. 49. "The Roman Military Advance under Ostorius Scapula", by Graham Webster. (This paper gives a broad picture of Mr. Webster's recent researches, of which his excavations at Wiveliscombe (*Proc. S.A.S.* Vol. 103) formed but a small detail).

"Medieval Roofs", by J. T. Smith (esp. pp. 129-32 and 142, East Pennard Church, Meare (Fish House), Kingston Seymour, Cothay Manor, Glastonbury (Barn).

"Domestic Planning from 12th - 14th Centuries", by P. A. Faulkner (esp. pp. 174, 180 and 182, Bishop's Palace, Wells).

Somerset Record Society — Volume LXV — *Somerset Assize Orders, 1629-1640*, edited by Thomas G. Barnes, D. PHIL, (pp. xxxiv + 86).

This volume contains a transcription of the Somerset portions of the first of the Western circuit assize order books (P.R.O. Asz. 24/20) with some contemporary related documents as Appendices and a detailed introduction. The text records the administrative activity of the judges on circuit as the overseers of local government and deals with matters brought to the judge on the Crown side by directions from the Privy Council, letters from officials, petitions from private persons, presentments by the hundred constables and the grand jury, addresses by the justices of the peace, and adjournments of matters civil from the *nisi prius* side and criminal from the Crown side during the hearing of Crown cases.