On some doubtful Dedications of Somerset Churches

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In our *Proceedings* for 1905 (li, ii, 105 ff.) the late Prebendary Bates-Harbin (then the Rev. E. H. Bates) published an article on 'Dedications of the Churches of Somerset', in which he brought together a mass of material partly confirming and partly correcting the current dedications of many of our parish churches. This work bore good fruit, but it needs to be continually carried forward as fresh documents come to our knowledge or fresh evidence is derived from sources already known. I propose therefore to offer the result of such occasional researches in this field of enquiry as I have chanced to make at intervals during the past sixteen years.

A preliminary word must be said as to the chief authorities which will be quoted in these notes. In 1733 Browne Willis published his *Parochiale Anglicanum*.[1] He undertakes to give the dedications of all churches and chapels in thirteen dioceses. For Bath and Wells he makes special acknowledgment of help received from 'Mr. Prebendary Thomas Ford'.[2]

[1] Browne Willis (1682—1760), the antiquary, was born at Blandford St Mary and educated at Westminster and Christ Church. He is best known for his 'Survey of Cathedrals' and his 'History of Mitred Abbeys'.

[2] Thomas Ford was vicar of Banwell, 1713—1746; prebendary of Wedmore IV, 1721; and of St Decuman, 1731. His name is recorded in the Cathedral Register as priest vicar and prebendary, buried on 1 September 1746 (Jewers, p. 193). He deserves to be remembered for having supplied Francis Wise (another friend of Browne Willis), the editor of Asser's Life of Alfred, with a copy of the letter of Archbishop Fulco of Rheims to K. Alfred, commending to him Grimbald a monk of St Bertin's. He found this letter,

Browne Willis was also responsible,[1] wholly or in part, for the dedications assigned to the various churches in Ecton's *Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum* as re-edited in 1754 and 1763.

John Ecton's original work was entitled *Liber Valorum et Decimarum :* it was published in 1711, and gave no dedications of churches. He died in 1730. What is commonly known as Ecton's *Thesaurus* is the enlarged work of 1754 in which Browne Willis had a hand. As the dedications there given often differ from those of the *Parochiale Anglicanum*, it is possible that in some instances Browne Willis had found reason to change his opinion.

Another record of dedications, which also comes to us from the early part of the eighteenth century, is found in the valuable work entitled *Somerset Incumbents*, edited by the Reverend F. W. Weaver in 1889. This is taken from two of the so-called 'Hugo MSS.' in the British Museum, dating from about 1730, and believed to have been written by Edmund Archer.[2] Here we occasionally find the initials B. W. added to a dedication, to indicate the authority of Browne Willis.

That we in our day are in a position to criticise the traditional dedications that have thus come down to us from the eighteenth century, is mainly due to the labours of Mr. Weaver and others in printing records of Somerset Mediæval Wills. Here, and almost only here—for the episcopal registers offer surprisingly little help—we get documentary evidence of first-rate quality ; and we may hope that the source of such evidence is not yet exhausted.

Barton (St David). Collinson in his *History of Somerset* (1791), ii, 64, says that Barton-David, as he calls it, derives its

we are told, written at the end of an ancient Gospel MS., and rescued it from a sordid fate ('in latrinam tantum non detrusam ab interitu peropportune vindicavit') : see *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, p. 467. Sir Thomas D. Hardy identified this MS. with a tenth-century Gospel MS. at Crowcombe Court, Somerset : at the end it has 'Thos. Ford, his book, 10th Sept.'.

[1] See the quotation from the preface to the edition of 1742, given in Preb. Bates-Harbin's article.

[2] Some account of Archdeacon Archer, who died in 1739, will be found in *S. & D. N. & Q.* xvii, 280 ff. (Dec. 1923).

name from the dedication of its church; but he cites no authority for his statement that the patron saint is St David. It is true that Browne Willis in 1733 assigned Barton David to St David; but in Ecton's *Thesaurus*, for which as we have seen he had some responsibility, the dedication is given as All Saints. And this is confirmed by a charter of 1279 in the Buckland Chartulary (*S.R.S.* xxv, p. 79: cf. note on p. 194), wherein a yearly rent is to be paid 'in the church of All Saints of Berton'.

Now Barton is a prebend in the church of Wells, and therefore we have considerable evidence as to the various forms of its name in the documents of the Dean and Chapter.[1] In these the name Barton (Berton) stands alone, with no addition, to the end of Q. Elizabeth's reign. But in 1605 we have 'the prebend of Barton Davy', and this designation recurs in 1607 (*Cal. of Wells MSS.* ii, 347, 353). In 1632, however, it appears as Barton David (*ib.* 396), and so it remains to the last entry calendared, *viz.* in 1713.

Turning to other sources, we may note that, while it is still Barton only in Bishop Bourne's visitation of 1554-5,[2] it is called Barton Davye as early as 1575, in a return of the clergy of Somerset in the time of Bishop Berkeley (*S. & D. N. & Q.* xiv, 265).

In a Deposition Book (No. 20) in the Diocesan Registry, under 25 May 1586, a deposition is made by 'Henricus Addams paroch. de Barton Davie'. Here the final *e* is so like a *d*, that the word has been misread as 'David'; but a close examination of the handwriting leaves no room for doubt, and indeed the place is called 'Barton Davy' shortly before in the same document.

In the Registers of Bishops Curle (1629–32) and Piers (1632–70) we find Barton Davy (1632) or Davie (1643, 1661);

[1] It is more than ten years since I first called attention to the gradual modification of the name in post-Reformation days (*Proc.* lxii, 31).

[2] Diocesan Registry Act Books A. 22. It may be of interest to note here that No. 20 of this series is a register of the archidiaconal visitation of Polydore Virgil, part of whose name survives on the mutilated first page. He had gone to Italy before this date (1552), and the visitation was conducted by his official, John Smith.

and it can still appear as Barton Davie in Bishop Kidder's Visitation Book of 1701 (see *S.R.S.* xxxvii, p. xxix). On the other hand ' the manor of Barton David ' occurs in the record of Quarter Sessions in 1617, as printed in *S.R.S.* xxiii, 37.

When the final form ' Barton St David ' was reached, I do not know : it appears to be a regrettable modernism.

The name Davy was by no means uncommon in Somerset, and appears in various localities. John Davy, tanner, was of importance in Bridgwater before 1461 (*S.R.S.* xvi, 194, for his will) ; and his son (as it seems), also John Davy, was received into fraternity by the Friars of the order of the Holy Trinity in 1494 (*S. & D. N. & Q.* iv, 87). But I have not found the mention of a Davy in connexion with the manor of Barton.

It is to be remembered that ' Davie ' is but a bye-form of ' David,' and passage from one form to the other is easy. Hugh Pavy in his will (1495) describes himself as ' bishop of Saynte Davies ', and speaks of ' my cathedrall churche of saynte Dauyes ' (*S.R.S.* xvi, 330).

MARK. This church is popularly regarded as dedicated to St Mark. Browne Willis, however, in 1738 gave the dedication as the Holy Cross, and this is followed in *Somerset Incumbents*. In the enlarged ' Ecton ' it is left unassigned, and this may mean that Browne Willis had withdrawn his former opinion.

The only definite evidence to which we can point is the will of Nicholas Kemp, chaplain of Mark, in 1425, who requests that he may be buried in the chapel of the Blessed Mary of Merk (*S.R.S.* xvi, 114).

Mark was a part of Wedmore, that great royal estate which is mentioned in K. Alfred's will, together with Burnham and Cheddar, as bequeathed to his eldest son Edward who succeeded him in 899. A century and a half later Bishop Giso of Wells records that about the year 1060 he obtained Wedmore from K. Edward the Confessor towards the endowment of the canons of the cathedral church ; and that at the same time Q. Edith gave *Merken* and *Moddesleh*, part of the same land, which was of her own right. About 1128 Bishop Godfrey of Wells ob-

tained a charter from K. Henry I granting him the land of *Merk* which is in Wedmore, which had been challenged as belonging to the royal demesne.

The Ordinance by which (*c.* 1140) Bishop Robert assigned various prebends to the dean and canons shews that out of Wedmoreland six prebends and the deanery were endowed, and the dean had as a portion of his estate *Moddesleya* and *Merche*.

For the next three centuries and a half the spelling varies between *Merche*, *Merke* and *Merk*. But 'Merk' was pronounced 'Mark', just as 'clerk' is pronounced 'clark'; and presently the spelling followed the pronunciation. Thus we have at Wells a document, dated 8th October 1502, which confirms a grant made by the dean to William Bassett, who is said to be chaplain for life of the church of *Marke* (*Cal. of Wells MSS.* ii, 169); and from this time onwards the word is spelt Marke or Mark.

Mark was a chapelry of Wedmore, and the priest who served its chapel (or 'church') was appointed as chaplain by the dean, and was not a vicar instituted by the bishop.

How shall we account for the dedication to the Holy Cross given by Browne Willis in 1733? The Holy Cross is not unfrequently found in combination with another dedication: there are at least three churches in England of St Mary and the Holy Cross. This may conceivably have been the case at Mark: but the only documentary evidence that has been produced gives the dedication simply as to the 'Blessed Mary'.

The dedication of a church to St Mark was exceedingly rare in mediæval England: indeed not more than four or five instances are certainly known. We cannot doubt that in the present case a mistake has been made in modern times, owing to the change of spelling from Merk to Mark.

Sock Dennis. 'This, now an obliterated place', says Collinson (iii, 307), 'lies at a small distance southward without the town of Ivelchester. It was given by William the Conqueror to the Earl of Morton'. Later it was held 'by the family of Dacus or Dennis, from whom the place obtained the

addition to its original name '. Dacus (*i.e.* the Dane) became Le Deneys or Le Denneys. ' The church ', adds Collinson, ' has long since been desolated '. The return of 1597 already referred to has the brief entry : ' Socke : No church there ' (*S. & D. N. & Q.* xiv, 107). Yet the Phelips family, who were the patrons, went on presenting to it till 1728, if not later (*Som. Incumb.* 183) ; and the quite harmless legend of its dedication to St Denys appears in Ecton's *Thesaurus* (p. 26) in the entry ' Socke R (=Rectery) St Dennis (*a Sine Cure*) '. So in *Som. Incumb.* we have ' Sock (*S. Dionysii*) '. The present Diocesan Directory knows it not ; but it has seemed worth while to mention it here, as a good example of the way in which personal names have given rise to imaginary dedications.

Stratton-on-the-Fosse. Collinson gives the dedication as St Vigor. So does Ecton's *Thesaurus*, which claims to incorporate additions by Browne Willis. Yet in *Som. Incumb.* 192, we read ' (*Sancti Laurencii, B. W.*) ', where the initials refer to Browne Willis as the authority. In Browne Willis's own book, *Parochiale Anglicanum* (1733) the patron is given as St Laurence.

In the thirteenth century the manor of Stratton was held by the family of St Vigor (*de Sancto Vigore*). In 1263 Beatrice of St Vigor renounced her claim to two islands in the water of Mells in favour of the abbot of Glastonbury : they are described as lying between the land of the abbot in Doulting and the land of Beatrice herself in Stratton. The charter is given in *Monasticon* i, 55, and is attested by Thomas of St Vigor, who was afterwards sheriff of Somerset (1269–71). Adam of Domerham (p. 533) recounts how Robert de Pederton, abbot from 1261 to 1274, settled for a sum of money this contention of long standing with ' the lords of Stratton '. In 1308 a younger Thomas of St Vigor sold ' the manor of Stratton Seynt Vigor ' for £200 sterling to Thomas de Gurney (*Som. Fines, S.R.S.* xii, p. 5).

The place retained its name of Stratton St Vigor, or Stratton Vigour, for some time after this. In Bishop Drockenford's Register we have Stratton Vigour (f. 41*b*), Stratton sancti Vigoris and Stratton de sancto Vigore (f. 56*a*), Stratton sancti

Victoris (f. 158*a*, twice in error), the dates being 1312, 1313 and 1318.[1]

In the Register of Bishop Ralph of Shrewsbury we find in 1331 and in 1338 Stratton St Vigor ; but in 1347 it is Stratton super la Fosse, and this new designation recurs in 1349 and in 1351. Yet much later, in a list of clergy excommunicated by Bishop Ralph Erghum in 1389, for failure to pay dues to the king, we find mention of ' Johannes Rooke, Rector de Stratton Vigor ' (*S. & D. N. & Q.* lxiii, 355).

St Laurence is not an unlikely designation for this church. There are ten other churches in the diocese dedicated in his name. St Vigor, on the other hand, is hardly known in England. A church at Fulbourn near Cambridge is indeed said to be dedicated to him.[2] And some Worcester calendars have his name on 1 November, or on 3 November, to which day he was transferred to avoid coincidence with the festival of All Saints.[3]

The fame of St Vigor is connected with Bayeux. He was a disciple of St Vedast of Arras in the sixth century. It is probable that the family which held Stratton took its origin from St Vigor-le-Grand, a village close to Bayeux.

STREET. No dedication is given by Browne Willis in 1733 ; but in the enlarged ' Ecton ' it is assigned to the Holy Trinity. The first to question this was Preb. Bates-Harbin, who cites two passages from Somerset Wills :

> John Bayly, 1545. The churchyard of Sayncte Geld of Strete.
> John Rode, 1545. The churchyard of St Gelys yn Strete.

He was led by the second of these passages to assign the church to St Giles.

The latest volume of the Somerset Record Society throws a welcome light on the question : for there we read (*S.R.S.* xli, 150) :

[1] Not ' Stratton-on-the-Fosse,' as might be inferred from the printed Calendar (*S.R.S.* vol. i).

[2] It would be interesting to know whether the St Vigor family held lands also at Fulbourn.

[3] *The Leofric Collectar* (H. B. Soc.), ii, 599.

> Essoin taken before the king in the chapel of St Gyldas near Glastonbury on Monday the morrow of Easter, in the sixth year of King Edward (18 April 1278).

The explanation of this is found in Adam of Domerham (ed. Hearne, p. 588), who relates how Edward I was staying at Glastonbury for Easter in the year 1278, and wished to hold the assizes there ; but the abbot pleaded that this would be a violation of the immemorial privileges of his abbey, and the king ordered the said assizes to be held at Street, outside the Twelve Hides (*apud Strete extra duodecim hydas*). It is clear therefore that ' the chapel of St Gildas near Glastonbury ' was at Street.

Confirmation of this comes to us from John of Glastonbury, who gives us (p. 75) an account of St Gildas, abbreviated from the Life of that saint by Caradoc of Lancarvan (*c.* 1140).[1] He says that after staying awhile with the abbot of Glastonbury Gildas desired to return to the solitary life. Accordingly ' on the bank of the river that is near Glastonbury he built a church in the name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity '. John of Glastonbury here adds to Caradoc's narrative the words : ' et vocatur *capella fortunarum* ' ; and, after recording the burial of St Gildas in the Old Church at Glastonbury, he goes on to say : ' In that same place where he thus lived the solitary life there is now a parish church dedicated in the name of the same saint '.

This ' church of St Gildas ' can be no other than the parish church of Street, which curiously enough has come again to be known by the old dedication to the Holy Trinity. It may indeed be questioned whether this latter dedication was on the part of the hagiographer Caradoc more than a guess : for he makes both Gildas and Cungar build chapels in two places one after the other in honour of the Holy Trinity.

What explanation can we offer of the romantic designation ' capella fortunarum ' ? Is it possible that here we have a fresh trace of the appropriation of the Arthurian legend ?

[1] Caradoc also wrote the Life of St Cungar, a fragment of the earliest form of which is now preserved in the Wells Chapter Library. For this I must refer to articles in the *Journal of Theological Studies* on St Cungar (xx, 97 ff.) and on St Cungar and St Gildas (xxiii, 15 f).

> They ride forth all three
> Upon a fair causey
> By the chapel auntrous (*i.e.* adventurous)

and they find the hostile knight upon the ' perilous bridge '.

I have elsewhere taken the Chapel Adventurous to be St Bridget's chapel at Beckery.[1] But more than one identification of the place may have been popularly made.

A few stray notes may be added, chiefly by way of comment on Prebendary Bates-Harbin's article.

CARHAMPTON. The evidence cited for the dedication to St John Baptist is from a will of 1407. Nevertheless it is worth while to note Leland's description (see *Proc.* xxxiii, ii, 97) :

> *Carentun* Parocha a mile from *Dunster* Castella. *Carntown* is shortly spoken for *Carentokes Towne*, wher yet is a Chapel of this Sainct that sumtyme was the Paroch Chirche.

Carantocus is a Cornish saint, who has given his name to Crantock. If Leland's explanation be right, we can understand why St Karentoc appears on 16 May in the Calendar of Dunster Priory (Brit. Mus. *Addit.* 10,628).

PORLOCK. Without questioning the dedication to St Dubricius, attested for 1527, I would note that we have a will of ' James Hadley of Withecombe besides Dunster, esquyer ', dated 2 July 1532, in which we read (*S.R.S.* xxi, 14) :

> For as muche as I have beyne negligent to visit holy places and in going of pilgremage, therefore I give and bequeath to Our Blessed Lady of Cleve 5*s*., St Savior of Porlock 5*d*., St Culbone 3*d*., St Savior of Tanton, Bradford and Brigewater, each 5*d*.

Here however we may have to do with altars or images rather with dedications.

CULBONE. Here again Leland is to be noted, as possibly throwing light on St Culbone whom we have had mentioned

[1] *Two Legends of Glastonbury* (Cambridge : 1926), p. 26.

in the will just quoted. '*Comban*, peraventure shortely spoken for *Columbane*' (*Proc.* xxxiii, ii, 98).

MEARE. St Mary is the dedication given by Browne Willis in 1733. But the full designation is preserved in the record of the consecration of the church by Bishop Drokensford on 7 August 1323, in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, All Saints, and especially St Benignus. This should not be lost sight of; for the only other church of St Benignus that we have is at Glastonbury, where notwithstanding the revival of the true dedication not many years ago, St Benedict has again strangely usurped the position of patron saint.[1]

[1] Browne Willis gave St Benignus in 1733. But in Ecton's *Thesaurus* we have the dubious entry: '*Glastonbury St. Benignus* Cur. *St. Benedict*'.