

THE CHANGING BOUNDARIES OF SOMERSET

J. W. HART

The county of Somerset is an Anglo-Saxon creation, with boundaries that remained largely unchanged from Domesday until obscured by frequent changes in both the nineteenth and the twentieth century. The ancient county was an important entity with its own identity and administration and largely natural boundaries formed by rivers, woods and hill ridges. Anyone studying the history of Somerset needs to be aware of what “Somerset” means at any particular period; lack of this knowledge leads to mistakes and confusion.

This article describes the documented changes to the Somerset county boundary from the fourteenth century onwards. These changes are shown in detail in an appendix, including references to their legal basis and to maps showing the boundary changes.

Youngs’ *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England* (1979) is a widely used standard reference work listing boundary changes up to and including those introduced in 1974, and the University of Portsmouth *Vision of Britain* website (GB Historical GIS (a), (b) (no date)) has made this information accessible online. Subsequent orders changing county (and other) boundaries from 1973 onwards are listed on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England website (no date). The *Guide* and the *Vision of Britain* website are both useful and important tools; however, both contain mistakes. Two further appendices show discrepancies between the boundary changes listed here and those reported in Youngs’ *Guide* and on the *Vision of Britain* website.

THE ANCIENT COUNTY OF SOMERSET

The first specific reference to Somerset is the Anglo Saxon Chronicle for 848 which refers to the men of Somerset and Dorset (Yorke, 1995, see also Thorn, 2012). It is argued that the division in 909 of the diocese of Sherborne, covering both Somerset and Dorset (Barker, 2013), with the creation of the separate diocese of Wells led to an adjustment of the boundary between Dorset and Somerset, particularly in the Yeovil – Milborne Port area

(Dunning & Siraut, 1999, 72-74; Thorn, 2017 and forthcoming). Bath and its dependent territory were not added to Somerset until the tenth century (Thorn 2010).

The earliest documented boundaries of the county are defined by Domesday book (Morris et al., 1980). The revised Phillimore Introduction to the Somerset Domesday from the Hull Domesday Project (2007) addresses specifically the places in Domesday affected by subsequent boundary changes.

Holwell, south of Milborne Port, was detached from the rest of the county and entirely surrounded by Dorset parishes. Holwell is not listed in Domesday, and, if it was part of Somerset at this time, it is probably included as part of Milborne Port (Hull, 2007). Holwell was part of Horethorne hundred in 1212 (Dunning & Siraut, 1999, 72-74). Holwell is consistently shown as a detached part of Somerset on Dorset county maps from Saxton’s map of 1575 onwards, but does not appear on Somerset county maps until the late eighteenth century.

On the Somerset-Wiltshire border, the ancient county includes Kilmington, Yarnfield and Gasper (also known as Brook), all on the eastern side of the Selwood ridge, which otherwise forms the boundary between Somerset and Wiltshire. Kilmington was a separate parish, whilst Yarnfield and Gasper were part of the Wiltshire parishes of Maiden Bradley and Stourton respectively (Thorn, 2014). Yarnfield and Kilmington are both shown in Domesday (Hull, 2007). Gasper is not shown in Domesday and is first mentioned as answering at the Norton Ferris hundred court in 1625 (Dunning & Siraut, 1999, 161-163).

The first documented change to the Domesday boundary was the creation of the ‘City and County of the City of Bristol’ in 1373. The new county was created under a charter of Edward III, having both its own Sheriff and quarter sessions that set a separate county rate (Lipman, 1949). A second charter defined the boundaries, which included the chapelry of St Mary Redcliffe in the Somerset parish of Bedminster, as well as substantial areas of water: the river Avon from Bristol Bridge to the

Severn Estuary, and a large area of the Estuary itself bounded by Denny Island, Flat Holm and Steep Holm, including the foreshore of the Somerset coast from the mouth of the river Avon south to Clevedon Bay. Whilst the boundaries of the central part of the city are shown on several early maps, these maps do not show the water boundaries. These water boundaries were extended in 1803 by taking in more of the banks of the river ('five yards from the high-water mark') from the city to the mouth of the Avon, and in addition the river Avon upstream to the east of the city as far as Hanham Mills.

Many of the changes to the county boundary that occurred later in the nineteenth century were the consequence of reforms introduced in the 1830s.

The 1832 Great Reform Act introduced substantial changes to Parliamentary constituency boundaries. Details of these changes were contained in the Parliamentary Boundaries Act 1832. Holwell was transferred to the Dorset Parliamentary constituency, and the Act defined the boundaries of the parliamentary boroughs of Bristol and Bath.

The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act reformed the provision of poor relief. This included uniting parishes into poor law unions, many of which comprised parishes in more than one county. The Somerset parishes of Seaborough, Misterton, Trent, Marston Magna, Rimpton, Sandford Orcas, Poyntington, Goathill, Kilmington, Freshford and the Somerset parts of Maiden Bradley and Stourton together with Exmoor, an extra-parochial place partly in Devon, were in unions in neighbouring counties (Youngs, 1979, p. 674). These counties also had parishes in Somerset poor law unions. The Devon parishes of Yarcombe, Churchstanton, Burtlescombe, Clayhidon, Culmstock, Hemyock, Holcombe Rogus and Morebath (Youngs, 1979, p. 587), the Dorset parishes of Wambrook, Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna (Youngs, 1979, p. 594) and the Gloucestershire parishes of Bitton, Hanham, Mangotsfield, Oldland and Siston (Youngs, 1979, p. 609) were all in Somerset Poor Law unions. These unions formed a template for the registration and sanitary districts created by later legislation.

The 1835 Municipal Corporations Act created the Bristol Municipal Corporation, co-terminous with the parliamentary borough defined in the 1832 Parliamentary Boundaries Act, thus transferring an additional area of Bedminster to the county of Bristol. However, the boundary defined in the 1832 Act did not include the water boundaries in the 1373 Charter and the 1803 Bristol Harbour Act, and therefore these areas were not included in the

municipal borough. This unintended deletion was corrected by an Act in 1842 and confirmed by the Bristol Dock Act 1848 which made the whole of the River Avon downstream from Hanham Mills, including five yards from the high-water mark on either bank, part of the county of Bristol.

The 1832 Parliamentary reforms had transferred Holwell to Dorset for Parliamentary purposes; in 1844 the parish was transferred to Dorset for all purposes.

The Poor Law Amendment Act 1868 extended parish boundaries to include 'the Part of the Seashore to the Low-water Mark'. It also included the 'Bank of every River to the Middle of the Stream' for places where this was not already the case. This Act, together with later changes in 1878 (Oliver, 2001, pp. 46-8), had the effect of bringing the extensive area of foreshore between the high- and low-water level marks along the Somerset coast (with the exception of the foreshore already within Bristol) within the boundaries of the county.

An important part of the work of the Local Government Board, formed in 1871, was to rationalise parish boundaries. Many parishes contained detached parts, often at some distance from the main part of the parish. These detached parts were usually amalgamated with the nearest parish in the same poor law union, in some cases resulting in a transfer between counties. A detached part of Oldland in Gloucestershire 'known as Withybed, which is situate on the south side of the River Avon, and adjoins the parish of Keynsham' was transferred to Somerset in 1884.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF SOMERSET

The Local Government Act 1888 created new counties called administrative counties. The Act also created two new county Boroughs: Bristol and Bath. The boundaries of Bristol (which retained its title as City and County of the City of Bristol) remained unchanged. The boundaries of Bath County Borough were those of the Bath Parliamentary Borough as defined in the 1832 Act, and the borough was separated from Somerset with effect from 1st April 1889.

Most of the changes to the county boundary over the next decade were a consequence of provisions in the Local Government Act 1894. The Act abolished sanitary districts and replaced them by urban or rural district councils. As the sanitary districts

had been based on poor law unions, some districts contained either whole parishes or parts of parishes in a different county. The Act required that parishes and rural districts were to be in one administrative county only. The parishes affected were given the choice of changing county or changing poor law union and rural district (e.g. SHC: C\GP\D\34e). The subsequent rearrangements between rural districts and county in 1895 and 1896 came very much at the expense of Somerset. Whilst eight of the thirteen affected parishes or parts of parishes in Somerset were transferred to neighbouring counties, only one of the three Dorset parishes, one of the eight Devon parishes and none of the Gloucestershire parishes affected were transferred to Somerset.

The expansion of Bristol led to eight changes to the Somerset county boundary between 1895 and 1966, partly to accommodate a growth in the port, and partly the spread of the urban development to the south of the city. Some of these transfers affected only small areas (e.g. Dumbell Island in 1895), whilst other changes were more extensive. A large area of Bedminster was transferred to Bristol in 1897 and the remaining part of the parish was renamed Bishopsworth soon after 1898 (Youngs, 1979, p. 417). A further significant expansion occurred in 1930, and in 1933 Brislington was abolished. More extensive changes occurred in 1951 when more of Bishopsworth was transferred to Bristol and the remaining part of the parish became part of Long Ashton. However, the changes in 1951 did restore the foreshore between the high- and the low-water mark of the parishes facing the Severn Estuary to Somerset. The changes in 1966 were minor and also included the return of a small area of the county borough to Somerset.

Bath also grew at the expense of Somerset, with expansions in 1911, 1951 and 1967, absorbing the parishes of Weston and Charlcombe as well as parts of other parishes surround the city.

In addition to the expansion of the two county boroughs, there were other adjustments to the county boundary. The Somerset parish of Rode was enlarged by gaining part of Southwick in Wiltshire in 1937. A review of the boundaries of south-western counties carried out under the Local Government Act 1958 led to numerous changes to the boundaries between Somerset and Devon, Dorset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire which came into effect in 1966. Many of these changes were transfers of quite small areas, several as exchanges of areas between parishes.

THE NON-METROPOLITAN COUNTY OF SOMERSET

The Local Government Act 1972 which came into effect on 1st April 1974 created a new county of Avon. In addition to the County Boroughs of Bath and Bristol and the borough of Weston-super-Mare, the new county included nearly ninety parishes, including the civil parish 'Unnamed' (Youngs, 1979, p. 440), which had been part of the administrative county of Somerset. The extra-parochial place of Steep Holm Island was also transferred to the new county. In some cases only parts of parishes were transferred to Avon, and the remaining parts of these parishes transferred to parishes remaining in Somerset.

Two minor adjustments to the Avon–Somerset county boundaries occurred in 1983 and 1990 and in 1991 the Dorset–Somerset county boundary was changed, effectively moving Yeovil Junction Station from Dorset to Somerset.

In 1996, the county of Avon was broken up and four new counties of North West Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, the City of Bristol and South Gloucestershire were created.

OTHER "SOMERSETS"

The three headings used above of 'Ancient', 'Administrative' and 'Non-metropolitan' county of Somerset are those used by Youngs *Guide* and in the relevant legislation. There are however other "Somerset"s.

The term 'historic county', whilst apparently similar to the ancient county, is often used to describe counties as they were between 1844 (when detached parts were transferred between counties) and the changes introduced by the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894. It is the term used by the Association of British Counties (website, no date), which promotes awareness of the continuing importance of the counties as they have existed 'largely unchanged since before 1066'. In reality, the time span covered by the term is relatively short, since it excludes the detached parts of counties that formed part of the county until 1844 (in the case of Somerset, Holwell) and, as the change in county boundary in 1884 shows, some county boundary changes took place before the two Local Government Acts were implemented. The 'historic' county by this definition lasted only four decades. This is the term used by the Somerset

Archaeological and Natural History Society (SANHS website, no date).

'Watsonian Vice-counties' are areas used for natural history recording (National Biodiversity network website, no date). Hewett Cottrell Watson (1804–81) devised a system of sub-dividing Great Britain into similar sized areas for plant recording. These are known as 'Vice-counties'. These Vice-Counties followed the county boundaries as they were in the 1850s. Somerset is covered by two vice counties (VC5 and VC6). The Somerset Moth Group's website (no date) shows a map of the boundaries of the two Somerset Vice-Counties and the modern county boundaries.

'Poor law counties' and 'Registration counties' are concepts that followed the creation of poor law unions under the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 and the subsequent use of these unions as the basis of registration districts created by the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1836. As described earlier, many unions and registration districts included parishes from neighbouring counties, and these parishes were therefore considered to be part of the neighbouring 'poor law county' or 'registration county'. These parishes are listed in the 1851–1891 censuses under their registration rather than their ancient county. These anomalies were resolved by the boundary changes made following the 1894 Local Government Act.

Finally, in 1995, The Local Government Changes for England (Miscellaneous Provision) Regulations 1995, which came into effect on 1st April 1996, created what is often referred to as 'Ceremonial Counties', although the term is not used in the Order. The Order specifies that for the purposes of appointing Sheriffs or Lord Lieutenants, 'Somerset' means the administrative areas of Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset and North West Somerset. These offices that, together with the Custos Rotulorum and the Clerk of the Peace, were key posts in county governance prior to the Local Government Act of 1888 (Eastwood, 1994, 50–70), have become once more a means of holding together groups of local authorities in a structure resembling the 'historic' counties of the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION

As can be seen above, there is no unique 'Somerset', and hence the meaning of the term will depend on the context. Appendix A documents the nearly

thirty changes to the county boundary made since 1373, and makes it possible to define what exactly is covered by the term at any particular time. This is important in many different contexts.

For any demographic or other quantitative study it is essential to define the area within which that study takes place. Natural historians have solved this problem by adopting a system of vice-counties independent of changes to administrative boundaries. Genealogists, local historians and others concerned with searching and analysing records are however affected by boundary changes. 'Somerset' records are held not only in the Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton but also in the Bath Record Office, the Bristol Archives, the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre in Chippenham, the Dorset History Centre in Dorchester, the Devon Heritage Centre in Exeter, and the National Archives in Kew.

The Victoria County History for Somerset uses the boundaries of the county as they were at the beginning of the 20th century. Hence the parishes in Horethorne and Norton Ferris Hundreds transferred to Dorset and Wiltshire in 1844 and 1895–6 are not included under their respective hundreds (Dunning & Siraut, 1999) whilst Wambrook, originally a Dorset parish transferred in 1896, is included in the volume covering the neighbouring parish of Whitestaunton, a detached part of the Somerset hundred of South Petherton (Dunning & Bush, 1978). The Manorial Documents Register uses the county boundaries as they were in 1926 when copyhold tenure was abolished.

Changes to the county boundary can also mean that the 'Somerset' used does not always fit the context. Somerset County Council has a number of webpages under the heading of *Aspects of Somerset History* which includes maps of 'Anglo-Saxon Somerset' and 'Domesday Somerset' (Somerset County council website, no date) both drawn on the post-1896 boundaries of Somerset. The important 'Domesday Geography' series (Darby & Finn, 1967) maps by county, but similarly uses 20th century (pre-1966) boundaries. Hence the parishes transferred in the 19th century are not shown under the county under which they appear in Domesday, but in the county to which they were transferred. There is a similar problem with Pevsner's series on *The Buildings of England*. The former Somerset parish of Trent is in the Dorset volume (Newman & Pevsner, 1972, p. 427), and the entry for St. Andrew's church starts with the remark: 'There can be few churches in Dorset with so much to

enjoy'. Whilst technically correct, a more relevant comparison would be with other Somerset churches, as the church was built whilst the parish was in Somerset and part of the diocese of Bath and Wells. Buildings in Trent have however been surveyed by the Somerset Vernacular Buildings Research Group (SVBRG, 2015).

There were very few attempts to document boundary changes before Youngs' systematic approach in 1974. Fry wrote a short piece in 1906, documenting the 19th century changes to the Dorset-Somerset border (Fry, 1906). The Bristol City Engineer's Department drew up a map showing

the history of the expansion of the City boundaries from Anglo-Saxon times, up to the changes in 1938 (BA: NonArchivalPlans/2), but left out the 1895 annexation of Dumbell Island, and suggests the extension of the water boundary east to Hanham Mill first occurred in 1897. The comparisons between the list of boundary changes shown above and those reported in Youngs' *Guide* (Appendix B) underlines the importance of checking the primary material. The University of Portsmouth's *Vision of Britain* website, which is based on the material in Youngs' *Guide*, omits many of the changes and contains additional errors (Appendix C).

APPENDIX A: CHANGES TO THE SOMERSET COUNTY BOUNDARY

| Date of change | Somerset parishes affected | Change | Legal Instrument <i>[reference included if not an Act of Parliament]</i> | Maps |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 1373 | Bedminster (part). | Somerset to Bristol | Charter of Edw. III [Harding (1930)]. | BA: 04882/1(a). |
| 1803 | Long Ashton (part), Bedminster (part), Easton-in-Gordano (part), Abbots Leigh (part), Portbury (part), Portishead (part), Brislington (part), Keynsham (part) | Somerset to Bristol | Bristol Harbour Act 1803 (43 Geo. III c. exl). | BA: 04882/1(a). |
| 1835 | Bedminster (part) | Somerset to Bristol | Municipal Corporations Act 1835 (5 & 6 Will. IV c. 76). | BA: 04882/1(a). |
| 1842 | Parishes bordering river Avon | Correction to above | Bristol Boundary Act 1842 (5 & 6 Vict. c. ix). | |
| 20 October 1844 | Holwell | Somerset to Dorset | Counties (Detached Parts) Act 1844 (7 & 8 Vict. c.61). | DHC: D.1549/2 |
| 1848 | Parishes bordering river Avon | Somerset to Bristol | Bristol Dock Act 1848 (11 & 12 Vict. c. xliii). | |
| 1868 | Coastal parishes | Extends boundaries from high- to low-water mark | Poor Law Amendment Act 1868 (31 & 32 Vict. c. 122) s. 27 | TNA: OS 76/1027 |
| 24 March 1884 | Oldham (part) to Keynsham | Gloucestershire to Somerset | Local Government Board Order 16409 [TNA: OS 24/453, KEY/1] | TNA: OS 27/1993 |
| 1 April 1889 | Bath St James, Bath St Michael, Bath St Peter & St Paul, Bathwick, Lyncombe, Widcombe, Walcot (part) | Somerset to Bath (county borough) | Local Government Act 1888 (51 & 52 Vict. c. 41) | SHC: Q/FA/25 |
| 30 September 1895 | Maiden Bradley with Yarnfield (part), Stourton with Gasper (part) | Somerset to Wiltshire. | Local Government Board's Provisional Order Confirmation (No. 12) Act 1895 (58 & 59 Vict. c. xc) The County of Wilts. (Gaspar and Yarnfield) Order 1895 | SHC: C\GP/D/16 |
| 31 October 1895 | Easton-in Gordano (part) | Somerset to Bristol | Bristol Corporation Act 1895 (58 Vict. c. clvii) | BA: BristolPlans/arranged/50 |
| 31 March 1896 | Seaborough, Trent, Sandford Orcaas, Poyntington, Goathill Wambrook | Somerset to Dorset Dorset to Somerset | Local Government Board's Provisional Order Confirmation (No. 12) Act 1895 (58 & 59 Vict. c. xc) The Counties of Dorset and Somerset (Goathill &c.) Order 1895 | SHC: DD\SAS\H528/26; C\GP/D/16; |
| 30 September 1896 | Churchstanton | Devon to Somerset | Local Government Board's Provisional Order Confirmation (No. 3) Act 1896 (59 & 60 Vict. c. lxxxv) The County of Somerset (Churchstanton) Order | SHC: C\GP/D/16 |
| | Kilminster | Somerset to Wiltshire | Local Government Board's Provisional Order Confirmation (No. 3) Act 1896 (59 & 60 Vict. c. lxxxv) The County of Wilts (Kilminster) Order | SHC: C\GP/D/16 |
| 31 October 1897 | Long Ashton (part) Bedminster Without (part), Easton-in-Gordano (part), Portbury (part), Portishead (part) | Somerset to Bristol | Bristol Corporation Act 1897 60 & 61 Vict. c. cccxxx | BA: BristolPlans/arranged/53 |

| Date of change | Somerset parishes affected | Change | Legal Instrument <i>[reference included if not an Act of Parliament]</i> | Maps |
|-----------------|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| 9 November 1911 | Charlcombe (part), Twerton or Twirterton, Weston (part) | Somerset to Bath | Local Government Board's Provisional Order (1910) Confirmation (No.12) 1911 (1 & 2 Geo. V c. xxxv); Bath Extension Order | SHC: Q/RUP/582. |
| 1 October 1918 | Easton-in-Gordano (part) | Somerset to Bath | Bristol Corporation Act 1918 (8 & 9 Geo. V c. xlii) | TNA: OS 38/836 |
| 1 October 1926 | Portishead (part) | Somerset to Bristol | Bristol Corporation Act 1926 (16 & 17 Geo. V c. xciv) | TNA: OS 38/973 |
| 1 August 1930 | Bishopsworth (part), Brislington (part), Portishead (part), Whitchurch (part) | Somerset to Bristol | Bristol Corporation (No. 2) Act, 1930 20 & 21 Geo. V c. clxxx | TNA: OS 38/1088 |
| 1 April 1933 | Brislington, Bishopsworth (part), Whitchurch (part) | Somerset to Bristol | M. of H. Order No. 77130. The Somerset Review Order, 1933 [SHC: C\GP/D/85] | SHC: C\GP/D/85 |
| 1 April 1937 | Southwick (part) to Rode | Wiltshire to Somerset | M. of H. Provisional Order Confirmation (Somerset and Wilts.) Act, 1937 (1 Edw. VIII & 1. Geo. VI. c. xiii) | SHC: Q/RUP/676 |
| 1 April 1951 | Whitchurch (part), Bishopsworth (part), Dundry (part), Long Ashton (part), Easton-in-Gordano (part), Clevedon (part), Portishead (part), North Weston (part), Weston-in-Gordano (part), Walton-in-Gordano (part), Easton-in-Gordano (part). | Somerset to Bristol Bristol to Somerset | Somerset and Bristol (Alteration of Boundaries) Order, 1951 SI (1951) No. 563 [BA: 43006/8] | TNA: OS 38/1667 |
| 1 April 1966 | Charlcombe (part), Claverton (part), English Combe (part), Monkton Combe (part), South Stoke (part), Weston (part) North Stoke (part) Norton St Philip (part) Stourhead with Gasper (part) to Penselwood Chard (part), Wayford (part), Winsham (part), Corton Denham (part), Henstridge (parts), Wincanton (part) Broadwindsor (part) to West Crewkerne, South Perrot (part) to Misterton, Thorncombe (part) to Chard, Buckhorn Weston (part) to Wincanton, Kingston Magna (part) to Henstridge Brushford (part), Churchstanton (part) Chardstock (parts) to Chard & Wambrook, Upottery (part) to Churchstanton, East Ansty (parts) to West Brushford & Dulverton, Clayhindon (part) to West Buckland, Henyock (part) to Wellington Without, Holcombe Rogus (part) to Thorne St. Margaret | Somerset to Bath Somerset to Gloucestershire Somerset to Wiltshire Wiltshire to Somerset Somerset to Dorset Dorset to Somerset Somerset to Devon Devon to Somerset | Bath Extension Act 1950 (14 Geo. VI c. lxiv) South Western Counties Order 1965 SI 1965/2086 [SHC: C\GP/D/97] | SHC: C\GP/D/105 SHC: C\GP/D/98 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|--|---|--|
| 1 April 1966 | Long Ashton (part), Whitchurch (part), Keynsham (part) | Somerset to Bristol Bristol to Somerset | Bristol Order 1966, SI (1966) No. 134. [BA: 43006/8] | SHC: C\GP/D/99 |
| 1 April 1967 | Charlcombe and parts of Batheston, Monkton Combe, Newton St Loe, Swainswick | Somerset to Bath | Bath Order 1966: SI (1966) 1534 [SHC: C\GP/D/96] | SHC: C\GP/D/96: |
| 1 April 1974 | Long Ashton, Backwell, Barrow Gurney, Bathampton, Batheston, Bathford, Blagdon (part), Bleadon, Brockley, Burrington (part), Butcombe, Cameley, Camerton, Charlcombe, Chelwood, Chew Magna, Chew Stoke, Churchill, Clapton-in-Gordano, Claverton, Cleeve, Clevedon, Clutton, English Combe, Monkton Combe, Combe Hay, Compton Dando, Compton Martin (part), Congresbury, Corston, Dundry, Dunkerton, Easton-in-Gordano, Farmborough, Farrington Gurney, Flax Bourton, Freshford, East Harptree (part), West Harptree (part), Hinton Blewett, Hinton Charterhouse, Hutton, Kelston, Kenn, Kewstoke, Keynsham, Kingston Seymour, Abbots Leigh, High Littleton, Locking, Loxton (part), Marksbury, Nailsea, Nempnett Thrubwell, Newton St Loe, Norton Malreward, Norton Radstock, Paulton, Peasedown St John, Portbury, Portishead, Priston, Publow, Puxton, St Catherine, Stanton Drew, Steep Holm Island, North Stoke, South Stoke, Stowey-Sutton, Swainswick, Tickenham, Timsbury, Ubley (part), 'Unnamed', Walton-in-Gordano, Wellow, North Weston, Weston- in-Gordano, Weston-super-Mare, Whitchurch, Wick St Lawrence, Winford, Winscombe, Wrington, Yatton. | Somerset to Avon | Local Government Act 1972 c. 70 | TNA: OS 76/30 (Avon) TNA: OS 76/1042 Somerset |
| 1 April 1983 | Shipham (part); Bleadon (part) to Lympsham, Winscombe (part) to Shipham | Somerset to Avon Avon to Somerset | Avon and Somerset (Areas) Order 1983 SI (1983) No. 84 [SHC: C\GP/D/147] | SHC: C\GP/D/147 |
| 1 April 1990 | Kilmersdon (part) Compton Bishop (part) Wellow (part) to Norton St Philip, Loxton (part) to Compton Bishop | Somerset to Avon Avon to Somerset | Avon Somerset and Wiltshire (County Boundaries) Order 1990 SI (1990) No. 159 [available on legislation. gov.uk website] | TNA: OS 38/2829 |
| 1 April 1991 | Bradford Abbas (part), Clifton Maybank (part) to Barwick | Dorset to Somerset | Dorset and Somerset (County Boundaries) Order SI (1991) No.286: [available on legislation.gov.uk website] | TNA: OS 38/2597 |
| 1 April 1995 | Avon abolished: new counties of North West Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset | Creation of new counties | Avon (Structural Change) Order SI (1995) No. 493 [available on legislation.gov.uk website] | TNA: OS 38/2927 |

APPENDIX B: DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN YOUNGS' *GUIDE* AND APPENDIX A

None of the boundary changes transferring part of Somerset to the city and county of the city of Bristol (in 1373, 1803, 1835, 1842 and 1848) before the creation of the County Borough by the 1888 local government Act are included in Youngs (1979, 668).

The change in boundary from the high- to the low-water mark in 1868 is not included.

Youngs (1979, 668) incorrectly shows a change to the county boundary at Exmoor in 1884. The entry for Exmoor (Youngs, 1979, 425) describes Exmoor as an extra-parochial place 'primarily in Somerset, small uninhabited part in Devon'. Exmoor became a parish in 1856 under the 1815 Exmoor Forest Act (Poor Law Board 1857) and not, as Youngs has it, under the 1857 Extra-parochial Places Act. The 1884 Local Government Board Order (LGBO) 16348 (TNA: OS 24/114, SOU/1) quoted by Youngs (1979, 813 ref. 276) as a change in county boundary transferred the Devon part of Exmoor civil parish to the Devon parish of North Molton.

The transfer of part of Oldland to Keynsham and Somerset in 1884 is not included (Youngs 1979, 668).

Youngs (1979: 797, ref. 130) gives the incorrect date of 30th September 1895 for the coming into effect of the Counties of Dorset and Somerset (Goathill &c.) Order 1895 instead of 30th March 1896, possibly because this is the date the other seven provisional Orders confirmed by the Local Government Board's Provisional Order Confirmation (No. 12) Act 1895 Act came into effect.

Youngs (1979, 668) incorrectly shows a county boundary change in 1896 for parts of the parishes of Abbots Leigh, Bedminster, Easton-in-Gordano, Long Ashton, Portbury and Portishead, to help create the parish of South Bristol in the Bristol County Borough, with reference to LGBO 34794. This Order (TNA: OS 24/175, BRI/12) creates three new parishes (North, Central and South Bristol) from parishes already within the City and County of Bristol, but does not make any change to the county boundary. A map of the areas of the parishes transferred to the new parish (BA: BristolPlans/arranged/52) shows that the parts of the Somerset parishes west of Bedminster transferred to the new parish of South Bristol are the areas of these parishes along the river Avon and at its mouth that formed part of the city and the county of the city of

Bristol as defined in the 1373 charter and extended by the 1803 and 1848 Acts.

The transfer of Dumbell Island under the Bristol Corporation Act 1895 is not included (Youngs 1979, 668).

Youngs (1979, 668) shows the transfers under the Bristol Corporation Act 1897 which came into effect on 31st October 1897 as transfers in 1896. The references under the individual parishes depend on the parish concerned (1979, 812, Easton-in-Gordano: ref. 18; Long Ashton, Portbury, Portishead: ref. 19; Bedminster Without: ref. 73). All three references contain errors either of date or legal instrument.

Youngs (1979, 668) incorrectly shows a county boundary change in 1898, with the loss of parts of the Somerset parishes of Brislington and Keynsham to Bristol Parish and County Borough, with reference to LGBO 38597. This Order (TNA: OS 24/175, BRI/18) creates a new parish of Bristol from the parishes and parts of parishes already within Bristol, and Article 2 of the Order states specifically that the boundary of the new united parish shall be the boundary of the city and county of the city of Bristol as defined by the Bristol Corporation Act 1897. The parts of the two Somerset parishes concerned are the river Avon upstream as far as Hanham Mills and the areas on the banks transferred to the city and county under the 1803 Bristol Harbour Act and confirmed by the 1848 Dock Act.

Youngs gives an incorrect reference to the London Gazette (1979, p. 812, ref. 39) for the transfer of parts of Charlcombe and Weston to Bath County Borough under the Bath Extension Order 1911, confirmed by the Local Government Board's Provisional Order (1910) Confirmation (No.12) Act 1911.

The transfer of part of Easton-in-Gordano under the Bristol Corporation Act 1918 is not included.

Youngs incorrectly gives the date as 1st April 1926 (1979, 813, ref. 398) for the coming into effect of the Bristol Corporation Act 1926 which came into effect from 1st October 1926.

Youngs incorrectly gives the date as 1st April 1930 (1979, 812, ref. 81) for the coming into effect of the Bristol Corporation (No. 2) Act, 1930 which came into effect from 1st August 1930.

Youngs (1979, 668) only shows Brislington as affected by the changes introduced by the Somerset Review Order, 1933 but does not list the parts of Bishopsworth and Whitchurch also transferred.

Youngs (1979, 812 ref. 21) incorrectly gives

the reference to the Bristol Order 1966 (SI (1966) No.134 as “18 Feb. MinHousLGO 21193”.

Youngs gives incorrect references to the changes introduced by the Bath Order 1966. For the transfers of Monkton Combe, Newton St Loe and Swainswick the reference is given as ‘9 Nov, 1 & 2 Geo. V c. xxxv’ (Youngs 1979, 812, ref. 42) and for the transfers of Batheaston and Charlcombe as ‘1 Jan, MHLGO 23994’ (Youngs 1979, 812, ref. 44).

Youngs includes the changes made by the 1972 Local Government Act, but does not include any of the subsequent changes.

APPENDIX C: DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE VISION OF BRITAIN WEBSITE AND APPENDIX A

Ancient County: (GB Historical GIS a, no date)

None of the changes to the boundaries of the ancient county of Somerset are shown.

Administrative County (GB Historical GIS b, no date)

None of the boundary changes to the administrative county of Somerset up to 1930 are shown. The eight parishes transferred between counties as a result of the implementation of the 1894 Local Government Act are shown as belonging to their pre-1896 county.

The website includes the changes introduced by the Somerset Review Order, 1933 but shows them as being to Gloucestershire rather than to Bristol, and includes a second (incorrect) reference to a 1935 Ministry of Health Provisional Order Confirmation Act.

The website shows the changes as a result of the Somerset and Bristol (Alteration of Boundaries) Order 1951 and the Bath Extension Act 1950 as affecting Gloucestershire rather than Bath or Bristol County Boroughs, and gives a reference to the Bristol order for both.

The website lists the changes made under the South West Counties Order 1965 but also includes additional incorrect references to the Cornwall and Devon (Broadwoodwidge) Order 1965, the Exeter Order 1966 and the Bristol Order 1966.

The website includes the changes made under the Bristol Order 1966 but also gives a reference to the South West Counties Order 1965.

The website does not include the changes introduced by the Bath Order 1966.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful for the help advice and support given by Dr. Frank Thorn, and in particular for his help in describing the early history of the county boundary, and also to Colin Bowditch, Liz Caldwell and Mark Forrest for their helpful comments on the draft.

REFERENCES

Primary Sources

Note: The primary legislation (public or local Acts of Parliament) quoted is referenced conventionally (by regnal year and chapter number) without indicating the archives used. The secondary legislation (orders or statutory instruments) quoted includes a reference to the archival source. Some of the latter and the maps quoted may be available in different archives or as multiple copies with different reference numbers within the same archive. The references shown below are those consulted in the preparation of this paper.

Bristol Archives (BA)

04482/1(a): Maps and Plans – Plans of the Boundary of the City and County of Bristol 1820

43006/8: Statutory Instruments relating to alteration of boundaries of Bristol 1936–1966

BristolPlans/arranged/50: City Plan: As extended by Bristol Corporation Act 1895. 1895.

BristolPlans/arranged/52: Order for Union of Parishes inquiry (8 plans). With plans of parish of Shirehampton and Henbury 1896 Mar 25.

BristolPlans/arranged/53: City Plan and Ward Map, 1881–1897; 1897. Showing City boundary as extended by Bristol Corporation Act, 1897

Non-archival plans/2: Plan of city boundary extensions to 1955. [4 inches to 1 mile]. 1955

Dorset History Centre (DHC)

D.1549: Holwell Maps.

Somerset Heritage Centre (SHC)

C\GP\D\16: Report of the Boundary Commissioners for England and Wales and papers resulting from this report. 1888

C\GP\D\34e: Dorset and Somerset Joint Committee, Unions in their area, 1894

C\GP\D\85: Local Government *Review of Somerset, Order and Maps. 1931–1933.* (Map 1).

C\GP\D\96: The Bath Order. 1966

C\GP\D\97: South Western Counties Order. 1965

C\GP\D\98: Boundary maps of the South Western Counties Order. 1965 (bundle).

- C\GP\D\99: Maps referred to in the Bristol Order. 1966
 C\GP/D/105: City of Bath Act. (and maps). 1950
 C\GP/D/147: The *Avon and Somerset (Areas) Order* 1983 (Maps Separate). 1983
 DD\SAS/H528/26: Endorsed 'Parishes of Goathill, Pointington, Sandford Orcas and Trent etc.. Map re L.G. Act 1894 and altn of boundaries'.
 Q/FA/25: plans of Bath and Bristol, showing their boundaries
 Q/RUP/582: Composite OS 6in map, showing boundaries of city. 29 Jun 1911
 Q/RUP/676: Somerset And Wiltshire Order. 8 Dec 1936

The National Archives (TNA)

- OS 24/114: South Molton Poor Law Union (Devon): boundaries file 1883–1901
 OS 24/175: Bristol Poor Law Union (Gloucestershire): boundaries file 1848–1936
 OS 24/453: Keynsham Poor Law Union (Somerset): boundaries file 1883–1937
 OS 27/1993: Boundary Sketch Map: Gloucestershire: Bitton; Bitton township; Hanham township (detached); Oldland township (detached) 1879
 OS 38/836: Ordnance Survey: Boundaries Branch: Deposited Maps: Bristol, Gloucestershire. Map showing boundaries 1918
 OS 38/973: Ordnance Survey: Boundaries Branch: Deposited Maps: Bristol City, Gloucestershire. Map showing boundaries 1926
 OS 38/1088: Ordnance Survey: Boundaries Branch: Deposited Maps: Bristol, Gloucestershire. Map showing boundaries 1930
 OS 38/1667: Ordnance Survey: Boundaries Branch: Deposited Maps: Bristol (County Borough), Gloucestershire and Somerset. Map showing county boundaries. 1933–1951
 OS 38/2597: Ordnance Survey: Boundaries Branch: Deposited Maps: Dorset and Somerset: (County Boundaries) (South Somerset District) Order, SI (1991) No 286
 OS 38/2829: Ordnance Survey: Boundaries Branch: Deposited Maps: Avon, Somerset and Wiltshire: (County Boundaries) (Sedgemoor District) Order, SI (1990) No 159
 OS 38/2927: Ordnance Survey: Boundaries Branch: Deposited Maps: Avon: (Structural Change) (Bath and North East Somerset District) Order, SI (1995) No 493. (Note: this contains only four of the six maps relating to this order).
 OS 76/30 Avon: shows boundary information to 1974 including manuscript annotations Scale 1:100000 1974 Jan 01–1974 Dec 31
 OS 76/1027: Somerset: shows boundary information to 1920 Scale 1:190080 1899 Jan 01–1920 Dec 31
 OS 76/1042 Somerset: shows boundary information to

1975 with manuscript annotations. Scale 1:100000
 1974 Jan 01–1975 Dec 31

Books and Journals

- Dunning, R. W. and Bush, R. J. E. 1978. *A History of the County of Somerset: Volume 4. Parishes: Wambrook*. Victoria County History, London.
 Dunning, R. W. and Siraut, M. C. 1999. *A History of the County of Somerset: Volume 7. Bruton, Horethorne and Norton Ferris Hundreds*. Victoria County History, London.
 Barker K. 2013. *Aldhelmus episcopus: the making and shiring of the Sherborne bishopric – Saxon, Briton and Byzantine*. Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society 134. 113-127.
 Darby, H. C. and Finn R. W. (Eds.), 1967. *The Domesday Geography of South-West England*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 Eastwood, D. 1994. *Governing Rural England*. Oxford Historical Monographs. Clarendon Press, Oxford:
 Fry, G. S. 1906. *Boundaries of Dorset, Somerset & Dorset* Notes and Queries, 10, 86-7.
 Harding, N. D. (Ed.) 1930. *Bristol Charters 1155–1373*. Bristol Record Society, Bristol.
 Lipman, V. D. 1949. *Local Government Areas 1834–1945*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
 Morris, J, Thorn, C. and F. (Eds.) 1980. *Domesday Book 8 Somerset*. Phillimore, Chichester.
 Newman, J. and Pevsner, N. 1972. *The Buildings of England: Dorset*. Penguin Books: Harmondsworth.
 Oliver, R. 2011. *OS Act, tidelines and growth of a myth*. Sheetlines (The Journal of the Charles Close Society for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps) 91 (August 2011), 36-51.
 Poor Law Board, 1827. Ninth Annual Report of the Poor Law Board 1856. Parliamentary Papers 1857 Sess. 2 Vol. XXII [2241], p. 11.
 SVBRG (Somerset Vernacular Buildings Research Group). 2015. *Traditional Houses and Farms in the Parish of Trent. A study of the Houses and Farms in the Village of Trent and the Hamlets of Adber and Hummer (Somerset Villages)*.
 Thorn, F. R. 2010. 'That most famous Monasterium at Bath', *Its Hundred hides and its estates, viewed from South Stoke*. Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. 153. 13-53.
 Thorn, F. R. 2012. *The Ancient Territory of Somerton, Somerset*. Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. 155. 163-191.
 Thorn, F. R. 2014. *The Ancient Territories of Frome and Bruton in Somerset*. Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. 157. 1-52.

- Thorn, F. R. 2017. *Early Royal Estates in Somerset*. Talk to the South Somerset Archaeological Research Group. 19th February, 2017.
- Thorn, F. R. (forthcoming). *The Ancient Territory of Milborne Port in Somerset*. Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.
- Yorke, B., 1995. *Wessex in the early Middle Ages*. Leicester University Press: London and New York
- Youngs, F. J. Jr. 1979. *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England: I Southern England*. Royal Historical Society, London.
- Websites**
- Association of British Counties. URL: <http://abcountries.com/about/what-we-promote/>. Accessed: 28th January 2018
- Avon Somerset and Wiltshire (County Boundaries) Order 1990 SI (1990) No. 159. URL: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1990/159/made/data.pdf>. Accessed: 28th January 2018.
- Avon (Structural Change) Order 1995 SI (1995) No. 493. URL: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1995/493/made/data.pdf>. Accessed: 28th January 2018.
- Dorset and Somerset (County Boundaries) Order 1991, SI (1991) No. 286. URL: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1991/286/made/data.pdf>. Accessed: 28th January 2018.
- GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, (a), (no date). Somerset AncC through time Census tables with data for the Ancient County. *A Vision of Britain through Time*. URL: <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10024900>. Accessed: 28th January 2018
- GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth (b) (no date), Somerset AdmC through time Census tables with data for the Administrative County. *A Vision of Britain through Time*. URL: <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10073900>. Accessed: 28th January 2018.
- Hull Domesday Project (AHRC Funded) deposited in 2007. Revised Phillimore Introduction to Somerset: *Somerset (version 1a)*. <https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/resources/hull.518>. Accessed 28th January 2018.
- Local Government Boundary Commission for England. URL: <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/records-and-resources/database-of-local-government-orders/south-west/somerset>. Accessed: 28th January 2018
- Local Government Changes for England (Miscellaneous Provision) Regulations 1995, SI (1995) No. 1748 URL: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1995/1748/made/data.pdf> Accessed: 28th January 2018.
- National Biodiversity Network. URL: <https://nbn.org.uk/tools-and-resources/nbn-toolbox/watsonian-vice-county-boundaries/> Date accessed: 28th January 2018.
- Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. URL: <http://www.sanhs.org/index.htm> Accessed: 28th January 2018.
- Somerset County Council. URL: <http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/archives/ASH/P11ang.htm>. Accessed: 28th January 2018. <http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/archives/ASH/P15dom1.htm>. Accessed: 28th January 2018.
- Somerset Moth Group. URL: <http://www.somersetmothgroup.org.uk/portal/p/VC5> and 6. Accessed: 28th January 2018.