

MARGINAL NOTES (MARGINALIA) MADE IN A COPY OF YARRELL'S A HISTORY OF BRITISH FISHES (1836) by DR MARTIN (1806-67) OF BELGRAVE HOUSE, VENTNOR

Peter Holt

Abstract: Dr George Martin, a physician who spent most of his working life in Ventnor in the mid-19th century had a keen interest in the Undercliff of the Isle of Wight and its natural history. He made handwritten notes of the catches of local fishermen in the margins of his copy of Yarrell's 'A History of British Fishes', which give a record of specimens seen in local waters during the period 1847- 1865. His residence provided a meeting point for a number of prominent naturalists of the time. The appendix to this paper is a transcript of his marginalia.

Keywords:

Fish, Belgrave House, Victorian naturalists

Introduction

I recently acquired volumes 1 and 2 of Yarrell's 'A History of British Fishes' (1836), and found these to contain 27 marginal pencil notes, dated mainly in 1848 - and mostly signed 'G.A.M., Belgrave House'.

Dr Martin was a physician who spent most of his professional life in Ventnor. He authored the book 'The Undercliff of the Isle of Wight: its climate, history and natural productions' (1848), and in connection with this, he appears to have used Yarrell's book to identify species and record identifications.

Martin's marginal notes made between 7 July and 14 October 1849, mention local fishermen who brought species to Belgrave House: frequently William Lale of Ventnor (his name occurs in the local rate book for January 1849), less frequently Newnham of Bonchurch, Harvey of St Lawrence and William Jackman of Boldwood. It appears that Martin was not going to meet incoming boats and examine their catches, rather the fishermen were selecting on his behalf and bringing specimens to him. Martin was too busy as a successful physician to seek them out.

A detailed 'parallel' account occurs on page 213 of Martin's book and in his notes pencilled in the margin of page 229 of Yarrell's Volume 1. G.A.M. tells how the Gattoruginous Blenny, now known as the Tompot Blenny (*Parablennius gattorugine*), was caught in a crab pot off St Lawrence and kept alive "in a pan of daily renewed sea-water" from July 7 to the end of September 1848. G.A.M. even sketches the Blenny (p.222).

In 1848, Martin was using "all the means at my command to

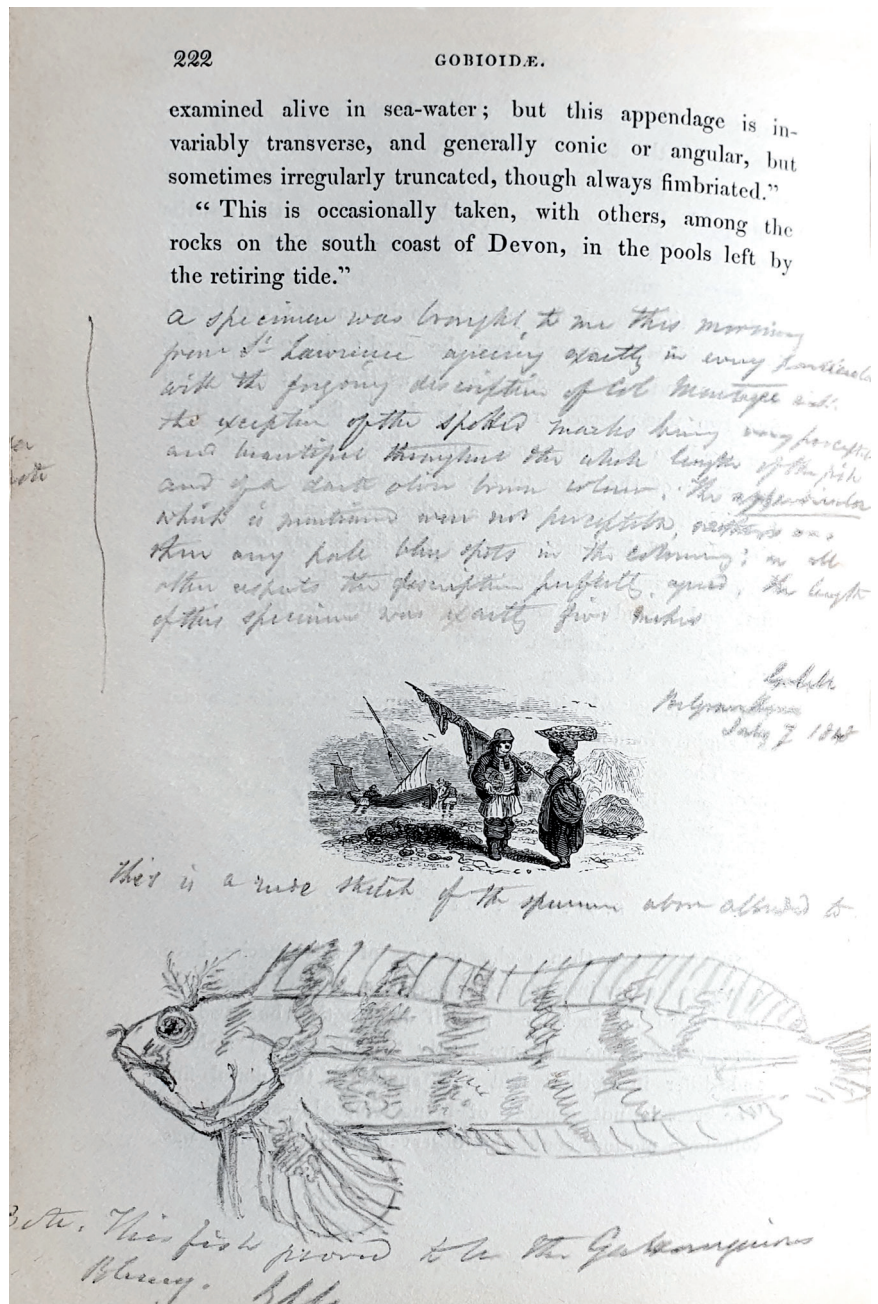


Fig. 1: Marginal note relating to the catch of a Gattoruginous Blenny, now known as the Tompot Blenny, together with a sketch of the specimen by George Martin



Fig. 2: Tompot blenny (*Parablennius gattorugine*), off St Lawrence 3rd October 2022

Photo: Theo Vickers

verify, by personal investigation, the lists (of fishes) with which I had been supplied" (page 209).

He acknowledges the help of Edmund Peel, Esq., of Bonchurch and of William Yarrell of London – but does not mention the fishermen in print; presumably payment was their acknowledgement.

An early marginal note is of a Short Sun-Fish caught at sea off Bonchurch on 29 June, 1841. (This will have been the Sun fish, *Mola mola*)

He comments:

"Have noticed this fish more particularly in my Ichthyology of the Undercliff"

(his note in Yarrell Vol. 2, p. 253).

Apart from the Short Sun-Fish in 1841, and his numerous marginalia over several months in 1848, Martin makes a very few marginal notes at Belgrave House in March and July 1849 and March 1850.

Intriguingly, in the margin of my Yarrell Vol. 2, p.380, there is a last note from 1865, just two years before Dr Martin's death. Uninitialed and in shaky handwriting, it records a Fox Shark (now known as the Thresher Shark, *Alopias vulpinus*):

"One of these fish was caught about 10 miles from the shore (five words illegible) in nets May 26th 1865 and exhibited on the Esplanade. Length 13 feet 4 inches."

How Dr George A. Martin came to Ventnor

George Anne Martin was already a 'fashionable' doctor aged 30 when he came from Enfield to Ventnor in 1836 -- coincidentally the year in which his Yarrell fish volumes were published.

The invigorative benefits of sea air had been set out in a medically influential book by Martin's prestigious patron (Clark, 1830). Indeed, Martin dedicates his own book (1849)

"to Sir James Clark, Bart., F.R.S., who first called the author's attention to the study of climate, and whose kindness and assistance further encouraged him in the pursuit of it."

Sir James became physician to both Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

Clark (1830) specifically extolled the virtues of the climate of the Undercliff. Hence, the fishing village of Ventnor rapidly developed into a sought-after health resort. Sir James urged his protégé to set up practice there.

Belgrave House links to many naturalists

One ailing sojourner in Ventnor from 24 October, 1849 to 5 July, 1850 was Jane (née Daubeny), accompanied by her husband the Rev. Leonard Jenyns (1800-93). He was a notable naturalist, a lifelong friend of Charles Darwin and a close friend and collaborator of William Yarrell. Jenyns wrote the volume on fishes from Darwin's voyage of the Beagle. He had also joined Yarrell in meeting fishermen at south coast ports, inspecting their catches quayside and even going out with the boats (Jackson, 2022)

On 17 October, 1849, a week before the Jenyns' departure for the Isle of Wight, Yarrell wrote to him from London:

"Dr Martin of Ventnor has called two or three times here, and was kind enough to give me a copy of his book in return for some small hints about species in the Fishes (Yarrell, 1836). Besides being an amiable man, he has the reputation of being the best physician in that locality. You will be quite at home with him" ..." (Jenyns Letter 3061).

The Rev. and Mrs Jenyns did not stay with Dr Martin, but rented Grovehill Cottage, later moving to Promenade House to be nearer the sea. However, Leonard Jenyns fully enjoyed the hospitality of Belgrave House and the company of gentleman naturalists there.

Jenyns reminisces:

"We made several pleasant acquaintances in Ventnor and the neighbourhood. First and foremost was Dr George Anne Martin, the physician of the place and author of an excellent work on 'The Undercliff', in which its climate, history and natural productions are all dealt with in such a way as to make it a valuable guide-book for strangers. It was published the first year (1849) I came into the island, and proved of great use to me."



Fig.3: The location of Belgrave House, Ventnor, now Belgrave Court

Photo: Keith Marston

"Dr Martin's remarks on the climate of the Undercliff are based upon Meteorological Observations, which he had carried on himself at Ventnor for many years. Having been myself an observer in that way a great part of my life, we had naturally much to say to one another on the subject." (Jenyns, 1889).

Jenyns concludes:

"It was at Dr Martin's house, at an evening party, that I first met and got acquainted with Dr (William Arnold) Bromfield (of Ryde), who was then working out the Botany of the Isle of Wight, and getting materials for his 'Flora Vectensis'. This valuable and laborious work he never lived to publish, or thoroughly to complete." Nonetheless, it was published in 1856 by William Pampin of London, having been edited by botanist Sir William Jackson Hooker and biologist Dr Thomas Bell Salter (Ryde). The frontispiece is a portrait of Bromfield."

Bromfield was one of several local naturalists who were in touch with Belgrave House. Indeed, he was the main source of the botany section in George Martin's book.

Bromfield's papers on Hampshire's flora also helped Prof. Thomas Bell prepare his later two-volume edition of White's Natural History of Selborne, (Bell, 1877). In his Preface to Vol.1, Prof. Bell writes,

"(my) frequent botanical rambles with (my) late nephew, Dr Bell Salter, of Ryde, and the contributions to the Selborne flora of his late friend Dr Bromfield ...have furnished much of the information (I have) been able to give respecting the rarer or more noteworthy plants of the district..."

Other Isle of Wight naturalists acknowledged by Martin (1849) are: Rev. J.F. Dawson (birds, quadrupeds and beetles), George Guyon (beetles), Mr Maitland of Ventnor (Lepidoptera), Edmund Peel of Bonchurch (fishes), S.M. Saxby Esq. (geology of the upper greensands) and Rev. C.A. Bury of Bonchurch.

Belgrave House's "metropolitan" contacts were, as already mentioned, through Bromfield and Bell Salter to Prof. Thomas Bell and to Sir William Hooker and additionally to Leonard Jenyns and William Yarrell.

In his Undercliff book (p. 177) Martin says he is *"taking Yarrell (1843) as my guide to birds"*. However, Martin's greatest reliance on Yarrell is clearly about fishes. This is emphasised on page 209 of the Undercliff book: *"I am also greatly indebted to the distinguished author of 'British Fishes', Wm Yarrell, Esq., V.P.Z.S., for the personal assistance he has so kindly afforded me in my researches, as well as to his valuable work, without which I should have failed collecting even the few materials I have been able to bring together."*

Martin, on at least one occasion, sent specimens to Yarrell for authentication; they were of Gattoruginous Blenny (marginal pencil note on p229 of volume 1 of Yarrell's Fishes).

Dr Martin's natural history interests had, of course, a

further 'metropolitan' connection, namely to his publisher, John Churchill (1801-75), already well-known for his issuing of Chambers' then anonymous bestseller 'Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation' (1844). Churchill was predominantly a medical publisher, whose London premises were an informal rendezvous, circulating library and reading room for leading physicians. Perhaps Martin knew him there or was recommended to him by Sir James Clark. An interesting account of John Churchill is given in Secord (2000).

Ending of an era

Dr George Anne Martin died in 1867, but Belgrave House's traditions lived on to the beginning of the 20th century.

The medical practice and the house were taken over by Martin's son-in-law, Dr John Livesay Whitehead (? 1840-1924). Whitehead continued Martin's weather observations, and wrote 'The Climate of the Undercliff, Isle of Wight', issued in 1881.

Moreover, Whitehead compiled 'The Undercliff of the Isle of Wight Past and Present' (1911). He was a member of the Hampshire Field Club, but his book is predominantly an antiquarian survey of the area's human prehistory and history, rather than its natural history. However, there is again a direct link to George A. Martin -- namely Whitehead's chapter XIII on Meteorology, covering 70 years of weather observations at Belgrave House.

As Whitehead neared the end of his life, Belgrave House was auctioned in 1922 *"with vacant possession"*. By the 1930s it had become the Belgrave Private Hotel, advertised in the Town Guide (1938) as *"enjoying one of the most favourable positions in the Town... glorious Sea Views. Large Pleasure Lawn. Bathing Tent. Dance and Recreation Room"*.

Ultimately, Belgrave House was converted in 1989 into flats known as Belgrave Court.

Acknowledgements

For invaluable help and encouragement, I am deeply indebted to: Dr Jeffrey Mazo, secretary, Ventnor & District Local History Society; Rob Randall for Matt Williams, collections manager, Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution; Richard Smout, Isle of Wight heritage service manager, Isle of Wight County Record Office. For inspiration, my heartfelt thanks to historian and author Christine E. Jackson.

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APPENDIX 1 Transcription of the marginalia

Current nomenclature from World Register of Marine Species (2024) available at: <https://www.marinespecies.org/> [Accessed 19/5/2024]

Volume 1

Page No.	Date of Note	Fish (Current common name where different, and Latin name)	Marginal Note
40	16/7/1849	Red Gurnard, Cuckoo Gurnard (Red Gurnard, <i>Chelidonichthys cuculus</i>)	One brought by Lale 14 inches in length caught off Ventnor Baths July 16 1849. Sig
67	7/7/1848	Father Lasher (Long-spined scorpion, <i>Taurulus bubalis</i>)	A specimen was brought in this day from St. Lawrence. Belgrave House. July 7 1848
89	7/3/1850	Fifteen spined Stickleback (<i>Spinachia spinachia</i>)	Two specimens one rather more than 6 and the other under 5 inches in length was brought me by Lale; caught off Ventnor March 7. 1850
206	19/9/1848	Grey Mullet (Grey thin-lipped mullet, <i>Chelon ramada</i>)	A specimen of this fish measuring about 13 inches was brought me this morning by Wm. Lale caught at Steephill Cove sig Belgrave House Sept 19 1848
218	14/10/1848	The Atherine, or Sand smelt (Sand smelt, <i>Atherina presbyter</i>)	These small specimens of this species were brought me by Lale this morning taken on the shore Oct 14, 1848 Undercliff sig

Volume 1 (continued)

Page No.	Date of Note	Fish (Current common name where different, and Latin name)	Marginal Note
222	7/7/1848	Gattoruginous Blenny (<i>Parablennius gattorugine</i>) The initial identification of Montagu's blenny proved incorrect and the specimen was later confirmed by Yarell as the Gattoruginous blenny, now known as the Tompot.	A specimen was brought to me this morning from St Lawrence agreeing exactly in every particular with the forgoing description of Col. Montagu with the exception of the spotted marks being very perceptible and beautiful throughout the whole length of the fish and of a dark olive brown colour. The appendicule which is mentioned was not perceptible, neither was (sic) there any dark blue spots in the colouring in all other respects the description perfectly agrees. The length of this specimen was exactly five inches. Sig This is a sketch of the specimen above alluded to Note. This fish proved to be the Gattoruginous blenny. Sig Belgrave House July 7 1848
229	7/7/1848	Gattoruginous Blenny (Tompot blenny <i>Parablennius gattorugine</i>)	The first specimen was brought to me on July 7 1848 having been caught in a crab pot off St Lawrence and kept alive for several weeks. I at first mistook it for Montagu's Blenny in consequence of its great similarity to the drawing of that fish. Several other specimens have been since brought to me and sent to Yarell who as I imaginedpronounced this the Blennius gattorugine
232	2/8/1848	Shanny <i>Blennius pholis</i>	Several specimens of this fish varying from 2½ to 5 inches were brought in by Lale caught off Ventnor, this day Belgrave House Aug 2 1848 Sig.
242	2/8/1848	Spotted Gunnel or Butterfish (Butterfish, <i>Pholis gunnellus</i>)	Two specimens were brought me this morning by Lale, caught off Ventnor, one measuring 4¾ inches and the other 4¼ Inches. Both fish had only ten spots on the dorsal fin Belgrave House Aug 2 1848
257	2/8/1848	Double spotted Goby (Two-spot Goby, <i>Gobiusculus flavescens</i>)	Two specimens were brought me this morning by Lale caught off Ventnor measuring from 2 1/8 to 2 ¼ inches Belgrave House August 2 1848
259	2/8/1848	Spotted Goby (Sand Goby, <i>Pomatoschistus minutus</i>)	A specimen brought this morning by Lale caught off Ventnor measured four inches Bonchurch Aug 2 1848
278	19/7/1848	Ballan Wrasse (<i>Labrus bergylta</i>)	A specimen of this species was brought to me July 19. 1848 from Newnam of Bonchurch it measured 9 ½ inches in length The length of the head 2 ½ inches which corresponded with the length of the body at its thickest part Belgrave House July 19 1848 The margin of the ... perfectly smooth

Volume 1 (continued)

Page No.	Date of Note	Fish (Current common name where different, and Latin name)	Marginal Note
280	7/7/1848	Green streaked Wrasse (Probably the Cuckoo Wrasse <i>Labrus mixtus</i>)	A specimen of this fish was brought to me this day from St Lawrence agreeing exactly with M Risso description & from its colour and (???) there could be no doubt of the correctness of the account Belgrave House July 7 1848
290	19/7/1848	Comber Wrasse (Probably the Ballan Wrasse <i>Labrus bergylta</i>)	A specimen (I believe) of this fish was brought me from Bonchurch July 19 1848. The following is the number of fin rays D.20 + 11-P.14._V.5_A3 +7. C14 Length 6 ½ inches. Head 1 ½ inches. Depth of body just behind the pectoral fin 1 ¾ inches. The tail differed in form from that given in the plate
295	7/7/1848	The Gilt-head (Probably the Cork-wing Wrasse <i>Symphodus melops</i>)	A specimen brought to me from St Lawrence this day agreed in every particular with the foregoing description with the exception of the colour which the lad who brought it said had changed since the fish had died Sig Belgrave House July 7 1848

Volume 2

Page No.	Date of Note	Fish (Current common name where different, and Latin name)	Marginal Note
189	Not dated	Three-bearded Rockling (Shore Rockling, <i>Gaidropsarus mediterraneus</i>)	Called here (I.Wight) the Red beard. A fine specimen was brought me by Newnham of Bonchurch.
192	2-3/8/1848	Five-bearded Rockling (Five-bearded Rockling, <i>Ciliata mustela</i>)	Four specimens were brought me this morning by Lale, the largest measuring 6 inches and the least 4 ½ inches. They were caught off Bonchurch. Belgrave House Aug. 2 1848. Another specimen August 3
214	5/8/1848	Plaice (<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>)	D. 73: P.11: V.6 : A.54 C.17. Largest specimens Aug 5. Several specimens of these fish brought me this morning by Lale the largest measuring 9 ¾ long by 6 inches in breadth Belgrave House August 5 1848 Caught between Ventnor and Bonchurch Sig.
259	4/8/1848	Sole (<i>Solea solea</i>)	Two very small specimens one 2 inches and the other not quite 1 ½ inch were brought me by Lale this morning caught between Bonchurch and Ventnor Belgrave House August 4 1848 Sig. One measuring 1 ft and 1 inch and 6 inches breadth was brought this morning by Lale Fin Rays D.87 P.7. V.5. A.72. C.17 weight 1 lb 1 oz August 6 1848 Caught between Ventnor and Bonchurch.
297	2/8/1848	Sharp nosed Eel (European Eel, <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>)	A young specimen of this species was brought me by Lale this morning having been taken off the shore at Bonchurch it measured 7 inches in length and the fisherman tells me that young eels are not infrequently caught in the sea off the shore Belgrave House August 2 1848

Volume 2 (continued)

Page No.	Date of Note	Fish (Current common name where different, and Latin name)	Marginal Note
299	5/8/1848	Broad nosed Eel (European eel, <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>) It is now known that variation in head shape morphology is related to diet. Compared to sharp nosed eels, broad nosed eels having a 'stronger bite' to consume larger prey, such as crustaceans and fish (De Meyer, 2018)	Eight eels were brought me this morning by Lale, taken under rocks in <u>the sea</u> between Ventnor and Bonchurch <i>having no river of fresh water near</i> which have a general resemblance to the Grig figured above (Grig is applied by Thames fishermen when any small-sized eel of any species when not longer than eight or nine inches , and of which eight or ten are required to make up a pound weight - Yarrell text) August 5 . 1848 Sig.
341	3-4/8/1848	Worm Pipefish (<i>Nerophis lumbriciformis</i>)	A specimen of this species with the ova attached to the under and external part of the abdomen as mentioned in the text was brought me by Lale this morning: it measured 4 ¼ inches August 31848 Belgrave House 2 more brought by Lale August 4 th 1848
352	29/7/1857	Sunfish (<i>Mola mola</i>)	A specimen of this fish was caught off St Lawrence July 29 1857 by the 'Lovegood' while employed in landing their crab pots about half a mile off the shore the fish came swimming alongside the boat in an upright position when they succeeded in gaffing it and bringing it into the boat. Length 21 inches breadth 15 inches - Dorsal fin 10 inches. Anal fin 10 inches. Weight not mentioned.
353	29/6/1841	Short Sunfish (This will have been the Sunfish <i>Mola mola</i>)	A specimen of this fish was brought to me to look at June 29 1841 having been caught at sea off Bonchurch by William Jackman fisherman at Boldwood; it was discovered swimming on its side on the surface of the water, made great resistance and took an hour to secure. This individual was 4 ft 9 inches long from the nose to the tail Breadth 3 ft 1 inch and 6 ft 6 inches in the girth Fins 1 ft 10 inches long ? ft wide weight about 350 lbs Belgrave House Have noticed this fish more particularly in my Ichthyology of the Undercliff
372	18/7/1848	Small-spotted Dogfish (Small-spotted Catshark. <i>Scyliorhinus canicula</i>)	An individual of this species was brought to me July 18, 1848 by Harvey of St Lawrence: it measured about 1 ft 11 inches in extreme length Belgrave House, Ventnor July 18. 1848
380	26/5/1865	The Fox Shark (Thresher Shark, <i>Alopias vulpines</i>)	One of these fish was caught about 10 miles from the shore entangled in some mackerel nets May 26 1865 and exhibited on the esplanade. Length 13 ft 4 inches
383	11/6/1840	Blue Shark (<i>Prionace glauca</i>)	Caught 7 or 8 miles at sea off Ventnor measures 6 feet 6 inches
392	19/7/1848	Common Tope (Tope Shark, <i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>)	A female of this species was brought to me July 19. 1848 which was caught with a trot by Harvey of St Lawrence it measured exactly 2 ft 6 inches the body being 2 ft and the tail 6 inches
438	5/8/1848	The Thornback (Thornback Ray, <i>Raja clavata</i>)	A specimen 8 ¼ inch long by 5 ¼ inch in breadth was brought me this morning by Lale caught on the shore between Bonchurch and Ventnor Belgrave House August 5. 1848. Sig.

LIMERSTONE: RECONSTRUCTION OF A LANDSCAPE

John Margham

Abstract: Later documentary sources are used to reconstruct the landscape of the manor of Limerstone's demesne (home farm) in the twelfth century. This identifies a series of complementary landscape components whose locations were strongly influenced by physical geography (geology, hydrology, soils and climate). Additional resources to the south of the demesne were shared with neighbouring Brighstone manor and these are outlined. The relative importance of constraints and opportunities provided by physical geography in apparent contrast with the role of human agency in the development of this landscape are explored in relation to recent landscape history research.

Keywords: Medieval landscape, Limerstone

Introduction

The landscape of Limerstone manor can be reconstructed for the twelfth century. This is based on a range of later documentary sources dating to the thirteenth, sixteenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The relationship between geomorphology, drainage, geology and soils to the zoning of land used in this reconstruction raises the issue of how much the landscape of medieval Limerstone owes this zoning to physical constraints or to human agency.

Sources

The manor of Limerstone is well documented in late medieval and post medieval sources. An account of the manor survives in a Winchester pipe roll of 1278 (Page, 1998). Clifford Webster, a former county archivist, has reconstructed the topography of Limerstone manor using the bounds and field-names recorded in 1565 (Webster 1975-1999; Webster unpublished; Map 1). The present owners of Limerstone Farm have recently come into the possession of a manorial map of 1778 which includes field-names (Fig. 1). The Brighstone Parish Tithe Apportionment provides field-names recorded in 1841 (IWCRO JER/T/044-045).

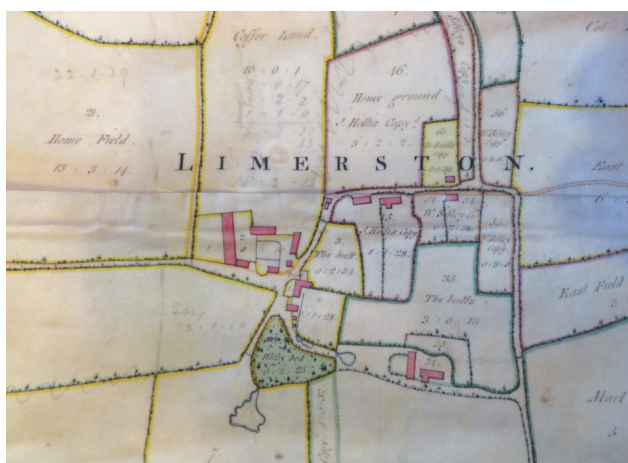
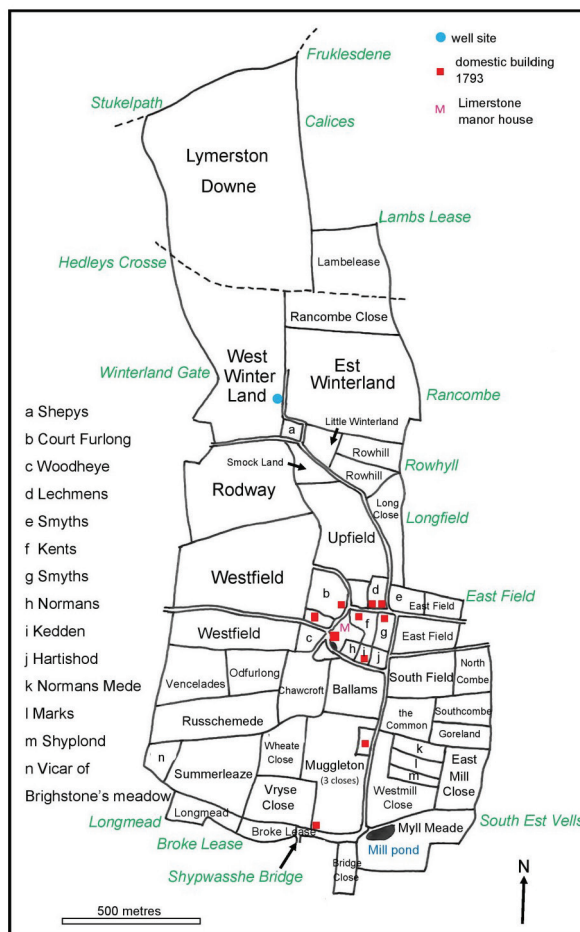


Fig. 1: An extract from the Limerstone manorial map of 1778

The Bishop of Winchester's Estate

During the pre-Conquest period, the Limerstone area was part of an extensive estate held by the bishop of Winchester centred on Calbourne. This



Map 1: Transcription of Clifford Webster's reconstruction of Limerstone's demesne in 1565 from Webster (unpublished) with amendments: 16th century boundary locations, well site and domestic buildings in 1793/4 added by the present author.



Fig. 2: Limerstone farmhouse from the west

was first defined in a charter purporting to be a grant by King Ecgberht in 826 of 30 *mansae* [hides] in *Cawelburnan*, but is probably a tenth-century document concocted by Winchester to validate their holding of the estate (Sawyer, 1968; Edwards, 1988). The boundary clause of this charter defines a landholding extending from the Solent to the English Channel, consisting of the medieval parishes of Calbourne and Brighstone, and part of Mottistone (Margham 2006). The Domesday Book records Winchester's Calbourne estate but by this date (1086) some areas to the south of the chalk ridge were independent manors: Brighstone, Chilton, Coombe and Shate. Three other landholdings in this area were sub-tenancies of Calbourne:

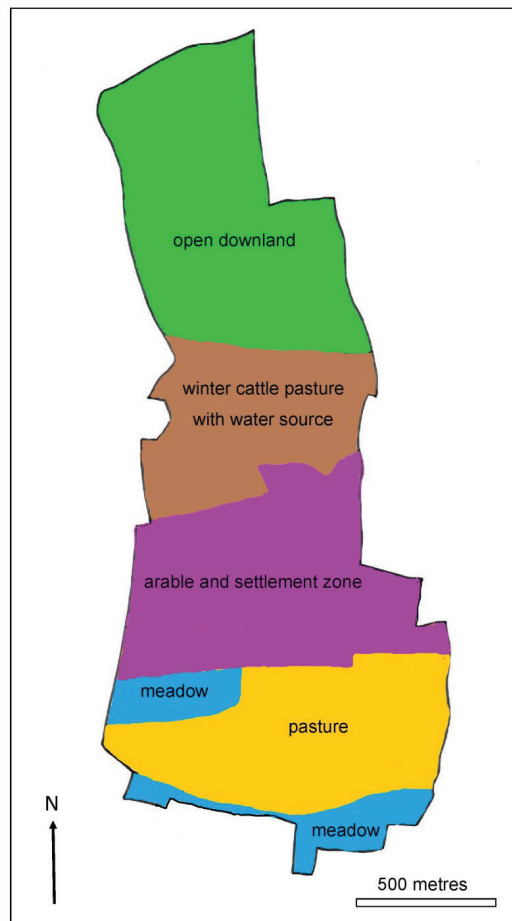
Of this land Robert holds 6 hides, Herpul 2 hides, and Alsige 3½ hides. 7 aloderies held these hides of the bishop, and could not withdraw elsewhere or from him. There are 3½ ploughs; and 3 villans and 22 bordars with 5 ploughs. There are 12 slaves, and 15 acres of meadow (Williams and Erskine 1989, 52v).¹

It is reasonably certain that the largest of these, Robert's 6 hides, can be identified as Limerstone. The two smaller landholdings were plausibly *Uggaton* (to the west of Brighstone) and *Waytes Court* (Page, 1912). Limerstone as a place-name was therefore not recorded in Domesday Book. This first enters the extant documentary record as *Lemerestune* in 1252, meaning 'Lēofmær's or Lēodmær's *tūn*' (Mills, 1996). The Old English personal name suggests the naming of estate by c.1100. The *tūn* element may indicate an earlier origin of the place-name. Wider research indicates that this became a widely used place-name element after c. 750 AD (Gelling, 1992), and some *tūn* names on the Island were of relatively recent origin in 1066 (Margham, 2017).

The process of becoming an independent landholding can thus be traced back to Domesday Book, and apparently before, as suggested by the place-name. The date when Limerstone became totally independent of Winchester is uncertain. The overlordship passed along with Swainston to the crown in 1284 but in 1498 and 1555-6 the manor was said to be held of the bishop of Winchester. The earliest mention of a sub-holding after 1086 was in 1255-6 when Mabel de Tichbourne granted a messuage in Limerstone (Page, 1912). The Tichbourne family held Limerstone until it was sold in 1724 (Webster, 1975-1999).

Limerstone in the Twelfth Century

Limerstone's demesne consisted of approximately 500 acres in the mid-sixteenth century. This was a compact land-holding extending 3km from north to south centred on Limerstone Farm in the preferred settlement zone just to the south of the Island's Lateral Ridge. It thus encompassed two landscape regions (Lateral Ridge and Southern Vale). The field names recorded in 1565, 1778 and 1841 provide



Map 2: A reconstruction of Limerstone's demesne in the twelfth century

evidence for differing zones of land-use from north to south. The following can be inferred from this evidence for the twelfth century (Map. 2):

- Unenclosed chalk downland from the course of *Stukelpath* down along *Fruckesdene* within the dissected plateau of the Lateral Ridge, rising up to 199 metres at the summit of Limerstone Down and then down-hill to a lynchet marking the southern extent of the chalk. A stipend was paid to a shepherd in 1278 (Page, 1998; Fig. 3). In 1565 this upland pasture was accessed from the manorial centre via 'the road to the Downs'.



Fig. 3: Limerstone Down: an area of chalk downland sheep pasture'

¹ 'Could not withdraw elsewhere or from him': a similar type of tenure was recorded within Winchester's estate of Downton (Wiltshire) where the holders of various lands in the time of King Edward 'could not separate themselves from the church' (Williams and Martin 1992, 164), and within Glastonbury Abbey's Polden estate (Somerset) where dependent thegns 'could not be separated from the church' (Turner. 2006).

- The area to the south of the chalk ridge and encompassing the subsidiary greensand ridge included 'Winterland' field-names and the location of *Winterland Gate*, adjoining Coombe Tower, the starting point of the 1565 bounds (Map 1; Fig. 4). These names apparently indicate the use of this zone for pasturing cattle during the winter months. Unlike sheep on the downland, cattle needed a water source. One such source was located within this area: the former well between *West Winterland* and *East Winterland* supplied water to Limerstone before being disconnected c.1957 (pers. comm. Mary Case).



Fig. 4: Looking north-westwards to *West Winterland* and *Little Winterland*. Coombe Tower, which adjoins the site of *Winterland Gate*, is on the horizon on the right of the photograph. The well site formerly serving *Winterland* is within this valley below Coombe Tower. The 'road to the Downs' followed the valley up from the manorial centre.

- The field-names *Eastfield*, *South Field*, *Upfield* and *Westfield* adjoining the manorial centre to the south of the greensand (Ferruginous Sands formation) were recorded in 1565. A man was paid to look after the corn (and meadows) in 1278, when eight oxen were kept, sufficient for a plough team, with 38 acres of wheat, 6 acres of oats and 9 acres of peas and vetches (Page, 1998). The field-names and their locations as depicted in later maps suggest the former existence of two, possibly three, fields (Fig. 1). References in 1565 such as 'four acres of land in Southfield between the lands of other tenants there' and 'six acres of land lying in Upfield in separate parcels between the lands of other tenants there' imply that at least some of this area was farmed as open field furlongs. Limerstone also had open field furlongs within Sutton Field to the south of the demesne land. The 1565 field-name *Ballams*, which was to the south of the manorial centre, means 'land on which beans are grown' (Cavill 2018), and this accords with the later thirteenth-century record of arable produce.
- Field-names such as *Summerleaze*, *The Common* and *Common Ground* reflect

pastoral land use on the Atherfield Clay, with some lower-lying meadowland (*Russchmede*). A stipend was being paid to the oxherd and dairymaid in 1278 (Page, 1998). *Summerleaze*, an allusion to 'forage, grazing pasture or tillage, accessible or workable only in summer' (Cavill, 2018) suggests that at least some of this area can be contrasted with *Winterland* in terms of seasonal land-use.

- Meadowland was underlain by alluvial soils (*Long Mead*, *Brokeleaze* and *Millmead*, also *Bridge Close*) at the southern, lowest extremity of the demesne alongside the watercourse either side of *Shypwasshe Bridge* (Fig. 5). This zone included small areas of wathy beds depicted on the Tithe Apportionment map. The manorial watermill was located in this area, adjoining *Westmill Close* and *Millmead*. The issues of the mill were recorded in 1278 (Page, 1998). Although *Marshefield*, to the south-west of *Shypwasshe Bridge*, was within the manor of Brighstone, various Limerstone tenants had use of meadow there in 1565.



Fig. 5: *Shypwasshe Bridge* on the southern bounds of Limerstone's demesne, looking northwards to the slightly elevated area of former pasture, with Limerstone Down on the horizon

Whilst there is no explicit evidence for the zoning of land-use within Limerstone in Domesday Book, the statistics for the three sub-holdings of the bishop's manor of Calbourne to the south of the Lateral Ridge suggest that this was the case. Robert's 6 hides, Herpul's 2 hides and Alsige's 3½ hides had between them 3½ ploughs, 3 villans and 22 bordars with 5 ploughs, 12 slaves and 15 acres of meadow (Williams and Erskine, 1989). Open-field agriculture may not have been fully developed here by 1086, but parallels drawn from the wider English landscape imply that this was happening by or during the twelfth century. The development of a self-contained manor may have been set in motion by the individual recorded in Limerstone's place-name. This process would have been an incentive for the development of more intensive and integrated land-use within the demesne, in contrast to the previous more extensive exploitation of the

estate centred on Calbourne. Such extensive estates were 'based on established connections between broad ecological zones rather than the dynamic exploitation of confined ones' (Blair, 2018), with post-Conquest Limerstone exemplifying the latter. The mutual interrelationships between the various components of such an integrated landholding were illustrated in the late tenth/early eleventh century by Ælfric of Cerne Abbas (Appendix 1).

Beyond the Demesne

The area defined by the 1565 bounds and the 1778 estate map was Limerstone's demesne. The manor also had interests in the area further to the south, in *Marshefield*, Sutton Field and along the coast. This observation is consistent with the late Anglo-Saxon concept of 'inland', i.e. the demesne farm, and the contrasting 'warland', land outside the demesne where villans held land and owed labour services to the land-holder of the demesne (Faith, 1997). In the sixteenth century, the successors to these villans were the copyholders living beyond the bounds of the demesne.

Limerstone manor's interest in the area to the south of the demesne is demonstrated by the holdings of George Trencher in the fifteenth century. He was

'a free tenant for 74 acres of land called Hawkeley in Sutton formerly [held by] John Trencher and William Middlemarsh by military service for half of a quarter of a Knight's fee and suit of court at Limerston and pays annually 2s.6 d. as appears by court roll, dated 1 June 1472, by charter shown there' (Webster, 1975-1999).

Immediately to the south of Limerstone's demesne was *Marshefield*. Whilst this was a constituent of Brighstone manor, Limerstone tenants had pasture rights there in 1565. This meadowland was known as *Common Mead* in 1841 when it was sub-divided into seven unenclosed parcels of varying sizes. This arrangement would appear to have originated with annual apportionment as documented in meadowland adjoining Sutton Field in 1565.

Further to the south was Sutton Field, in the area to the south-east of Thorncross. Sutton formed part of the manor of Brighstone. However, Limerstone copyholders held lands in Sutton Field and the adjoining meadowland, a fine example of evidence from the 1565 Limerstone survey being:

William Currelle held, by copy dated 14 October 1528, for life at rent of 20s.: 26 acres of land lying in the fields of Sutton, viz: in Clay Furlongs Six Acres, and 20 acres lying in Sutton Field of which six acres lie in Horydytche Furlong, and ix acres in Sondihyll and six acres in Lyttecrofte and two acres in Hickatstretes Furlong, one acre of pasture lies in Charell [Carle] Mede running north opposite the common pole between the hedge there and the running doles and abutts upon his own land [running doles being evidence of annual distribution of meadowland] (Webster, 1975-1999).

Other land-holders owing suit to Limerstone in 1565 with lands in Sutton were John Currel (copyholder) 6 acres in a close, John Barron (copyholder) 2 acres abutting Sutton field, John Worsley gent. (free tenant) 1 messuage and 12 acres of land in Sutton,

and George Trencher esquire (free tenant) 74 acres of land in Sutton. None of these provide specific evidence for holding open field strips in Sutton Field. However, Thorncross had 'pieces of arable land' in Sutton Field documented in the 1630 survey of Brighstone manor (Webster 1975-1999). The three small quantities of arable specified to be within Sutton Field of about one acre each suggests that some arable here was farmed in open field strips or furlongs enclosed from former open field land at this date, as does the reference to Clay Furlongs held by William Currelle cited above. The morphology of fields to the west of Sutton as depicted on the 1793/4 Ordnance Survey map suggests that these were enclosed from former open field furlongs.

The 1565 manorial survey also itemises Limerstone's land-holdings within Brighstone's East Field, several of which appear to be open field furlongs or enclosed former open field furlongs. This is exemplified by plot 660 in the 1630 survey of Brighstone manor,

'A piece of arable land, lying in Butts furlong in Eastfield next the land of Mr Wayte on every side',

this instance being held of Brighstone, not Limerstone. It is quite possible that landholdings of Limerstone within Brighstone manor fields originated before the definition of Limerstone's demesne and manor. This impression is supported by a lease of 1680 within Brighstone manor which included part of Longmead Meadow (3 acres), lying in common with Limerstone farm (Webster 1975-1999).

There are several references in the 1630 Brighstone manorial survey to tenants having 'common of pasture for 10 sheep' on Sutton Common, which adjoined the coast (Webster 1975-1999). Sutton Common may have been intercommoned with Limerstone at one time, but there do not appear to have been any instances of Limerstone tenants having rights of common there in manorial surveys from 1565 onwards.

However, further to the west within Brighstone, in the 1565 survey of Limerstone Robert Smyth, a copyholder, held 'One acre in South Marshfield [plot 336 on the tithe map] at *Schrepeledge* Chine [south of Marsh Green] on the west side of the same and on the south side of a certain ditch there' (Webster 1975-1999). Whilst this was not part of Sutton Common, it illustrates the intermixed interests of Brighstone and Limerstone in this coastal strip of rough pasture.

Physical Constraints or Human Agency?

The reconstruction of Limerstone's demesne presents a picture of the zoning of land use from north to south: unenclosed downland; winter cattle pasture; a settlement zone surrounded by arable fields; lowland pasture; and meadowland. This zoning continued southwards from the demesne with Sutton Field and Sutton Common, located on Wealden beds and associated gravels and alluvium, with further meadowland and open field furlongs and rough pasture along the coast. Much of the latter has been lost due to coastal erosion. The example of *Cashyd* illustrates this process. This was a tenement of 30 acres within the tithing of Sutton in

1630, which can be identified with Chine Farm on the Brighstone parish boundary adjoining the Atherfield area. At some time in or after 1680 the nearby tenement

'which stood and belonged to the grounds called Leap Place [Shepherd's Chine] were taken down and set up at Cashyd by reason of the washing away the land within 2 roods, where the said tenement stood' (Margham, 2019).

The influence of the physical background on the development of landscapes has been much debated over the past few decades. Rippon (2008) provided an overview of the debate. Subsequently, Williamson (2013) added to this with the publication of *Environment, Society and Landscape in Early Medieval England*. Although the role of physical factors in landscape history had previously been emphasised, for example in the work of Alan Everitt (1977, 1986), by the 1990s there was a general consensus that it was human actions that were entirely responsible for variations in landscape character, rejecting the notion of 'environmental determinism', that the physical environment dictated settlement patterns and land use (Rippon, 2008). This consensus was challenged by Tom Williamson. His *Shaping Medieval Landscapes* examined the development of open field agriculture in eastern England and identified a correlation between the distribution of 'regular' open fields and heavier clay soils (Williamson, 2003). Simon Draper's (2006) study of the landscape of Roman and early medieval Wiltshire also addresses this issue stating that the physical landscape of a region is fundamental to 'understanding its settlement and society. This may sound obvious to many, but we are only now emerging from a period in landscape studies when it became almost fashionable to downplay environmental factors in favour of social and cultural explanations for change, for fear of being branded an adherent of "environmental determinism"'. Williamson (2013) considered the relative importance of physical conditions and human agency, demonstrating the significance of physical geography, geology, hydrology, soils and climate in the pattern of human interaction with the environment. He does, however, qualify this, identifying a false dichotomy between 'human choice' and 'geographical determinism'. He concludes that choices of where to settle were conditional on everyday practicalities:

'Landscapes are a consequence of human agency, but agency exercised knowledgeably, in a real world' (Williamson, 2013).

The reconstruction of the landscape of Limerstone's demesne in the twelfth century and observations regarding the meadowland, the open field furlongs in Sutton Field and the coastal strip of rough pasture to the south accord with this more mature and nuanced approach to the significance of the physical background in medieval landscape history. Geology, soils, drainage and landforms were important in providing opportunities for the development of a range of complementary land uses. Human agency was also significant in acting within these constraints and exploiting opportunities to provide a productive

and integrated landscape centred on the manorial focus, now known as Limerstone Farm.

Appendix-1 Ælfric's Colloquy

Ælfric the Homilist of Cerne Abbas in Dorset produced his *Colloquy* to help boys in the monastic school there improve their fluency in Latin. This consisted of a series of dialogues outlining various occupations. Three examples are of particular relevance in showing interrelationships between areas of contrasting land use within an estate (Cavill 2001, 42-3):

What do you say, shepherd? Do you have to work hard?

Yes, sir, I do. In the early morning I drive my sheep to their pasture and watch over them with the dogs, whether it is hot or cold, in case wolves attack them. Then I take them back to their folds, and milk them twice a day. I move their folds, and I make cheese and butter. And I am loyal to my lord.

Well, ploughman, what do you say? How do you go about your job?

Oh, sir, I have to work hard! I go out at dawn, driving the oxen to the field, and I yoke them to the plough. No winter is so severe that I dare hide at home, because I am afraid of my lord. But when I have yoked the oxen and fastened the ploughshare and the coulter to the plough, each day I have to plough a full acre or more.

And oxherd, what do you do?

Oh, my lord, I work hard. When the ploughman unyokes the oxen, I lead them to pasture, and all night I watch over them, alert for thieves. And then in the early morning I take them back to the ploughman, well fed and watered.

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